



Master thesis – Strategic communication

Beyond branding

Communicating authors in the Swedish publishing industry

MALIN ÖSTERMAN

Lund University
Department of Strategic Communication

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Abstract · Sammanfattning

Communicating authors in the Swedish publishing industry

Authors are the public face of the publishing industry and a key aspect of its marketing efforts. This thesis aims to explore different communication strategies surrounding authors within the industry, with a special focus on the growing trend of branding authors. Critical realism is used to reveal and analyze the mechanisms that generate the strategies. Three theories are used to understand the industry and its communicative efforts: branding, strategic communication and Bourdieu's theories regarding fields and symbolic power. The empiric data was generated through interviews with authors, publishers, marketers and journalists. In addition, a content analysis of all the issues from the trade magazine *Svensk Bokhandel* during 2011 was conducted. The results show that the strategies used to communicate authors share strong similarities with classical branding, although they are discursively reframed to maintain the industry's privileged position as a field of cultural production.

Att kommunicera författare på den svenska förlagsmarknaden

Författare är förlagsbranschens ansikte utåt och har en nyckelroll i dess marknadsföringsinsatser. Syftet med denna uppsats är att utforska olika kommunikationsstrategier som omger författare i branschen, med ett särskilt fokus på den växande trenden av att se författare som varumärken. Kritisk realism används för att visa och undersöka de mekanismer som genererar strategierna. Tre teorier används för att förstå branschen och dess kommunikationsåtgärder: varumärkesteori, strategisk kommunikation och Bourdieus teorier om fält och symbolisk makt. Det empiriska materialet samlades in genom intervjuer med författare, förläggare, marknadsförare och journalister. I tillägg genomfördes en innehållsanalys av alla nummer av *Svensk Bokhandel* från 2011. Resultatet visar att strategierna som användes för att kommunicera författare uppvisar starka likheter med klassisk varumärkesteori, även om de omtalas på andra sätt för att kunna upprätthålla branschens privilegierade position som ett fält för kulturell produktion.

Keyword: Authorship, branding, publishing, strategic communication, symbolic power

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1. Introduction

Authors are the lifeblood of the publishing industry. Their manuscripts may be haggled over by agents, edited into submission by publishers and marketed by PR and marketing departments, but without those fleeting words on a page there is no industry. The author is also the industry's public face and can in our contemporary society become a celebrity on par with movie stars and rock stars (Feldman, 2003). This makes the author one of the publisher's foremost means of marketing, something that leads to different strategies of communicating authors. As a student of strategic communication and publishing I wanted to explore the communication efforts that surround authors in the Swedish publishing industry and study the strategies used by the actors in the industry to position authors in regards to the industry itself and consumers of literature.

One of the growing trends connected to author communication is the discussion concerning the author as a brand (Gradvall, 2007, September 27; Steiner, 2009; Ransmark & Larsson-Brorson, 2010). For a range of industries, branding is seen as the solution to many organizational concerns and there is a widespread agreement that a strong brand is an asset (Thelander & Rosenqvist, 2011). Author branding is still a relatively new phenomenon in the publishing industry and the cultural industries have complex relationship with brands (Brown, 2009; O'Reilly, 2009). They do not brand standardized products, but individuals with mutable personalities and opinions. Publishing, as many cultural industries, also have a long-standing tradition of viewing culture and commerce as diametrically opposing concepts. Economic success, which is the goal of branding, or the definition of an authorship in economic terms, can lessen an author's cultural value (Lantz, 2006; Squires, 2009). How then, can branding be reconciled with the author as a complex, cultural figure?

The Swedish publishing industry is mostly uncharted territory in academic research and while literature and specific high profile authorships have been studied in detail, the general marketing of authors and the communication surrounding them is rarely the focus of research (cf. Nyblom, 2008, Lenemark, 2009, Kärholm, 2009). Author branding may be a growing trend in the publishing industry but it is still a fledgling research subject, something that makes it interesting to study further.

The communication that surrounds authors is in this thesis explored against the backdrop of three theoretical perspectives; classical branding, strategic communication and Bourdieu's sociological theories regarding fields and symbolic capital. Bourdieu's theories facilitate the process of understanding publishing as a field of cultural production, where traditionally economic and cultural success is in an oppositional relationship with each other. Classical branding needs to be un-

derstood in order to explore whether the publishing industry use branding techniques, but without addressing them as such. Strategic communication is used as an interface between branding and the literary field and its actors. I also use it to go beyond branding in an attempt to bridge the gap between the industry's cultural and economic logic and find common ground for different communication strategies. Overarching these three perspectives is the epistemology of critical realism that opens up for the possibility of discussing the mechanisms that helps to shape the publishing industry and the communicative strategies it employs.

Through the use of interviews with industry actors and a content analysis of the trade magazine *Svensk Bokhandel* I study how authors are communicated today within the industry. An interview guide with a set of six themes constituted the foundation of both the interviews and the content analysis and aided in the systematic approach to a wide and flexible research subject.

1.1. Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore and map different communication strategies in the Swedish publishing industry in regards to authors and their authorships. In addition, branding as a communication strategy is analyzed further as it is a new way of marketing authors in Sweden and still is a relatively unexplored area of research.

Branding as a concept was first developed for products and then extended further, to organizations, nations and individuals (Lair, Sullivan & Cheney, 2005; Thelander & Rosenqvist, 2011). It is a concept that has been transferred from field to field and industry to industry, and since it is viewed as having a positive effect on profit margins and customer relations it keeps on being transferred. But simply transferring a concept without adapting it to prevailing circumstances can impact its effectiveness. In order to study how branding is used in the publishing industry it is important to first understand the communication patterns and discourses that characterize the industry today. Therefore the following research questions will be addressed:

- What communication strategies do actors in the Swedish fiction publishing industry use to position authors with regards to the industry, the media and the public?
- Can these strategies be seen as branding in the classical sense even though they might not be discursively addressed as such?
- If that is the case, what purpose does the discursive reframing, or even obscuring, of branding processes serve?

According to Bourdieu, the more we know about the patterns of ideas and hierarchies of values we are a part of, and reproduce, the more freedom we have to change them (Broady, 1988). Further insights to the publishing industry can both enrich the academic research and make it easier for practitioners to deepen their knowledge regarding the industry.

My wish is to highlight an ever evolving profession that is a part of an industry which plays a large role in how Sweden is perceived internationally. I also

hope that the results from this study can elucidate the workings of an industry that often distinguish itself by assuming a cultural and educational responsibility while at the same time operating as a part of a profitable market.

1.2. Limitations

The focus of this essay is the publishing industry, rather than the book market. The reason for this is that I am interested in how an industry helps to shape those who act within it, authors as well as publishers, agents and literature critics. I will not focus on the readers or the wholesalers of literature since they are “consumers” of culture, rather than producers of culture and its adherent image (Broady, 1998).

I have also chosen to focus on literary fiction as “fiction publishing is an industry in which there are strong brand identities, both of imprints and authors.” (O’Reilly, 2006, p. 77). It is also an area that can be compared to both the music and film industry, which makes any construction of a theory made in this area more likely to be applicable on those industries as well (cf. Clark & Philips, 2008).

2. Background

The publishing industry, as all specialized industries, may at first seem bewildering to an outsider. The aim of this chapter is to give the reader a short introduction to two important aspects of this thesis, the author and the publishing industry, as well as some issues of contention that affects them today. These issues include the consolidation process that impacts both large and small publishing houses and a market adaption of both the author role and the publishing houses.

2.1. Authors

Throughout history, the definition of an author has changed. In ancient Greece an author was an oral storyteller, an intermediary of stories rather than a creator. Even when writing became more common, the author was not necessarily the originator of the story. The author as the creator of his own works began during the renaissance, with works such as Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The largest change in the role of an author came when the printing press was invented during the 15th century, and writing became the art of an individual. Throughout the centuries this slowly led to a professionalization of the trade and gave the author market value, measurable in money (Steiner, 2009).

What defines an author today? Foucault (1980) would argue that the definition of an author depends on the prevailing discourse in society. It can mean being published by a publishing house, which disqualifies self-published authors, or having published a physical book, which disqualifies authors who publish digitally. Sveriges Författarförbund (The Swedish Writers' Union) will only accept members that have at least two literary works published, of a certain literary quality (Sveriges Författarförbund, 2012). Other definitions maintain that to be called author a person has to have writing as main source of occupation (Steiner, 2009). In this thesis I will define an author as the originator of at least one book, be it self-published or published by a publishing house. And while literary quality may be an important factor in an authorship I agree with Steiner (2009) when she writes that it is a too arbitrary way of defining a profession.

“The author's position is both exposed and exalted.” (Steiner, 2009, p. 25, translation by M.Ö.). Statistics from 2011 show that only about 0,15-0,2 % of all manuscripts sent in by hopeful writers-to-be are accepted for publishing (Svensson, 2011c, September 21). In today's publishing industry the editor or the publisher locate new talents, and literary quality is not the only qualifying criteria. An author's persona, style and looks can affect the impact he or she has (Steiner, 2009). Brown (2006) mentions the same development when he writes “[p]hotogenic authors are glamorized, profiled and promoted like the literary equivalent of Britney [Spears]”. (p. 7). The potential size of the market is also im-

portant, as well as “how photogenic and articulate the author is, his age and likely productive life cycle, the fashionability and/or substance of the themes dealt with in the books being pitched, the possibility of media tie-ins or product placement deals, the existing degree of celebrity of the author, rights sales, the reliability of his agent, and so on.” (O’Reilly, 2006, p. 74).

There exists state sponsored grants for writers, but even when those are taken into consideration there are few authors in Sweden who can live solely on their writing and publishing is a market highly exposed to competition (Steiner, 2012). Authors are often portrayed as free spirits, answerable to nothing and no one. But being an author is often a precarious situation where the produced work is likely to be influenced by many other things than the author’s own will.

Authors’ position and conditions can hardly be described as free or controlled. Instead most authors find themselves in a constant balance act, caught between their own literary ambitions and ideal, and conforming to the demands of the market, the opinion of the critics, the wishes of the publishing house’s economy department, the will of the readers and the visions of the politicians. (Steiner, 2009, p. 65, translation by M.Ö.).

2.2. Publishing

“Publishing is a venture capital business supported by the licensing by authors to publishers of monopoly rights in copyrighted ‘properties’.” (O’Reilly, 2006, p. 73). O’Reilly’s description of publishing is concise, but the industry is seldom viewed in such a detached way. Rather, the business of publishing books is still highly romanticized even though it today is a part of a multi-billion dollar market (Steiner, 2009).

Brown (2006) estimates that around one million books are published worldwide annually. That is 4000 each day. In Sweden 16 465 books, defined here as works over 48 pages, were published in 2010 (Nauri, 2011). Around 3000 of them were fiction intended for an adult audience (Steiner, 2012). Publishing is an economy of scale. The more copies printed, the cheaper the production costs are per copy, which results in a larger profit for each sold copy. However, the average title today in Sweden sells about 1000-2000 copies which means that it barely cover its own costs (Eklund, 2009, December 5). This is a global trend, and one that often leads to discussions regarding over-publishing and saturated markets.

During the late 90’s the publishing houses began to change their strategy. Instead of publishing a wide array of books in hopes of finding the elusive hit, they began to focus on books and authors deemed profitable. This was a blow to those authors whose books only sold in modest editions, but whose authorships had been supported by the publishing houses while waiting for a breakthrough. The time allotted for them to prove their selling potential diminished substantially and shortened to only one or two books (Clark & Philips, 2008).

There is a polarization between the very large publishers and the very small publishers in Sweden as well as internationally. There are only a few medium-sized publishing houses as they do not have the economic margins of the larger or

the specialized focus of the smaller, which would allow them to reach their target audiences easier (Lindgren, 2000; Clark & Philips, 2008; Eklund, 2010, March 17; Thompson, 2010). In addition to this the publishing industry is, and has been for the last 20 years, in a consolidation process, which means that the largest actors are getting even larger (Brown, 2006). Sweden's two largest publishing houses, Norstedts and Bonniers have since the 19th century dominated the Swedish market (Steiner, 2009). The consolidation does not only affect the publishing houses themselves but also the channels of distribution, from distributors to bookstores.

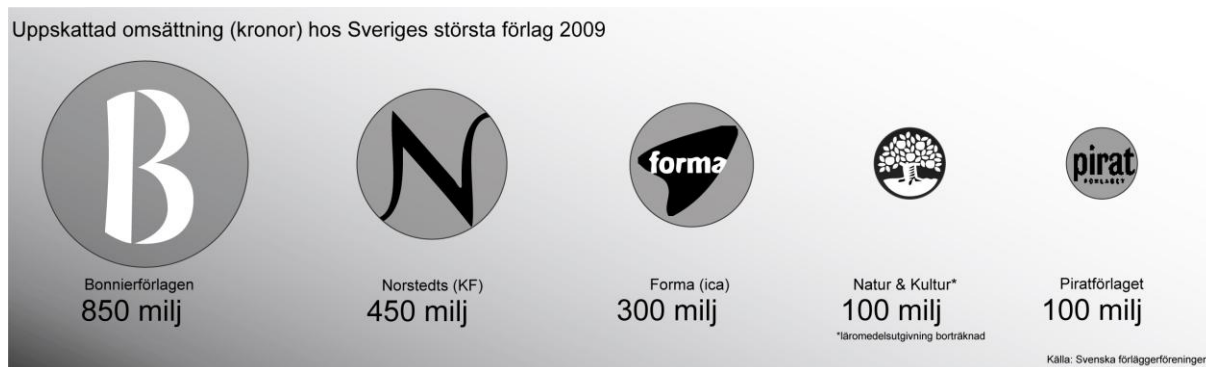


Figure 1 Estimated turnover (SEK) for Sweden's largest publishing houses 2009 (Eklund, 2010, March 17)

Not even the small publishing houses are immune to different aspects of consolidation, albeit on a smaller scale. Most publishing houses are a part of several different segments within the industry, even if it is just to act as agents or marketers (Peterson, 1998).

Greco (2005) writes that “[t]here is a stark uncertainty in the book business. Every book is in a tournament fighting for sales and attention against every other new and backlist book, so book publishing is geared to adapt, and adapt rather quickly.” (p. 6). Much of the business includes selling the product before it even exists in print. This includes the selling of rights, both nationally and internationally, as well as selling the book to retail dealers who often make their decisions regarding purchases before each seasons’ titles are in print (Clark & Philips, 2008). Books have a very short shelf life, extremely short in comparison to many other consumer goods industries. The lion’s share of books will peak their sales within a year of publishing, and within some genres even quicker. “Most adult hardback fiction and paperback titles are dead within three months or just weeks.” (Clark & Philips, 2008, p. 51).

Publishing as an industry receives subsidies, both by direct and indirect means, from the state and the local authorities. These include a general publishing subsidy, translation subsidies and so forth. The subsidies are in place to promote quality and versatility in publishing. Books are also exempt from the general 25% value-added tax and are instead only taxed with a 6% culture tax. The reduced value-added tax was introduced in 2002 to promote reading. Ensuing studies showed that sales increased, but that reading did not become more diversified. Instead those who read a lot simply bought more books (Steiner, 2012).

Greco (2005) speaks of circles in the publishing industry. They are informal but highly structured and often include well established networks. There are editorial circles and trade circles, in which for example agents, authors and consultants move. Greco writes that “[...] one does not quickly or easily enter a circle. It takes years in the industry, a certain status and panache, and, frequently, intangible traits.” (Greco, 2005, p. 127). The publishing business, especially in a small country like Sweden, therefore becomes very much a world of its own.

2.3. Previous research

This thesis is interdisciplinary in nature and makes use of a number of different research traditions. Those connected to the applied theories are presented in chapter 4. However, the focus of this study is the field of publishing and I would like to situate the thesis in a publishing context.

The Swedish publishing industry is a relatively unexplored research area, but is described at length in *Litteraturen i mediasamhället* by Ann Steiner and *Litteraturens värden* edited by Anders Mortensson. More concrete research is often carried out by Svenska Förläggare-föreningen, who have published reports such as *Svensk bokmarknad 1973-2003* and *Vad gör de på bokförlagen?*

A more specific discussion regarding author roles and the creation of success can be found in *Star Authors – Literary Celebrity in America* by George Moran and *Författaren som kändis* by Torbjörn Forslid. The dissertation *Sanna lögner – Carina Rydberg, Stig Larsson och författarens medialisering* by Christian Lenemark studies the dynamic relationship between authors, literature and media in contemporary Scandinavia. Lenemark discusses how symbiotic the relationship can be, yet how it is often fraught with tension and conflict.

A large part of the literature concerning the publishing industry consists of how to-books. These are usually books with a more practical rather than theoretical approach. They can be informative but are more often than not based on the individual author’s experience rather than research concerned with the underlying mechanisms that govern the industry. Literary works that relate to different aspects of marketing of literature as well as the theoretical frameworks behind them are *Marketing Literature – The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain* by Claire Squires and the anthology *Consuming Books*, edited by Stephen Brown.

3. Theoretical framework

A theory is a reflective way of looking at the world, of framing and reframing reality. Falkheimer and Heide (2007) describe it as a lens through which we view the world around us; this unlike the more traditional, positivistic view of theories as maps to reality.

As the focus in this thesis is communication in regards to authors, with the publishing industry as a backdrop, it is important to gain insight into the industry. While branding as a form of market communication is on the rise there are still factors that separate publishing from other fields of production. Literature and its originators belong to a cultural sphere in which success can be divided into a cultural logic, where the main objectives are artistic quality, and an economic logic, where profit is essential (Lantz, 2006). To better understand this division, and how it can impact communicative measures such as branding, I will be using Bourdieu's theory of fields, as well as the concept of symbolic capital. The aim is to give the reader a more complete picture of how the actors in the industry reasons.

Overarching Bourdieu's theories and the theory of branding is the area of strategic communication. It is a multifaceted area of study, but its focus on a holistic perspective on communicative approaches makes it, in my eyes, ideal to use when studying publishing and cultural figures. In its role as a unifying framework it also helps to define the questions asked, and the methods used to find answers to those questions (cf. Hallahan et al., 2007).

Finally, I discuss the theoretical complexes that were the basis of the themes used in the interviews and the content analysis. They were derived from the theoretical approaches and from my personal experience from, and knowledge about, the Swedish publishing industry.

3.1. Critical realism

The way we acquire knowledge about the world is in research called epistemology. In this thesis I use critical realism as an epistemological lens, something that shapes my view of the empirical results.

“Attaining knowledge about reality is a process. To reach beyond the empirical we have to place the concrete empirical fact we are studying in relation to that which shaped it.” (Danermark, Ekström, Johansson & Karlsson, 2003, p. 30, translation by M.Ö.). The primary function of critical realism is to reveal the mechanisms that generate the studied phenomenon (Danermark et al., 2003).

In critical realism the answer to the question “Does there exist a reality independently of our experiences?” is twofold; yes, there exists an independent reality (the intransitive dimension, such as physical processes or social phenomena) *and*

a historically and socially determined knowledge regarding that reality (the transitive dimension, theories about those processes and phenomena) (Sayer, 2000; Robson, 2002; Bhaskar, 2008). “It is the task of science to invent theories that aim to represent the world.” (Robson, 2002, p. 34).

Reality is composed of three domains; the real, the actual and the empirical. The real domain represents the underlying mechanisms that generate actual events, which in turn can be observed in the empirical domain (Danermark et al., 2003; Bhaskar, 2008). The three domains make it possible for a researcher to distinguish between an event and the cause of an event. To explain the event, or the phenomenon, it is important to identify the causal mechanisms and how they work, and to discover if they have been activated and under what conditions (Sayer, 2000).

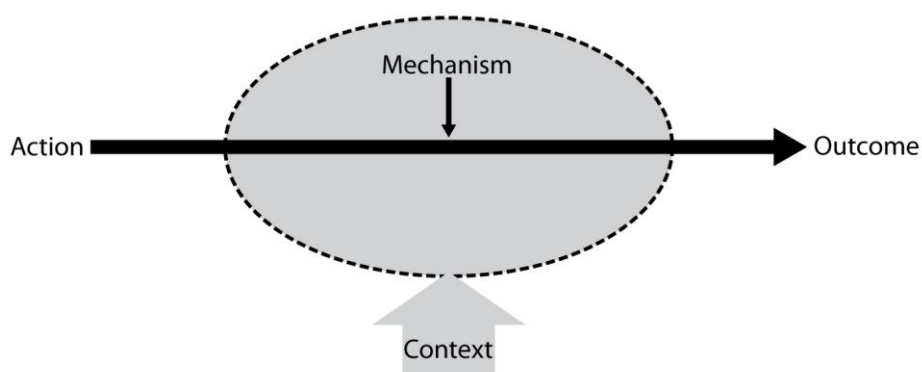


Figure 2 Generic critical realism diagram (adapted from Robson, 2002, p. 31)

Unlike naïve realism where sensory impressions are intermediaries of truth, critical realism claims that the knowledge imparted by our senses is dependent on a social context (Danermark, 2003). So to understand an outcome (empirical) we study the action behind it (actual). In addition the researcher also tries to understand the context, because only then is it possible to try to identify and distinguish between different mechanisms (real) (Sayer, 2000).

Though these lines of reasoning may seem abstract it is important to clarify the epistemological grounding used in this thesis as it determines how I view the gathered empirical data. While I treat the interviewees as experts within their field, I do not view their statements as undisputed facts. Instead I try to situate their statements in a context, with the use of explanatory theories and research, in an effort to seek underlying mechanisms that determine how authors are communicated within the Swedish publishing industry.

3.2. Branding and brand-name authors

Brands, and the branding process, are expansive areas of study. In many industries branding is seen as a matter of course and there is a firm agreement that a strong brand is an asset (Thelander & Rosenqvist, 2011). In this thesis I use branding as a way to exemplify and explore communication strategies surrounding authors in the publishing industry. Result and theory are always intertwined and while there

are several types of branding, I have focused on the classical approach as it is the dominating version of branding and have a secure foothold in many industries (Thelander & Rosenqvist, 2011). It also serves to highlight the way branding is perceived by the practitioners in the interviews and presented in the content analysis.

A brand can be defined strictly from verbal or visual cues, what it represents in a tangible way, for example a trademarked design or the performance of the branded product. The use of a symbol to create meaning and to imbue a product with certain values is an integral part of branding (Lair, Sullivan & Cheney, 2005; De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh, 2010). The physical aspects, names, logos and designs, are a fundamental level of the brand, and a necessary foundation. They are the material markers of the brand, but they are in themselves devoid of meaning (Holt, 2004). In addition to the foundation there are the intangible values that a brand becomes imbued with; the symbolic and emotional dimensions that relate to what the brand represents. The intangible values constitute the reasons why the customer should pick one product over another, when they both perform the same service (Olins, 2000; De Pelsmacker et al., 2010; da Silva Lopes & Duguid, 2010). When the distinctive constellation of abstract values associated with the brand has been identified, or constructed, it constitutes the brand essence. It is important that this brand essence is consistent over time and evoked in every context where the brand is used, because it is the collective nature of the public's perception of the brand that makes it powerful (Holt, 2004). Branding as a communication practice then becomes a form of symbolic management (Hallahan et al., 2007).

When the audience's attention becomes increasingly fragmented branding becomes a way of communicating in a crowded market, and the brands themselves are promoted in increasingly varied and complex ways (Lair et al., 2005). "The market of today seems to be demanding well-crafted identities that are able to stand out and break through the clutter." (Christensen & Cheney, 2000, p. 246). These brand identities are not just applicable to products but also to organizations and individuals and they are shaped in the same way, by filling the brand with meaning and establishing that meaning in the collective understanding (Holt, 2004).

Author image has historically been important for authorships, though most notably for high-profile authors (Nyblom, 2008; Steiner, 2009). Authors who develop a personal readership create their own market, and may attain a "brand name"-following (Clark & Philips, 2008). Developing a brand name is resource demanding (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010). For example, a publishing house that wishes to brand its authors would be hard pressed to accord all its authors with the effort because of finite resources. Instead they might take the approach that it is the publishing house's brand that is the uniting factor, not the individual author. But it would also be possible to see the publishing house as a multi-brand corporation. "Publishers of consumer books written by brand-name authors face the challenge that their imprint name is a sub-brand to that of their authors in the public's mind." (Clark & Philips, 2008, p. 52). The brand of the publishing house may also influence how the brand of the author is perceived, as brands are attributed with

the ability to transfer customer loyalty from one product to another (Davis & Maniatis, 2010).

“Author-brands can be read as commodified texts that mediate meanings between and among readers and writers. They function as symbolic articulators of writing and reading, and can be used by consumers discursively to elaborate markers of their own distinction from, and identification with, others.” (O’Reilly, 2006, p. 77). When the author becomes a distinct brand the readers can use it to communicate an image of themselves and what type of person they are, something that in turn fills the brand with more meaning.

While brands are generally seen as positive differentiators and economically beneficial, they can also distort markets and inhibit innovation (da Silva Lopes & Duguid, 2010). Christensen and Cheney (2000) problematize the need for a distinct identity. They see the importance of branding as something created by organizations in their quest for visibility and legitimacy rather than by the consumers need for differentiators. Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (2005) view the branding of individuals from a critical viewpoint; while they see personal branding as a possible strategy for negotiating a complex, market driven environment, they also see the risk of it giving people only a superficial view of the individual behind the brand. It could make it impossible for the person behind the brand-name to self-reflect and improve. It can also promote stereotypes in regards to gender, class, race and age. O’Reilly (2006) views the branding of authors as something that restricts them to a purely economical dimension, an act that de-humanizes them.

3.3. Bourdieu’s fields of cultural production

Bourdieu’s work focuses on individuals and their position in society as well as the construction and presentation of the social world. There are three central themes in his work: habitus, symbolic power and fields of production (Broady, 1998; Hussey, 2010).

The *habitus* refers to how individuals create their worldview. This generally occurs through unconscious recognition of patterns, rules and expectations. This recognition is in turn based on each individual’s earlier experience and circumstances, such as gender, education, social class and interaction with others (Hussey, 2010). A *field* is a system of relationships between positions inhabited by people and institutions that contend over something they have in common, something they believe in and that unites them (Bourdieu, 1993; Broady, 1998). It does not matter what opinions people have on the contended subject, as long as they all agree on its importance. For example, in the literary field of production the actors might argue about what constitutes good literature, but they all agree in their belief that literature is important (Bourdieu, 1993; Peterson, 1998). What the *symbolic power* entails and how it is valued, differs from field to field. In the literary field it could mean a degree in literature, while the same degree is of no consequence in the field of physics. Each individual, group or institution engages in different strategies to either protect the value of their symbolic power or to defend or improve their position. According to Broady (1998) these strategies are mostly unconscious decisions.

Those that have acquired enough symbolic power in a field also have the authority to pass judgment, for example publishers or literary critics. They can consecrate an authorship, or demolish it (Peterson, 1998). When an actor has become a part of the field they assume, or are assigned, a position. The position brings with it roles to be enacted, as well as status (Mutch, 2006). According to Bourdieu the field itself can be understood by studying the different positions people enact on it, as well as how they relate to each other. Every position within a field is defined by its relationship to other positions and it is these relationships that decide what actions the actors can execute (Danto, 1999). No individual actor can create renown and celebrity for an author; it is in the collaboration between the actors on an entire field that value is created, and continuously recreated (Bourdieu, 1993).

Fields are dynamic sites that are characterized by the struggles over changing positions (Mutch, 2006). Even when the traditional procedures within a field are questioned, and innovations are introduced, these processes to a large extent substantiate the already established authority of the field's institution (Bourdieu, 1993). A revolution may discredit the traditional way of doing things, and displace power, but it will not change the field into something unrecognizable. Every author needs to relate to the field, to use or reject its ideas and ideals, but they cannot completely ignore it (Broady, 1998).

The literary field is defined by two opposing poles, cultural capital and economic capital, and together they form a "reversed economy". The field's own symbolic power, the cultural capital, is highly valued while material aspects and commercial success is depreciated. All practices within the literary field can be positioned somewhere between the two poles (Broady, 1998; Lantz, 2006). In the publishing industry the two poles are tied together in a balancing act, because while cultural capital is needed to gain legitimacy in the field, economic capital is a basic necessity for the industry's survival. In addition to this the publisher, who exploits the author's work by making it a part of the economic reality, also gives it the highest distinction by consecrating through publishing, which gives it a cultural value (Bourdieu, 1993; Greco, 2005).

Bourdieu's theories regarding the cultural fields of production were introduced during the 1970's when the literary market, and the publishing industry, looked decidedly different from the more global and market oriented shape it has today. Squires (2009) discuss the appropriateness of using Bourdieu's theories on the contemporary market of literary fiction. She believes that it may distort the actual importance of different actors on the field, as the definition of cultural and commercial success has evolved since the theories were first introduced. But according to Brown (2006) the industry is still caught in the congenital cleft-stick. Publishing epitomizes today's entertainment economy; it is fast moving, hit driven with an intense competition. However, it is still characterized by a mentality where culture is opposed to commerce and where an anti-marketing ethos has the possibility to flourish.

3.4. Strategic communication, branding and the literary field

Bourdieu offers theoretical insights to the publishing industry as a field of cultural production and branding offers an understanding for how specific communication strategies can define an authorship. But to connect these two theories and to gain a new perspective on the empiric results I also use strategic communication as a unifying framework.

The corner stone in strategic communication is the use of *intentional* creation of meaning as well as understanding the factors that can facilitate or obstruct this process (Hallahan et al., 2007). Most ideas concerning strategic communication are connected firmly to organizations, but it can also be studied at an individual or societal level (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011).

Strategic communication is a multifaceted concept, and it should not be defined too narrowly; it needs to be a reconciliation of different subjects and tendencies, not an isolation of different strands of research (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 1998; Falkheimer & Heide, 2011). As a research area it is still a fledgling field, where new schools of thoughts are explored continuously. While publishing have not been specifically studied, other fields of cultural production have. Thelander and Rosenqvist (2011) have studied museums, and their use of branding and strategic communication. They see similarities between branding research and strategic communications research when a holistic view of branding is used, instead of the more traditionally product focused version. In the holistic view branding becomes more relational, long-term and less focused on isolated measures, for example separate campaigns (Thelander & Rosenqvist, 2011).

The integration of different theories and a holistic view of different communicative approaches is something I want to utilize in this thesis to connect the theoretical efforts to each other and the theoretical to the empirical. Strategic communication becomes the intermediary that offers a complexity and breadth that classical branding lacks, which makes it useful for trying to understand communication strategies in the publishing industry and how they relate to the economic and cultural logic.



Figure 3 Model of the integration of theories

The combination of these theoretical lenses also served as a basis for the development of the themes used in the interviews and the document analysis. These themes are *literary quality*, *structural dynamics*, *strategic communication*, *marketability of personas*, *niches in the market* and *contemporary publishing*. They were identified through initial research and a hermeneutic approach in which I looked at the subject matter as a whole and as separate parts in a reiterative process (cf. Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). My preconceptions of the subject together with initial research led to the themes, which were then used to concretize the theoretical concepts during the interviews as well as a foundation for the content analysis. My understanding of the themes has also continued to evolve during the research process, something that is reflected in the analysis.

The themes are connected to each other and to the different theoretical approaches. Literary quality and niches in the market are connected to cultural capital, and its importance in the industry. The marketability of personas is an expression of branding and economic capital. Strategic communication is the most explicitly communicative theme. It is used to discuss and analyze strategic choices made by the actors on the field, in regards to the communication of authors. Contemporary publishing can be seen as both perpetuating and revolutionizing the field; it does however show signs of changing how authors are perceived and communicated about. Therefore it is a rewarding area as changing patterns can throw existing ones in to stark relief. Structural dynamics is a key concept as it concerns the different relations between actors that define the field and can offer overarching explanations about the mechanisms that generates different communicative outcomes.

4. Methods

Research methods are made up of different tools of inquiry, and strategies for using them, and every researcher adapts them to his or her own specific purpose (Gee, 2011). Using qualitative methods is a good way to find a starting point in unexplored fields of research, and as qualitative researchers always strive for a better understanding of the subject matter at hand it is often useful to deploy more than one interpretive practice (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this thesis two methods were used to gather empiric data for the analysis: semi-structured interviews and a qualitative content analysis. Using two methods made it possible to delve deeper into the themes of interest, and explore a more complete picture of the way the industry communicates about authors.

In qualitative research the researcher is the main instrument of exploration. As a researcher, my view of the subject will invariably shape the way I study it, something that will affect the results. To compensate for this it is important to minimize potential threats to the validity and reliability of the research design. As a part of this, the method chapter aims at giving the reader a clear audit trail so that it is possible for others to follow the process that led to the reported results (cf. Robson, 2002).

4.1. Semi-structured interviews

In an interview the respondent is not merely an intermediary of already existing information, he becomes the creator of meaning. The interview becomes a conversation, albeit a guided one where the interviewer poses most of the questions, and the goal is to derive interpretations from the answers (Warren, 2002). “[A] discursive understanding treats attitudes and the self as inter-relationally constituted, as emerging out of discursive acts and performances in social interaction.” (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 228). Interviews can then become a sensitive method to examine representations of the self and social presentations.

Qualitative interviews are often chosen when trying to establish common patterns or themes between particular types of respondents (Warren, 2002). In this study the respondents are actors within or with a connection to the Swedish publishing industry. The aim is to identify strategies, characteristics or recurring approaches in the way they communicate authors and authorships.

4.1.1. Selection of interviewees

My ambition with my choice of interviewees was to cover as many aspects as possible of the Swedish publishing industry. This meant a wide variety of actors: authors, publishers, agents, literary critics as well as representatives from trade

organizations and marketing departments. The interview candidates were chosen with the aid of theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling means seeking out the respondents that seem likely to represent the analytic criteria that I am interested in (cf. Warren, 2002). A “snowball” process was also used; when the first respondents who fulfilled the criteria were chosen they were in turn asked if they knew of someone in the industry who would be beneficial for me to interview (Warren, 2002).

The publishing industry is a relatively small industry, and the division of labor is not always clear cut. Therefore I have interviewed publicists who are also authors, authors who are editors and so on. The interviews were all open, and so a short presentation of each interviewee will follow:

- Atterholm, Ia – Literary agent and owner of Atterholm Agency
- Carlsson, Christoffer – Author and postgraduate student in criminology
- Elmqvist, Marthina – Responsible for PR and marketing at Massolit Förlag
- Enqvist, Helén – Translator, publisher and owner of Sekwa förlag
- Eriksson, Leif – Author and editor at Lind & Co
- Hansson, Joakim – CEO and owner of Nordin Agency
- Kivi, Christina – Responsible for PR and information at Piratförlaget
- Kristensen, Sofia – Editor at Recito Förlag
- Kyhlén, Alf – Project leader and author intermediary for Författarcentrum Öst
- Johansson, Malin – Self-published fiction author and marketing student
- Jurjaks, Arvid – Freelancing journalist
- Mazetti, Katarina – Author
- Nergårdh, Cilla – Marketing director at Alfabeta Bokförlag
- Nordlinder, Åsa – Project leader at Författarcentrum Öst
- Thordén, Ulla-Lisa – Sales coach at Republic Consulting, speaker and author
- Winkler, Lasse – Editor-in-chief for Svensk Bokhandel

The interviewees were contacted by phone or by e-mail, and they all received a short presentation about the subject of the thesis, the approximate length of the interview and the structure of the interview beforehand. In total 18 persons were approached for interviews and 16 accepted which resulted in 15 interviews, of which one was a double interview.

4.1.2. Implementation

For the interviews an interview guide was devised (see Attachment 1). It was designed with Kvale and Brinkman’s (2009) three questions of *why*, *what* and *how* in mind. The *why* was the purpose of the study. The *what* included time to research and obtain pre-knowledge about the subject at hand, as well as the theoretical background I intended to use, which was then used to form anecdotes or short introductions to ease the interviewees into the different themes described in chapter 3.4. The *how* concerned the method and becoming familiar with different in-

interview techniques. After the first three interviews the interview guide was revised, using feedback from the interviewees and analyzing the results from the lines of questioning. The guide gave the interviews a structure, but it was the interviewees' answers that determined the order and the time spent on each theme.

It is important to remember that the interviewer and interviewee speak from different perspectives (Warren, 2002). In some questions I used well known examples, both authors and genres, something that may have influenced the interviewees' answers. In some instances I as a researcher were more familiar with certain terms, and the explanations given to the interviewees may have made them predisposed towards certain subjects or lines of thoughts while excluding others.

The interviews took place in a wide range of locales. The most common occurrence was that the interview was conducted in the interviewee's office or an adjoining conference room, but some interviews were in cafés or in other informal settings. What all these locations had in common was that they were chosen by the interviewee, something that Trost (2010) argues can make the interviewee feel more at ease. There were no major interruptions, and those interviews conducted in public locales were arranged so as not to be overheard, something that otherwise may inhibit the interviewee.

The interviews were conducted during a time period of seven weeks, from February 23 to April 3 in Lund, Malmö, Göteborg and Stockholm, to benefit from face-to-face communication. However, one interview was conducted by phone as it was not possible to arrange a personal meeting due to limitations in time and resources. Studies have shown that in-person interviews often generate slightly higher quality data but that phone interviews can reduce interviewer effect and give a greater uniformity to asked questions and the language used by the researcher (Shuy, 2002). After reviewing the transcript it is noticeable that both the questions and answers became shorter, and new lines of thought became less frequent, possibly due to lack of face-to-face interaction. But the difference is not marked, and I deemed the results valuable for the overall empiric result.

Another interview was conducted with two interviewees present as they felt that their knowledge within the organization supplemented each others, something that they thought would give me a more comprehensive view of my subject. The risk with interviewing more than one person at a time is the possible imbalance that might arise due to group behaviors and social control mechanisms (Trost, 2010). However, since it was a request on behalf of the interviewees, and they were colleagues who gave each other time to reflect on, and answer the questions in turn, I felt that these risks were minimized and that the result can be viewed in the same way as the results from the other interviews.

All the interviews were recorded for later transcription. The interviewees gave their consent to being recorded, and while Warren (2002) states that being recorded can affect the respondents' openness and frame of mind, none of the interviewees showed any discernible signs of this. Neither was there a noticeable effect of people opening up after the recorder was turned off, though I took note of some lines of reasoning after the interviews were officially over.

In addition to the recordings I kept memorandums of the interviews concerning insights and trends. Many of these later became the foundation of the analysis as they gave me a starting point to work from.

4.1.3. Processing the results

All of the interviews were transcribed, which gave me access to more easily analyzed sources of data but which in turn also opened up for certain methodological issues. The entire process of transcribing is an exercise in interpretation (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). While verbatim transcriptions can be necessary for linguistic purposes it is not an unproblematic view of the transcription process for other types of purposes (Poland, 2002; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). My goal was to identify communicative practices in regards to authors in the interviews, which necessitated a facilitation of meaning, something that can make verbatim transcripts confusing as they carefully note pauses, confused sentences, and the use of word fillers. So when transcribing I asked myself the question Kvale (1995) poses, “[w]hat is a valid translation from oral to written language?” (p. 27). In this case it means that I have purposefully left out filler words and also imposed a sentence structure with full stops and capital letters in the beginning of sentences where they came naturally during the transcribing process.

The transcribed notes were analyzed in two stages; first a general view of the material where interesting and fruitful areas were noted. In the second stage the notes were coded after the themes in the interview guide which made it possible to see broader tendencies as well as salient and interesting lines of reasoning.

Some of the interviewees asked for the transcription to review. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009) if the transcription is to be sent back to the interviewee a more fluent writing style should be considered, as to not offend the respondent, and to make the text more readable.

If there were any matters that needed to be expounded on or clarified I emailed the interviewee for more information, something that the interviewees had given me the permission to do during the interviews.

4.2. Qualitative content analysis

When researching and describing phenomena where there is a dearth of existing theories and research literature the use of conventional content analysis is appropriate (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Qualitative content analysis is a flexible method and it gives researchers an opportunity to immerse themselves in the data, avoid preconceived categories and create new ones from the insights gained (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). “Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text.” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278).

The role of the qualitative content analysis in this thesis is to supplement the data from the interviews. The analysis also works as a controlling agent since documents can either strengthen the result found in interviews, or contradict them.

If the results from the two different methods are contradicting, the documents can be used to study those contradictions closer (Yin, 2006).

The documents that have been studied in this thesis are all the issues of *Svensk Bokhandel* in 2011, a trade magazine that is an important source of information within the Swedish publishing industry. A year's publications consist of 21 issues as well as spring, summer and autumn catalogues that cover forthcoming titles from most of Sweden's publishers. *Svensk Bokhandel* contains news, debate contributions, short features, in-depth articles, investigative journalism and interviews with authors as well as industry actors. The reason it was chosen was because of its unique position as a voice for the industry; almost every publishing house in Sweden is a subscriber and it covers a vast array of industry matters.

A qualitative content analysis goes beyond the more mechanic counting of words used in quantitative research and classifies large amount of texts into an efficient number of categories. It is dependent on subjective interpretation, although the classification is a systematic process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). From these categories a small set of generalizations is elaborated that cover consistencies found in the data. These are then linked to a formalized body of knowledge (Robson, 2002).

The documents have been studied in relation to the six constructed themes which served as a supporting structure for the interview guide. The content analysis was also used to confirm or reject certain tendencies that were discovered throughout the interviews. When the content of the content analysis is referred to in chapter 5 it will be both as broad, noticeable trends, and specific phenomenon exemplified with quotes or references directly attributed to the individual journalist.

The documents in themselves have the advantage of being stable, as they can be studied any time, as well as being unobtrusive, since they are not created in relation to the case study. They are also precise and can cover a lot of information (Robson, 2002; Yin, 2006). A disadvantage is that the researcher can be unaware of his or her own bias, something that can skew the selection of documents, and therefore the results. It is important to note that documents are not a "slice of reality" but are produced with a goal in mind, a goal which does not correspond with the goal of the research (Yin, 2006).

5. Results – Strategies for communicating authors

In this chapter the data gathered from the methods are compared and contrasted with each other and highlighted with theoretical insights in an effort to explore the strategies used by different actors in the industry to communicate authors and the mechanisms that govern those strategies.

To structure the qualitative data the result chapter is based on the complexes and themes used in the interviews and the content analysis, although some of the categories have been combined to create a more coherent reading experience. I have tried to use the interviewees' own words as much as possible to illustrate the opinions expressed in the interviews. The main focus lies on the result from the interviews as they provided me with a rich source of data. However, the results from the content analysis provide a stable basis of comparison and resulted in opportunities for a conflicting and enriching analysis.

5.1. The elusive concept of literary quality

Communicating an author as a professional person includes talking about their production, their authorship. This is in turn often defined by literary quality. So while this aspect can feel as something more belonging to the cultural pages than a discussion regarding communication strategies, it is an intangible, and controversial, aspect that affects the more tangible ways a book is perceived. But the concept of quality is in itself far from clear cut. “[A]s long as you don’t think about it, there is a clear understanding, but when you start to poke around you realize that... Quality, the concept just falls apart, because what is it?” (Carlsson, lines 103-104¹).

To define qualitative literature is considered hard, or impossibly subjective. “At some point people have agreed about what constitutes literary quality. So some kind of objective literary quality in the sense that it is qualitative in itself, existing in a universe of its own, I have a hard time picturing that.” (Jurjaks, lines 33-35²). While a claim of subjectivity might be made to avoid defining the concept and alienating others, there are few, if any, actors in the literary field who are free from ideas concerning the quality of literature.

¹ ”[S]å länge man inte tänker på dem, då har man bilden klar för sig, men så fort man börjar peta i det så inser man att... Kvalitet, begreppet bara faller isär, för vad är det?”

² ”Någonstans har man ju också kommit överens om vad som är litterär kvalitet. Så någon slags objektiv litterär kvalitet i den mening att den är kvalitativ av sig självt, bara som existerande i ett eget universum, det har jag svårt att se.”

During the interviews different arenas for judging quality were brought up as a possible way of defining literary quality. Literary quality “can be seen as a handi-craft. But then I believe it has to be genre specific in a way. You can categorize it in different ways, for example very experimental literature.” (Hansson, lines 34-36³). The only arena in which the interviewees considered it possible to be objective was the one that focused on language; spelling, grammar and style. Breaches of language were only acceptable if it was a conscious decision, “innovation, pushing the boundaries in different ways, topically or stylistically, that is some kind of objectivity regarding literary quality.” (Kivi, lines 29-30⁴). “There is quality, so far that it is correctly formulated, there are grammatical rules, it follows the rules or diverges deliberately.” (Enqvist, lines 149-150⁵). “You can see it objectively as in a book being badly proofread or unknowingly badly spelled.” (Jurjaks, lines 32-33⁶).

Another way for the interviewees to judge if the literary quality was high was to juxtaposition it against something perceived as low quality. The definition of good became the absence of bad.

[Certain authors] change genre, and then it is something really good. And high-class, an acknowledgement of literary quality, that someone is always being innovative within the framework of their own authorship. Whereas there are authors who you expect to write the same thing all the time. [...] And then you're talking about everyday literature, everyday reading. (Kivi, lines 53-57⁷).

As Carlsson stated, understanding literary quality is only easy when certain assumptions remain undefined. Bourdieu's lines of reasoning regarding the reversed economy within the literary field makes the assumption that quality is the opposite of commercial success, a viewpoint still often expressed in today's publishing world (Holbrook, 2006). But research conducted by Feldman (2003) and Holbrook (2006) indicates that a strong relationship between quality and sales does not exist. In fact, Feldman (2003) states that “[...] a surprisingly strong intersection of sales, quality and longevity ... counters the theory that bestsellers inevitably mean lowest common denominator.” (p. 41). Feldman reached her results by analyzing her data on a book-by-book basis, using the concepts Excellency (which was based on prizes and achievements won by the books) and Popularity (appearance on bestseller lists). She found a negative correlation between excellency and popularity, though not as strong as the industry often assumes. However, Holbrook (2006) found Feldman's sample of selected books unsatisfactory (only

³ ”Man kan se det som ett hantverk. Men sedan tycker jag ändå att man får genrebestämma den då på något sätt. Men att man kan dela upp den på olika sätt, till exempel väldigt experimentell litteratur.”

⁴ ”nyskapande, att man flyttar framgränserna på olika sätt, ämnesmässigt eller formmässigt, det är väl någon form av objektivitet kring litterär kvalitet.”

⁵ ”Det finns ändå kvalitet, såtillvida att det är rätt formulerat, det finns grammatiska regler, det följer reglerna eller det bryter mot dem avsiktligt.”

⁶ ”Man kan ju se det objektivt som i att en bok är dåligt korrläst eller att den är omedvetet felaktigt stavad.”

⁷ ”[Författare] byter genre och då är det något som är väldigt bra. Och fint, och ett kvitto på litterär kvalitet, att någon hela tiden bryter ny mark inom ramen för sitt författarskap. Medan det finns författare som man förväntar sig ska skriva samma sak hela tiden. [...] Och då kanske man pratar om brukslitteratur, eller bruksläsning.”

350 as a basis) and instead used Feldman's data for a statistical analysis with 360,600 books during the same time period. The result showed a variance of 0,0034 between literary Excellence and Popularity, which led him to conclude that "[l]iterary merit is just plain irrelevant to book sales." (Holbrook, 2006, p. 110). But even though that may be the case, there is still ingrained habit left, and the complete removal of personal feelings regarding high-brow and low-brow when categorizing authors is probably not feasible. And this categorization will impact on how authors are perceived.

5.1.1. Defining high and low quality

While Feldman and Holbrook's research did not indicate a correlation between popular and excellent literature the interviews show that the dichotomy, and the ingrained way of thinking about it, remains. The interviewees' statements partly mirror Bourdieu's reasoning regarding literary quality. This does however not mean that they categorize in an unreflecting way.

In every society there are norms in some way for how something should look, for how something should be. But usually it is from a rather elitist viewpoint. Someone who has power over lines of thought and opinions, who can express it, what quality is. (Atterholm, lines 24-26⁸).

Bourdieu's lines of reasoning regarding the inverse economy of the field is challenged, but only to a point. Elmqvist (lines 13-20) does not agree with the idea that a book selling well automatically reflects a lower literary quality but that it can mean a lesser degree of complexity in a work, something that is echoed by Enqvist: "there might be a bigger chance for [literature] to be successful if it is more easily accessible. That is to say, literature that is hard to understand is by nature more difficult to access." (lines 16-18⁹).

According to Eriksson (lines 366-367) popular literature is grounded in a sense of safety and Winkler expounds on this aspect:

The story is rather uncomplicated in itself and it still gains momentum and affects so many people. Then it is not the language for example, but something else in the story that makes people buy it. It could be the need for safety, a need for structure, for escapism. (Winkler, 38-41¹⁰).

⁸ "I varje samhälle finns det normer på något sätt för hur något ska se ut, för hur något ska vara. Men ofta är det utifrån en ganska elitistisk nivå. Någon som har makt över ett tänkande och tyckande som kan uttrycka detta, vad som är kvalitet."

⁹ "det kanske är större chans att det blir populärt om det är mer lättillgängligt. Alltså mera svårbegriplig litteratur kanske av naturen liksom blir mera svårtillgänglig."

¹⁰ "Berättelsen är ganska enkel i sig och ändå tar den fart och berör så många människor. Då är det inte språket till exempel, utan då är det något annat i berättelsen som får människor att vilja köpa. Det kan vara behovet av trygghet, behovet av ordning, av eskapism."

According to Hesmondalgh (2007) distinctive symbolic creativity is valued higher in the cultural industries than more conventional, safe texts. This could explain why popular literature often is associated with safety and repetition, and thus, lower quality.

This division between popular and literary literature, and the accompanying assertions regarding high and low quality, was evident in *Svensk Bokhandel* as well, but to a much lesser degree. Instead literary quality took a backseat to other, more easily defined markers when authorships were discussed. When literary quality was touched upon it was in relation to reviews and international acknowledgment. I believe the explanation to be threefold; the magazine is a trade magazine, it is primarily geared towards news, and while literary quality can be newsworthy it is mostly presented in relation to prizes won, reviews and the selling of rights, facts that cannot be disputed. It is also an area that demands reflection, which in turn demands space, not something that can be given for every mention of an author in a magazine focused on news. Finally it is that the Swedish publishing industry is small, and it is not considered appropriate to step on the toes of a publishing house by declaring that their author's published work is subpar.

Literary quality can also be said to be a construct within the literary field. It is a constantly contended issue because it is an area where symbolic power can be gained. And symbolic power is very important for both publishers and authors as they are viewed as cultural mediators and arbitrators of quality and taste (Thompson, 2010). Evaluating literature then becomes a social phenomenon; those performing the evaluation, for example literary critics, also want to define themselves in regards to the rest of the field (Jurjaks, lines 257-258; Eriksson, lines 94-96). Their opinions, filtered through different media channels, become a part of the author construction. The earlier stronger status of literary critics is however giving way to a different way of communicating the author, also evident in *Svensk Bokhandel* (cf. Greco, 2005; Nyblom, 2008). "The space for literary critique has decreased while more and more is being written about books and authors in the shape of interviews and feature articles." (Svensson, 2011b, June 10, p. 9, translation by M.Ö.).

According to Nyblom (2008) literary celebrity and the opinions about literary quality are dependent on the image of the author, rather than the literary production. But the data from the interviews show that a certain literary quality is necessary. "[T]he text is the supporting structure. If people haven't had a positive experience it'll end quickly. It might not be the origin of the hype, it might reach people on different merits, but it needs to be there." (Hansson, lines 305-307¹¹). This is echoed in *Svensk Bokhandel* where the importance of finding a first circle of readers is discussed, but how that first circle will only continue to grow if the literary quality is good enough.

Literary quality is a concept open for interpretation. Its strength seems to lie in its ability to remain undefined as this gives it a role as an alibi for commercial

¹¹ "[D]å är ändå texten bärande. Har folk inte haft en positiv upplevelse tar det slut väldigt snabbt. Och det kanske inte är det som får igång hajpen i början, det kanske når ut på andra meriter men den måste ändå finnas där."

success (“It’s good, that’s why it sells”), or an explanation for why commercial success has failed to appear (“It doesn’t sell because people can’t recognize quality”). No matter how it is presented, as important or unimportant, it becomes something that everyone has to have an opinion about to become a part of the field, and thus, a key aspect of how the author is communicated. Literary quality also serves a purpose in its ability like few other areas to illuminate the dichotomy between culture and commerce that exists in the publishing industry, no matter if the words used are high/low, popularity/excellence or complex/safe.

5.2. The strategic positioning of authors – means and methods

An authorship can be communicated in many different ways, and the initiators of that communication are not necessarily the authors themselves. Authors are positioned with the use of different strategies, both deliberate and unintentional and their position is in turn relevant to how they are perceived, both within the industry and by the public. But who has the power to position authors; is it something they can do themselves, or is it something that is done on their behalf?

5.2.1. Media impact

According to Lenemark (2009) the contemporary media makes it impossible for authors to control how they are represented and perceived. Falkheimer and Heide (2007) write that media plays a very important part in how certain events and organizations are perceived. There is value in finding occurrences that are in line with the prevailing media logic. Media logic can be described as “reaching a critical stage, simplifying, polarizing, intensifying, making something concrete, personifying and stereotyping” (Falkheimer & Heide, 2007, p. 13, translation by M. Ö.). It does not matter what media channel is used, but that an author can fit the media logic and thus be given, or create, attention.

“It is through the media we now meet and navigate the world, whether we want to or not.” (Lenemark, 2009, p. 9, translation by M. Ö.). Thordén’s view is similar to Lenemark as she believes that “we are completely dependent on how media interprets the author.” (line 14¹²). Other interviewees instead see media as setting the tone, but not directing the concert.

Very self-aware authors probably choose their own role, what persona they want to present. They probably do it through their texts, but also in their public appearances, what they answer and where they appear, and what questions they answer and so on. But of course, it can be something that the publisher chooses, but it could also be a third alternative, that it is something that the media chooses for them. I believe

¹² ”vi är fullständigt i händerna på medias tolkning av författaren.”

that the third alternative is the most common. (Elmqvist, lines 115-120¹³).

“We are living through a period of rapid and continuous change in society and culture, the media play a significant role in reflecting and stimulating more general processes of change, and the practices of the media are correspondingly in constant flux.” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 61). Authors have to relate to the media to penetrate the flow of information and become visible, and that visibility provides their image with significance (Nyblom, 2008; Lenemark, 2009). “[I]s there anyone who hasn’t been visible at all and still succeeded? Is there anyone nowadays? I believe there’s less and less of that, there has to be some kind of attention.” (Hansson, lines 320-322¹⁴). If media attention is the foremost way of gaining visibility for authors then naturally it becomes very important when formulating communication strategies.

Certain literary news items are easier to attract attention to, incredible sales for example. “[T]hat type of journey or type of sensation fits well into how media works dramaturgically. But also because it is an easy item of news to work with, you don’t have to read the book to tell the story of a new superstar.” (Jurjaks, lines 238-240¹⁵). “Everybody loves writing about success. That is probably what both the author and publisher try to communicate all the time. Success, in different ways.” (Nergårdh, lines 262-264¹⁶). Some authors may have an easier time than others in becoming a part of the dramaturgy, authors “[w]ho are very rewarding to pay attention to, but who doesn’t reach out with their books but more with their persona.” (Kivi, lines 23-24¹⁷).

According to Lenemark (2009) the author derives not only legitimacy through his or her work, but by being available and appealing in the media. Book sales are driven by radio and television appearances. “[E]ffective self-representation is at least as important as the book itself.” (Delany, 2002, p. 184). “According to my publisher three minutes on a TV-couch is worth twenty good reviews.” (Mazetti, lines 25-26¹⁸). Being visible is not a choice, it has become a necessity. “The areas of communication are too small, because there are so many books published today and there is so much media attention, such a fast pace. So you have to become vis-

¹³ ”Väldigt medvetna författare väljer nog vilken roll de själva, vilken persona, de vill presentera. Det gör de ju säkert både genom sina texter, men också i sina framträdanden, vad de svarar och var de figurerar någonstans, och vilka frågor de svarar på och så vidare. Men så klart så kan det ju bli någonting som förlaget väljer, men det kan också vara ett tredje alternativ, att det blir någonting som media väljer åt dem. Jag tror att, och det tredje alternativet tror jag är det vanligaste.”

¹⁴ ”[F]inns det någon som inte har syns överhuvudtaget och ändå lyckats? Gör det det nu för tiden? Jag tror att det blir mindre och mindre av det, det måste finnas något omtal på något sätt.”

¹⁵ ”[D]en typen av resor eller typ av sensation passar väldigt bra i hur media fungerar rent dramaturgiskt. Men också för att det är en lättjobbade nyhet, du behöver inte läsa boken för att du ska kunna berätta om att ’Här är en ny stor jättestjärna’.”

¹⁶ ”Alla älskar att skriva om framgång. Det är väl mycket det både författaren och förlaget hela tiden försöker kommunicera. Framgången, på olika sätt.”

¹⁷ ”[s]om kanske är väldigt tacksamma personer att uppmärksamma, men som inte når ut med sina böcker utan mer personen.”

¹⁸ ”Sen brukar min förläggare säga att tre minuter i tv-soffan är värt tjugo bra recensioner.”

ible in some way and if you don't like it that is a huge disadvantage.” (Winkler, lines 297-299¹⁹).

5.2.2. *Publisher impact*

When positioning authors the publisher is very important. This is usually where the author and his work first become evaluated and defined with the market in mind. Basic decisions such as where to send advance reading copies of a book or where to market an author can influence how he or she is perceived (Carlsson, 214-218). During the interviews the publishers' way of defining authors was discussed. The foremost way of definition seemed to lie in the use of short elements of clarification.

[Y]ou begin with defining the work. Decide genre, finding value laden words and a short, maybe two lines, this... A pitch, in a way. But also the author, and there you're geared towards 'This is a young promising author' and in that you think of a ladder to an acknowledgement or so... Or if the author has another career, then that becomes a type of author role you communicate. And you have to do that to begin communicating in some way, boil it down to something easily communicated. Give it a hook. (Kivi, lines 72-78²⁰).

“Sometimes you notice that you emphasize certain authors' personal qualities, something that kind of makes them into characters. And maybe that is because they become clearer, they simply become a role.” (Eriksson, lines 305-307²¹). “Sometimes we have these discussions in our sales meetings, what value infused words we'll try to add to texts and letters and so on. And sometimes you notice that they continue to be a part of [the context] but sometimes entirely new ones are created as well.” (Hansson, lines 272-274²²). “Already when we plan the publication we try to find an angle, for the author as well. What is it that makes the author interesting, how can we present it in a way that makes the book and the author exciting.” (Kristensen, lines 37-40²³). “No one in media or retail wants long accounts of content. They want easy markers so they know what attitude to take in

¹⁹ ”Kommunikationsytorna blir för små då, därför det ges ut så mycket böcker i dag och det är så mycket media-uppmärksamhet, det är sådant tempo i dag. Så att det krävs att du blir synlig på något sätt och gillar du inte det så har du ett väldigt stort handikapp.”

²⁰ ”[S]å börjar man med att ringa in verket. Genrebestämman, hitta några värdeord och en kortfattad, på två rader, det här... En pitch liksom. Men också författaren, och där är man ju inne i det här, 'Det här är en ung lovande författare' och i det så tänker man en steg till erkända eller så... Eller författaren som har en annan karriär, det blir också en typ av författarroll som man kommunicerar. Och det måste man göra för att börja kommunicera på något sätt, att koka ner det till något väldigt lättkommunicerbart. Kroka upp det.”

²¹ ”Ibland märker man också att man lyfter fram personliga egenskaper hos vissa författare som gör att de nästan blir lite figurer. Och det kanske är för att de ska bli tydliga, de blir som en roll helt enkelt.”

²² ”Ibland har vi de här diskussionerna på marknadsmötena, vilka värdebärande ord ska vi försöka lägga i säljtexter och brev och så vidare. Och ibland så märker man att de följer med, men ibland så märker man att det skapas helt nya också.”

²³ ”Att man redan när man planerar en utgivning försöker hitta en vinkel, även på författaren. Vad är det som gör författaren intressant, hur kan vi presentera den på ett sätt som gör boken och författaren spännande.”

regards to this author and the book.” (Kivi, lines 151-152²⁴). “A lot of it is about those small markers that immediately define what kind of authorship it is.” (Jurjaks, line 268-269²⁵). “And then you will use emotionally charged words because you need to define who this author is” (Winkler, lines 225-226²⁶). The author is communicated in a way that makes him a part of a context. This is noticeable in the content analysis as well. Authors are mentioned in connection to sales statistics, specific PR or marketing measures, advances on manuscripts, change of publisher and so on. All of these help the reader to quickly put the author in a context but they offer no space for reflection or individual interpretation of an authorship.

“With the proliferation of media and the cacophony of messages they generate, it has become increasingly important for social actors and organizations to be deliberate and thoughtful in their communication to be heard.” (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 27). While short descriptions may not be conducive to an open interpretation of an authorship they are the result of a long process of deliberation from the publisher’s side. If the markers are the right ones, that grab the attention of both media and readers, they could lead to the author being heard through the cacophony.

Short easy markers are however not only positive and attention grabbing. “It can become a problem, of course, if you are surrounded by too many epithets all the time. They can become self-fulfilling prophecies.” (Atterholm, lines 192-193²⁷). Self-fulfilling prophecies by themselves do not need to be bad, but the risk is that when you are defined in clear yet simple terms the complexity of a personality disappears.

The reason that these markers still are used is because they are effective and useful. In a very short space of time, and line space, it is possible to define an author with the words chosen deliberately by the publisher. When the studied articles in *Svensk Bokhandel* were longer, the analysis of authors and their work became deeper and more complex. In the competition for attention, easy ways of positioning an author are preferred, but that does not mean that the complexity of the individual is forgotten. It is also important to keep in mind the way these markers have of evolving as soon as they are out of the publisher’s control; the markers can always be distorted or completely reinvented, depending on how media and the public perceive the author and his works.

²⁴ ”Ingen i media och ingen återförsäljare vill ha långa referat av innehåll. Utan de vill ha enkla markörer så att de vet hur de ska förhålla sig till den här författaren och till boken.”

²⁵ ”Det handlar ganska mycket om sådana små markörer som direkt definierar vad det rör sig om för typ av författarskap.”

²⁶ ”Och då blir det att du tar till värdeladdade ord för att på något sätt definiera vem den här författaren är.”

²⁷ ”Sedan kan det bli ett problem naturligtvis, om man får för många sådana epitet runt omkring sig hela tiden. Det kan bli självuppfyllande profetior.”

5.2.3. *Author impact*

Other elements that can position an authorship are what type of book the author has written, which publishing house the author belongs to and how and where the author is publicized (Carlsson, lines 195-204). But how authors define themselves can also impact decisions regarding positioning. There are authors who are very aware of what they want, and how to get it, and they use their writing to achieve their goals (Eriksson, lines 160-162). "A commercial author is very clear on what contexts he or she should be a part of." (Hansson, lines 221-222²⁸). "Certain authors wish to be a certain type of author and want help, or want you to work with the communication on those premises." (Kivi, lines 117-119²⁹). "[B]ut it is a kind of trend right now [...]. To market your authorship, and to really categorize it yourself." (Nergårdh, lines 77-78³⁰). "If you have the idea that you are like a brand [...] then there may be some situations you shouldn't be a part of, because it isn't good, it makes it possible to question your credibility." (Kyhlén & Nordlinger, lines 409-411³¹). The author becomes his own symbolic manager.

While far from all authors view themselves as brands, the underlying thought is one of deliberation and persistence; positioning is possible if there is a strategy behind it. "And yes, you can define yourself [as an author] by approaching the public and polish the image, so you can create an image of yourself in today's media." (Winkler, lines 212-214³²). "I believe that you can decide how you want to be perceived to a certain extent. Then [the image] might take on a life of its own after a while." (Kivi, lines 135-136³³).

Another important factor for the positioning of authors is sales, nationally and internationally. Mazetti (lines 94-95) has felt that her position as an author has changed because of her success in France. Being published internationally can also be used to position an authorship for media attention, as it becomes a part of the dramaturgy surrounding an author. Saying how many countries an author's works have been sold to is "a way of talking about the author in a larger perspective." (Kivi, line 163³⁴). "You get status, really high status in Sweden, if you sell well abroad. [...] And this 'Sold to 35 countries', it can be tiny countries, but it is still an incredible mark of status." (Nergårdh, lines 380-383³⁵).

While the interviews indicate that there are certain ways for authors to position themselves, mainly through deliberate actions, there is still the media aspect

²⁸ "En kommersiell författare är väldigt tydlig med vilka sammanhang han eller hon ska vara med i."

²⁹ "Vissa författare har en önskan om att vara en viss typ av författare och vill ha hjälp, eller vill att man jobbar med kommunikationen utifrån de premisserna."

³⁰ "[M]en det är också en slags trend just nu [...] Att marknadsföra sitt författarskap, och verkligen själv kategorisera."

³¹ "Eller att man har en uppfattning om att man är som ett varumärke [...] då är det kanske vissa sammanhang där man inte bör medverka, för det är inte bra – det gör att ens trovärdighet kan ifrågasättas."

³² "Och ja, du kan själv definiera dig genom att närma dig offentligheten och putsa på en bild, så det går att skapa en bild av dig själv i dagens media"

³³ "Det tror jag, att man kan bestämma hur man vill bli uppfattad till viss del. Sen kanske den börjar leva ett eget liv efter ett tag."

³⁴ "ett sätt att berätta om författarskapen i ett större perspektiv."

³⁵ "Att man får status, jättehög status, i Sverige, om man säljer bra utomlands. [...] Och det här "Sålt till 35 länder" det kan vara pytteländer, men det är ändå en otrolig statusmarkör."

to consider. Although both publishers and authors have the possibility to define authorships through different measures they still have to relate to the media. Because even though they may have strategies for communication, they still have to be conveyed to the end consumer. This means that the space for maneuvering an authorship is defined by a logic that those in the industry can only adapt to, rather than dictate. “I believe we have a lot less space than we hope we have, or what people believe we have.” (Carlsson, lines 208-209³⁶). Thompson (2001) has called the media a creative and uncontrollable arena, so while some authors may have the possibility to build myths around their own person, the public image can be hard to control.

5.3. Using roles to communicate authorships

Another strategy to communicate authors is to use different roles to describe them. While roles could be seen as belonging to the same category as the positional markers, they usually bring more connotations with them and seemingly, a deeper understanding of the author. During the interviews I used three different roles to clarify different discourses surrounding authors; *the rising star*, *the midlist author* and *the bestseller*.

The concept of author roles has been used before by Steiner (2009); she views roles as something that authors, deliberately or unknowingly, choose or are assigned. The roles in themselves are a way of categorizing authors that allows a clearer overview over the Swedish book market. The roles I have used are only peripherally connected to Steiner’s roles and have grounding in industry discourse rather than academic research. I view them as flexible constructs, evolving and changing over time, and although they can be hard to pinpoint in reality they are useful in theoretical lines of reasoning and for trying to distinguish mechanisms behind different communication strategies.

Nergårdh sees roles as “something you get in most cases, something you are allotted.” (line 85³⁷). “But then, with the role, it is created by the surrounding world, the expectations and the hype and mass media and... [...] So there is probably more than just the authorship that matters.” (Kyhén & Nordlinder, lines 90-95³⁸). “[Y]ou use different author roles in the communication. And it starts with the publisher, to be communicated internally, and then it spreads.” (Kivi, lines 79-81³⁹).

According to Eriksson authors can choose their own roles, but it demands more of them. The case may not be as much as choosing what role you want, but what role you don’t want. That you “go your own way and clearly express and define what you want and what you are trying to achieve. It has a price, often a so-

³⁶ ”Jag tror att vi har mycket mindre utrymme än vad vi själva hoppas att vi har eller vad folk tror att vi har”

³⁷ ”de flesta fall är det något man får, som man blir tilldelad.”

³⁸ ”Men sedan med rollen, den skapas ju mycket av omgivningen, förväntningar och upphåsnings och massmedia och... [...] Så det är väl kanske annat än bara själva författarskapet som spelar in.”

³⁹ ”[M]an använder sig av olika författarroller i kommunikationen. Och det börjar redan hos förläggaren, för att sedan kommuniceras internt, som sedan går vidare.”

cial price. An economic price. It's not always what the publishing house's marketing department wishes for." (Eriksson, lines 246-248⁴⁰). Kyhlén and Nordlinder doubt the author's prospect of choosing a role, because "if it would be as easy as choosing it, then you could say that it is incredibly strange that some people have made certain choices." (lines 150-152⁴¹). Enqvist (lines 281-290) only believes that an author can choose a role if they're already famous, otherwise it is a choice made by the publishers when they decide how to promote their authors. Like Hallahan et al. (2007) the idea central for Enqvist is influence. To communicate deliberately the author has to have the power to alter the behavior of others.

5.3.1. *The rising star, the midlist author and the bestseller*

The three roles discussed were chosen because they represent three very different types of authorships. The rising star could be likened to the Swedish word *debutant*, somebody making their literary debut, but also carries with it additional values. Carlsson (line 135) describes the key aspect of a rising star as "potential". Atterholm (line 72) sees it as an untried author. It is also seen as an authorship in which the "basic material is good enough that with the right marketing efforts it could reach a bestseller list." (Hansson, lines 96-97⁴²). "I think of someone who has published their first book, and written a few books. Where you can see a development [...] that this seems exciting." (Kivi, lines 87-89⁴³). "Somebody who shows that they've got talent, that they're very good, but you don't know if they can go the distance." (Johansson, lines 95-96⁴⁴).

According to Kristensen (lines 71-72) the rising star can already be acknowledged, by literary critics or prize committees. That can in turn put pressure on the rising star to continue producing books. "Foremost there are high expectations of this author. Which can be painful, especially when all you want to do is write stories." (Carlsson, lines 139-141⁴⁵). "There are many authors [...] who are expected to be bestsellers, but don't sell enough copies fast enough" (Mazetti, lines 282-283⁴⁶). "And I believe that is almost every author's nightmare. As fun as it is to have an immediate success, as awful it is to have that pressure on you when you are going to write book number two or number three." (Atterholm, lines 87-

⁴⁰ "går din egen väg och tydligt uttrycker och markerar vad du vill och försöker uppnå. Det har ett pris, ofta ett socialt pris. Ett ekonomiskt pris. Det är inte alltid det som förlagens marknadsföringsavdelning önskar."

⁴¹ "Ja, skulle det vara så enkelt att man kunde välja det, då är det ju helt oerhört konstigt att vissa har gjort vissa val, skulle man kunna säga."

⁴² "[G]rundmaterialet är så pass bra och att med rätt marknadsföringspaket så kommer det kunna nå till en bästsäljarlista."

⁴³ "jag tänker på någon som har debuterat och har skrivit några böcker. Där man kan se en utveckling [...] att det här verkar spännande."

⁴⁴ "Någon som visat att de har talang, att de är väldigt duktiga, men man vet inte om de håller hela vägen."

⁴⁵ "Och att det finns väldiga förväntningar på den här författaren framförallt. Vilket då smärtar, framförallt när man bara gillar att skriva berättelser."

⁴⁶ "Det är många författare [...] som förväntas att vara storsäljare men aldrig blir det därför att de inte säljer mycket nog fort nog."

89⁴⁷). The rising star has a window of opportunity, and actions and expectations on behalf of publisher can either reduce or extend it. The potential is still developing, and the authorship is viewed as a dynamic, fluid role something that is mirrored in the surrounding discourse.

A midlist author is associated with very different types of values; Steiner (2009) uses the phrase “Erkänd men inte mer” (“Acknowledged, but no more”) to describe a midlist author. She refrains from providing specific examples as she feels that the role is not a positive one. The midlist author is viewed in a more positive light in the American literature, for example in Greco’s (2005) discussion regarding the role, but the result from the interviews confirmed Steiner’s outlook. “[The description] feels almost negative. Someone who has stagnated, an author that writes book, after book, after book, and used to be this rising star but who won’t get that additional acknowledgment.” (Kivi, line 94-96⁴⁸). “It’s a tough situation today if you’re stuck in that [midlist] mire.” (Atterholm, line 81⁴⁹). “From an author perspective it might be a hard position to be in, because you are somebody, but you aren’t the biggest. And then maybe you’ll have to create a distinctive image for yourself in a different way” (Nergårdh, lines 137-140⁵⁰). Being able to distinguish yourself in different ways as a midlist author is something that Kyhlén and Nordlinder also talks about; “those that are in middle, there it is all the more important to market yourself and have that social competence and so on.” (lines 468-470⁵¹). “I don’t believe that anyone would see it as a straightforward compliment to say that you’re a midlist or midselling author. Then you’d rather talk about the author and the work in different words.” (Nergårdh, lines 276-278⁵²). Midlist authors are not clearly defined, not for their readers and not for themselves (Eriksson, lines 443-444). “I believe that is a key aspect, that you as a reader don’t have a direct relation to the author. So really it’s not about how much they sell or not, but ‘What do I know about this author? Not a lot.’” (Elmqvist, 180-182⁵³).

One of the reasons that readers may not be familiar with midlist authors is their lack of acknowledgment in the media. As discussed earlier media attention is an important factor when it comes to the positioning of authors. But “[midlist authors] are never close to the spotlight. Getting half a column in the local newspa-

⁴⁷ ”Och det tror jag är nästan alla författaress skräck att det ska hända. Lika kul det är att få ett genombrott precis med detsamma, lika förfärligt är det ha den här pressen på sig sedan när man ska skriva bok nummer två eller bok nummer tre.”

⁴⁸ ”Den känns nästan lite negativ. Någon som har på något sätt stagnerat, en författare som skriver bok efter bok efter bok och var den här rising star men sen som inte riktigt kommer att få det där ytterligare erkännandet.”

⁴⁹ ”Har man hamnat i det träsket är det ju tyvärr jättetufft i dag.”

⁵⁰ ”Men ur författarperspektiv så kanske det är så att det är en svår position att ha, för man är någon men man är inte den största. Och då kanske det handlar om att försöka profilera sig på andra sätt.”

⁵¹ ”sen så de här som ligger i det här mellanskiktet, där är det nog desto viktigare att man marknadsför sig och att man har den hör sociala kompetensen och så vidare.”

⁵² ”Jag tror inte att någon skulle uppfatta det som en enkel komplimang att säga att man är en midlist eller midsäljande författare. Då pratar man nog hellre om författaren och verket med andra ord.”

⁵³ ”Det tror jag är en nyckelgrej, att du som läsare har ingen direkt relation till författaren. Så egentligen kanske det inte handlar så mycket om de säljer mycket eller inte, utan ’Vad vet jag om denna författaren? Inte jättemycket.’”

per is a good thing.” (Eriksson, lines 340-342⁵⁴). “[B]ecause authors who aren’t visible, they aren’t talked about either, and then it’s hard to picture them. Then you might be able to picture their work, but not them as authors.” (Kristensen, lines 92-93⁵⁵). “So there can be people, authors, who sell very well in their field, but nobody has heard of them because they aren’t media personalities, they haven’t courted that role as a way to celebrity.” (Thordén, lines 109-112⁵⁶).

The bestseller is probably the role that is most strongly acknowledged outside of the industry, as well as inside it. But even though it is used frequently, bestseller as a description still denotes different meanings for different persons. Mazetti (lines 205-206) calls the bestseller a commercial construct. The bestseller is not only connected to sales; the epithet has just as much to do with the image projected by the media. A bestseller is a book, or an author, that cannot be avoided; it forces itself into you every-day life (Carlsson, lines 173-176). “It’s not only that the books sell well, but that the personality sells well.” (Nergårdh, lines 165-166⁵⁷). ”In Sweden, and in the time we live in, success is in itself a concept of quality. And commercial success is a very powerful concept.” (Winkler, lines 75-76⁵⁸).

Being a bestseller can also become a “golden cage” (Eriksson, line 271). The goal is to repeat your success, “because a publishing house commits malpractice if it doesn’t demand something similar again, until it stops selling.” (Eriksson, lines 272-273⁵⁹). This can of course lead to further success but it can also force the author to make decisions that impact negatively on their authorship. “[F]or example, you force the books too quickly because they’ve sold so well but you’re really, on the publishing house’s part, killing that bestseller.” (Nergårdh, lines 196-197⁶⁰). The focus on maintaining sales, even at the expense of an authorship, highlights the underlying, yet often ignored, market driven logic that drives the industry.

5.3.2. *Roles as constructs in the eye of the beholder*

A role on the literary field brings with it a position which in turn ties the actor to other positions on the field (Danto, 1999). Peurell (1998) writes that authors can define their position within the literary field by creating an image of themselves and their background but also through their writing. In that way a role can come to define an author and the surrounding discourse, which makes it important to be aware of them.

⁵⁴ ”De är aldrig i närheten av ett rampljus. De får vara glada om de får en halv spalt i lokaltidningen.”

⁵⁵ ”för att författare som inte syns, de talas det inte heller om, och då har man svårt att ha en bild av dem. Då har man kanske en bild av deras verk men inte av dem som författare.”

⁵⁶ ”Så det kan finnas personer, författare som säljer väldigt bra på sitt område men ingen människa har hört talas om dem för de är inga mediapersonligheter, de har inte sökt den rollen i någon form utav kändisskap eller så.”

⁵⁷ ”Det är inte bara det att böckerna säljer bra, utan att personligheten säljer bra.”

⁵⁸ ”i Sverige, och i den tiden vi lever i idag så är framgång i sig själv ett kvalitetsbegrepp. Och ekonomisk framgång är ett väldigt starkt begrepp.”

⁵⁹ ”För det förlaget begår tjänstefel om de inte kräver något liknande i fortsättningen, tills det slutar sälja.”

⁶⁰ ”att man till exempel pressar fram böcker för snabbt för att de har sålt så himla bra att man egentligen tar livet av den där bästsäljaren från förlagets sida.”

Author roles are ways of categorizing authors but each role represent different things to different persons. Their overall purpose remains the same however; they are a way of communicating what an author is, and what position on the literary field he or she inhabits at the moment. According to Moran (2000) the culture surrounding authors makes them into ideal social types, representatives for what the audience wish and long for. Their role defines them, and what the consumers wish they were.

In the interviews the roles became much discussed and elucidatory additions were made to make it clear what interviewees meant when they described a role. This can of course make the roles too intricate to use effectively. In the content analysis the roles usefulness lies in the assumption that the reader of the article share the same viewpoint as the writer, that they share a context in which the denotation bestseller signifies certain things. This makes it useful in a trade magazine where most readers can be relied upon to share the same contextual premises. Even so certain roles see much more use than others, such as bestseller or crime writer, possibly because there is a more widespread agreement as to their meaning. For example, the midlist author, which was the role the interviewees had the most differing opinions about, is seldom mentioned in *Svensk Bokhandel*.

The three different roles show how the intent behind the communication is key. If the author has a background, traits or experiences that fit with the media logic, those things can be used to create an image. If the image already fits neatly into a certain category or role, it can be used to communicate the author to the reader in a comfortable, recognizable way. But while roles can be excellent for clarifying or marketing an authorship, they can also be restrictive. Once you have been assigned a role, by you publisher, by your audience or by the media, it can be hard to redefine it. "I know very few authors who, sitting in a live broadcast, would say 'You've got me all wrong, I don't want to answer these questions because they are questions asked of a crime author and I am a serious novelist.'" (Carlsson, lines 238-241⁶¹). When a role has been assigned the author has to adapt (Johansson, lines 78-80).

5.4. Carving out a niche – how literary genres impact authorships

The large amount of books published each year necessitates a division into genres and categories, something that then is reflected in design as well as marketing (Clark & Philips, 2008; Squires, 2009; Steiner, 2012). While a genre in literature studies can be a theoretically complicated concept it is a basic form of branding in the publishing industry; it makes it easier to market books. It can maximize visibility and capitalize on the customer's perception of a certain genre (Squires, 2009; Steiner, 2009).

⁶¹ "Men jag vet väldigt få författare som sitter i en livesändning och skulle säga 'Du har missuppfattat mig som författare, jag vill inte svara på de här frågorna eftersom det är frågor som skulle ställas till en deckarförfattare och jag är en seriös romanförfattare'"

The genre a book is assigned will impact how it is read and how it is judged (Lenemark, 2009). The genre also defines the conditions in the contract established between the reader and the author in the process of communication (Tyrberg, 2002). Writing books that are a part of a popular genre could mean “interest from publishing houses that wants to publish your books and maybe a belief that you’ll automatically have a readership, buyers” (Atterholm, lines 322-323⁶²). “If you choose a well established niche you know there are many readers, but the competition is more intense.” (Hansson, lines 395-396⁶³). In certain genres “[i]t can be hard to get media attention and to find readers.” (Nergårdh, lines 418-419⁶⁴). The genre does not only define the marketing efforts and interaction with the readers, it also impacts the visibility of both the book and the author.

5.4.1. *Changing horse midstream*

Belonging to a distinct genre can be an advantage and as well as a disadvantage, but remaining undefined is not an option in today’s industry (Squires, 2009). The genre guides the customer and guarantees to fulfill certain genre bound promises (a crime novel without a crime, or a romance novel without love would constitute a broken promise). The promises a book gives with regards to genre, publisher and author name are also discussed in *Svensk Bokhandel*. Mostly these attributes are taken for granted, unavoidable facts of the industry, but sometimes they are problematized, although foremost with an eye towards how they are received by literary critics. “The ideal situation would be if the book weren’t placed in a compartment; if the critics received the texts without a sender, publisher, genre designation. But many probably have a need to classify.” (Westlund, 2011, February 4, translation by M.Ö.).

When the author’s name is one of the aspects that sell a book “[t]hen you can’t take too large risks with what you publish, changing genre is very difficult.” (Atterholm, lines 284-285⁶⁵). “[T]hen you are signaling that this is an author who keeps a constant quality level, that it is reliable entertainment delivered all the time [...] The readers should know what to expect and they should know that when they’ve paid a couple of hundred crowns for this product they should receive the equivalent entertainment value.” (Hansson, lines 122-127⁶⁶). It can be hard for an author with a well defined authorship to change course with his or her writing. The readers have certain expectations of an author, and if those are not met it becomes a breach of trust (Kristensen, lines 268-273). The side effects of changing a stable way of writing was something Mazetti (lines 246-248) discov-

⁶² ”ett intresse från förlag, att vilja ge ut ens böcker, och att man tror att man automatiskt får någon typ av läsare, bokköpare”

⁶³ ”Tar du en väl etablerad nisch så vet du att det finns många läsare men att konkurrensen är högre.”

⁶⁴ ”Det är svårt att få medial uppmärksamhet och det är svårt att hitta läsare också.”

⁶⁵ ”Då får man inte ta för stora risker med vad man ger ut, att byta genre är jättesvårt.”

⁶⁶ ”[...] signalerar man att det här är en författare som har en jämn kvalitet och det är säker underhållning som levereras hela tiden. [...] Läsarna ska veta vad de kan förvänta sig och de ska veta att när de har betalat ett par hundra kronor för den här produkten så kommer de få underhållning som motsvarar minst det.”

ered when she broke out of her “type casted role” as a romantic, easy-going author and wrote a book that centered on religious criticism and society’s image of God. The change in genre was reflected in the confused reviews and in sales statistics (lines 252-254). The author has come to represent something for the reader, and for the market. The genre, and the author’s previous work, becomes the norm. The genre itself becomes an implicit contract that can be hard for an author to break (Tyrberg, 2002). “And then it becomes even more important that this author keeps to what I feel is an agreement between him/her and myself.” (Kyh len & Nordlinder, lines 561-563⁶⁷).

Becoming a part of a niche or a well established genre is not necessarily a deliberate decision, it could be the way an author’s work is portrayed in media, or a certain element in the work which makes it susceptible to a specific genre direction. Carlsson discuss how his role as an author is defined by genre and cemented when media and marketing relate to his profession rather than him as a person.

For me, who is a criminologist as well, I believe that it is hard to be something else than an author who writes about crime. Which makes you a crime writer, or at least someone who writes suspenseful novels. And I don’t think of myself that way, I never have. And then you get asked “How does your job affect your writing?” never “Does your job affect your writing?” (Carlsson, lines 73-77⁶⁸).

The expectations held by the readers and the publisher can be seen as an example of how brands can distort innovation (da Silva Lopes & Duguid, 2010). The authors’ distinct profiles hamper them as they have been clearly defined. This makes them more easily differentiated, but also creates clear expectations among the readers. If they want to break out of the mould they will most likely face the consequences in loss of sales and sometimes, symbolic capital. “[I]f you start writing other types of fiction, then I believe that you can lose sales.” (Nerg rdh, lines 193-194⁶⁹). So while loyal readers entail a certain amount of guaranteed sales it comes with the provision that the readers receive what they expect. The flipside of brand loyalty is then brand disappointment, something that can occur if the reader’s expectations of the book are not met (cf. De Pelsmacker et al., 2010). The disillusionment may carry over to the entire authorship. If your name is too well known it will not matter what type of author you are, both the positive and negative aspects of brand recognition, will continue to affect how you are communicated within the industry.

⁶⁷ ”Och d  blir det  nnu viktigare att den h r f rfattaren h ller sig till vad jag tycker k nns som en  verenskommelse mellan honom/henne och mig.”

⁶⁸ ”F r mig som ocks   r kriminolog tror jag det  r v ldigt sv rt att vara n got annat  n n gon sorts f rfattare som skriver om brott. Vilket ofta blir att man skriver krim, eller att man skriver sp nning i alla fall. Och jag t nker inte p  mig sj lv som det, jag har aldrig gjort det. Och n r man f r fr gan ’Hur p verkar ditt jobb ditt skrivande?’ aldrig ’P verkar ditt jobb ditt skrivande?’”

⁶⁹ ”om man helt g r  ver till att bara skriva andra typer av romaner s  tror jag att man kan halka ner f rs ljningsm ssigt i alla fall.”

5.5. The author as a brand

O'Reilly (2006) views brands as social constructions, rather than something determined by a marketing department. Brand meaning is constructed by practices and discourses; by the author, the publisher and the readers. According to Bourdieu (1993) the field of cultural production favors strategies which have differentiation and distinction as purpose, something that holds true for branding as well (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010).

If an author develops a personal readership they can become a name-brand (Clark & Philips, 2008). But in order to do so it is necessary to become visible to the public. When the consumers' attention becomes fragmented branding is a useful strategic tool for the navigation of a crowded market (Lair et al., 2005). To create an author brand it is necessary to reduce the complexity that surrounds the individual and find unique and differentiable aspects that can entice readers. The author's products, the books, are one of these aspects, but many other traits will be dependent on the authors themselves, something that was considered in *Svensk Bokhandel* as well. "These days authors build their career on many different components of which the book is only one." (Svensson, 2011b, June 10, p. 12, translation by M.Ö.).

According to a tenacious idea an author's foremost importance is expected to be within himself/herself – in the works, the thoughts and the letters. But many times the image of the author, the media personality, the scandals and the gossip in an obvious way impacted and affected the contemporary audience so much more than the best poems and the innermost thoughts. (Nyblom, 2008, p. 8, translation by M.Ö.).

"[W]e are so awfully fixated on individuals. [...] A lot of it has to do with what we sell. And a lot of times, that is the author." (Carlsson, lines 43-47⁷⁰). While a publisher may consider their main product to be the book, Carlsson's words were echoed throughout the content analysis. A trend during 2011 was that individual authors represented by larger publishing houses were appointed their own PR and marketing staff. "There has been a need to offer certain authors a more comprehensive service and to work harder with their brand." (Schmidt, 2011, January 21, p. 6, translation by M.Ö.). The view is that the author brand is something that can be nourished and molded by communication experts. "I believe that the marketing department creates the author image based on what they believe is the most commercially viable." (Mazetti, line 243⁷¹).

The growing focus on authors as brands is noticeable from the beginning of the publishing process; "I think that you notice when you receive new manuscripts and meet authors, or future authors, that they are very keen on creating their own brand. The entire focus on that has made it so that's how you think of an author-

⁷⁰ "[V]i är så himla personfixerade. [...] Men väldigt mycket har det att göra med vad man kränger. Och många gånger är det författaren."

⁷¹ "Jag tror att marknadsavdelningen skapar den bild de tror är mest säljande av författaren."

ship.” (Nergårdh, lines 87-90⁷²). “Discussions are held regarding where the author wants to be or not be, or where they want to be seen and not seen, and in what way. Even if it isn’t always described that deliberately and cynically it still is about what you want to infuse your own brand with.” (Kivi, lines 255-258⁷³).

Publishing houses put a lot of effort into finding successful ways of presenting authors to the media and to the readers. “There are absolutely much more important factors than literary quality when you accept a manuscript. [...] There is a big difference when you’re going to market and sell a book if there is a subject to tie it to, apart from being good and well written.” (Nergårdh, lines 317-320⁷⁴). It is about formulating the author, “building the brand and emphasizing the right things to make something happen.” (Hansson, lines 111-112⁷⁵). “[T]here are always attendant questions. Who is the author? Education, how old, is there a hook? Absolutely. People think ‘This is great, but how can I succeed with it?’” (Hansson, lines 201-303⁷⁶). Eriksson does not always see it as a conscious effort.

I wouldn’t say that it is very strategically thought out; rather you always look for those things that could garner the attention of the public. It is in the back of your head when you work, almost irrespective of what you work with. Something instinctive. It’s there automatically, you think of it already when you decide whether to accept a manuscript or not. (Eriksson, lines 313-316⁷⁷).

As discussed by Thelander and Rosenqvist (2011), branding has a lot in common with strategic communication when it is viewed from a holistic point of view. The process Eriksson hesitates to call strategic is nonetheless a long-term process with an eye towards the future, based on target audiences, stakeholders and the authors themselves. It becomes a way to build a brand and to decide what parameters will make the author more successful when communicating him or her to the public. But viewing it as instinctive decisions based on the individual publisher’s experience allows the actor to avoid becoming a part of the economic, commercial sphere and instead remain firmly planted in the cultural logic.

⁷² ”Nu tycker jag att man märker att när man får in nya manus och träffar författare, eller blivande författare, att de är väldigt inne på att skapa sitt eget varumärke. Att hela fokuset på det har gjort att det är så man tänker på författarskapet.”

⁷³ ”Att man för diskussioner om var författaren vill finnas och inte finnas, eller var de vill synas och inte synas och på vilket sätt. Även om det inte alltid är så medvetet och kanske krasst beskrivet så är det ändå, det är ju vad man vill ladda sitt eget varumärke med.”

⁷⁴ ”Det finns absolut mycket viktigare faktorer än litterär kvalitet när man antar. [...] Det är jättestor skillnad när man ska marknadsföra och sälja en bok, att man kan haka upp den på ett ämne, förutom att den är bra och välskriven.”

⁷⁵ ”det är byggandet av varumärket, och trycka på rätt signaler för att få någonting att hända.”

⁷⁶ ”[D]et kommer ändå följdfrågor, vem är författaren? Utbildning, hur gammal, finns det någon hook? Absolut. Folk tänker ändå att ’Det här är jättebra, men hur ska jag lyckas med det här?’”

⁷⁷ ”Jag skulle inte säga att det är så strategisk uttänkt utan man letar hela tiden efter sådant som skulle kunna väcka omgivningens intresse. Det sitter liksom i huvudet när man jobbar, nästan oavsett vad man jobbar med. Något omedvetet. Att det finns automatiskt, att man tänker på det redan när man antar ett manus eller inte.”

5.5.1. *Author authenticity and branding*

“[B]rands offer consistency. They give us reassurance that what we have today is the same as we had yesterday and the same as we will have tomorrow.” (Olins, 2000, p. 61). This does not mean that a brand cannot embrace variety or diversity, but it still has to offer stability (Olins, 2000).

The marketing of an author, no matter if it concerns their looks or how they are portrayed in interviews, “still has to harmonize with the books they write.” (Hansson, line 134⁷⁸). The way the publishing house presents the author also have to be consistent with how the readers will perceive the author at a later date (Kyhlén & Nordlinder, lines 160-163). When the publisher discusses how an author can be presented it has to be in accordance with the author’s real persona, and not a role to be enacted. “[O]therwise I believe it is hard to keep up, if you get a false role it will be hard to maintain in the long run.” (Kristensen, lines 115-116⁷⁹).

When both authors and publishers strive towards a differentiation, if not branding outright, they try to find aspects of the author that are most appealing to the public. The challenge is to still be perceived as authentic when only certain edited parts of a persona are highlighted. This differentiation becomes a construction, but to be successful on the literary field it must appear un-constructed. “For an author to become successful on the literary field it is necessary that he to a certain extent acts consciously and takes steps to ensure this, but this conscious endeavor should be hardly noticeable.” (Peurell, 1998, p. 139, translation by M.Ö.).

While *Svensk Bokhandel* overall show a clear tendency of a market related language, as is natural in a magazine dedicated to the industry, it is still interesting to note the multitude of voices raised against the more commercial aspects of the industry. “There is a large focus on profit in the industry today and that affects publishing negatively.” (Svensson, 2011a, June 3, p. translation by M.Ö.). Words such as *cultural and educational achievement* and *literary passion* are used to communicate the importance of something else than profits as the guiding star in literary production. The critique against profits does not only concern the published works but also the remunerations authors receive from different assignments, such as delivering lectures (Bremberg, 2011, May 20). This criticism can be taken as straightforward complaints of a business where a chosen few earn more than everyone else, but I also believe it to be an indication of what happens when the literary field’s implicit contract regarding the symbolic capital is broken. Money is at least supposed to *seem* unimportant, so when the economic incentive becomes too visible it lessens the authenticity of the author image.

The challenge is then to make an author seem un-marketed while still making the author visible and available for consumers. Labeling the process with terms corresponding to market logic would render the cultural aspects of literature a moot point in many minds. Everyone wants to “be seduced by a story. It is a lot of

⁷⁸ ”måste ändå harmoniera med böckerna de skriver”

⁷⁹ ”[A]nnars tror jag det är svårt att bibehålla, om man får en falsk roll så tror jag att den är svår att bibehålla i längden.”

that type of thing you want to hear when listening to famous publishers. You don't want to hear strategic communication from them. [...] On one hand it is necessary to be able to communicate, but on the other hand we love those who sound artless." (Nergårdh, lines 488-491⁸⁰). This is something I believe goes for the industry itself and for the consumers. The image of the author as a sole genius writing simply because he has a need to express himself is still somehow stronger than the image of the author as a savvy entrepreneur who knows where and when to promote himself to gain readers.

5.5.2. *Brand harmony – authors and publishers*

"You talk about the author's brand and then you have the publishing house's brand as well, that is mostly neglected, even if it is permeated by the authors you work with." (Kivi, lines 345-347⁸¹). For a publishing house to position itself strategically the communication has to be aligned with the overall strategy (cf. Argenti, Howell & Beck, 2005). The publishing house's choice of authors will define its brand, and each author will in turn be influenced by their publisher. Not only because of the highly tangible aspects of the publishers work, such as editing and marketing, but also because of the intangible values of the publishers brand and how it can affect the public's perception of the author.

But I believe that the publishers today [...] in themselves are a kind of brand. That it has become more important today when they are closer to the readers, thanks to social media, thanks to all sorts of things, communication tools of different kinds. And that has made it more important also for the publishers to know who they are and what they represent in everything from communication to what titles they publish and what authors they do events for and, well, everything. (Elmqvist, 213-217⁸²).

In *Svensk Bokhandel* publishers are mentioned as brands in their own right, but more conspicuous is the fact that authors and their publishers are seen as units. Authors are very rarely mentioned without a reference to their publisher, something that can either strengthen their cultural value, or weaken it. "I've heard, I don't know if it is true, but I've heard that there are critics who screen books when they see that they're from Piratförlaget, because Piratförlaget is perceived as having the type of authors who aren't interesting from a cultural high brow per-

⁸⁰ "att själva förföras av en berättelse. Det är väl mycket sådant som, när man hör kända förläggare prata, så är det det man vill höra. Man vill inte höra en strategisk kommunikation från dem.[...] Å ena sidan så krävs det att man ska kunna kommunicera, å andra sidan älskar vi dem som inte låter så där."

⁸¹ "Man pratar om författarens varumärke så har man också förlagets varumärke, som oftast kommer i skymundan, även om det laddas av de författare man jobbar med."

⁸² "Men jag tror att förlagen mer i dag [...] också är en typ av varumärke. Att det har blivit viktigare i dag när de också kommit närmre läsarna, tack vare sociala medier, tack vare allt möjligt, kommunikationsverktyg av olika slag. Och då har det blivit viktigare också för förlagen vem de är och vad de presenterar i allting ifrån kommunikation till vilka titlar de ger ut och vilka författare och vad de gör för arrangemang och ja, allt."

spective.” (Carlsson, lines 96-99⁸³). “It has to do with what the publishing house is, how their brand is perceived. What kind of strategy they have.” (Jurjaks, line 158⁸⁴). Jurjaks (lines 158-161) adds that the publishing house may matter more for literary critics than for readers, something that could be said to be substantiated by the result of the content analysis, as it concerns the insides of an industry rather than what is presented to the public.

The expression “swings and carousels” is often used to describe how more lucrative authors support the publishing of more obscure authorships. This could be seen as a cultural deed aimed at giving readers a wider range of authorships to choose from, but as the literary field rewards inverse commercial thinking with strengthened symbolic capital it can also be seen as a form of brand building. “[I]t could probably heighten the credibility of the publisher that they don’t only have bestsellers [...] There is no profit, but it may be cheaper than some kind of marketing for the publishing house. It is some kind of image marketing, some kind of brand preserving.” (Kyhlén & Nordlinder, lines 434-438⁸⁵).

The image of the publishing house and the image of the author co-exist and in the best-case scenario they strengthen each other, but that presupposes corresponding values and images.

5.5.3. *Brand consistency and critique*

Creating a brand identity is hard, especially one that will distinguish one author from another (O’Reilly, 2006). The brand seems to be easier to cultivate if there is a consistency in the author’s production.

[T]here are a number of authors on the Swedish market, and internationally, who are very good at caring for their brands. [...] They are competent, and never really take any larger risks when it comes to their books or their creative efforts. And they know exactly what is needed when it is time to put a new book on the market and maintain their brand. (Atterholm, lines 102-108⁸⁶).

The problem inherent in having a consistent brand is one that is a part of all cultural industries; no two products are the same (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). “A risk exists that if you have a very strong brand as an author, the readers want the same

⁸³ ”Jag har hört, jag vet inte om det stämmer, men jag har hört om kritiker som väljer bort böcker när de ser att de kommer från Piratförlaget, för Piratförlaget uppfattas ha den typen av författare som inte är intressanta ur den sortens finkulturella perspektiv.”

⁸⁴ ”Det handlar om vad förlaget är, hur deras varumärke uppfattas. Vad de har för strategi.”

⁸⁵ ”Men att det kan väl också öka kanske trovärdigheten för förlaget att man inte bara har bästsäljarna, [...] Det är inga intäkter, men det kanske snarare är billigare än någon slags marknadsföring för förlaget. Någon slags profilmarknadsföring, att det är någon slags varumärkesvårdande.”

⁸⁶ ”[D]et finns ju på den svenska marknaden, och internationellt, ett antal författare som är väldigt duktiga på att vårda sina varumärken. [...] De är habila, och tar väl heller aldrig några större risker när det gäller sina böcker eller sitt skapande. Och vet precis vad som gäller när det är dags att lansera en bok och underhålla sitt varumärke.”

thing all the time.” (Johansson, lines 52-53⁸⁷). The way the public consume brands help them define who they are (Olins, 2000). This could be the reason why consistency in an authorship becomes so important, because the author brand does not only define the author, it also defines the reader.

The critique against branding focuses on two different aspects; the first one is the rigidity of a role. O’Reilly (2006) describes it as a dehumanization of the author where he or she becomes only a commercial construct. “[T]he rhetoric of personal branding encourages and endorses the process of turning oneself into a product – in effect, engaging in self-commodification.” (Lair et al., 2005, p. 319). “There is a risk with making yourself into a brand because you lock yourself in a role which makes it so that certain people expect certain things from you.” (Kristensen, lines 223-224⁸⁸).

The other aspect concerns the commercial nature of branding, but from the perspective of the literal field and the inverse relationship between cultural and commercial capital. Commercial success is far from the only thing that gives an author symbolic power, and talking openly about branding, showing that commercial success matters, can diminish an authors cultural capital. “And the concept brand is slightly foul. Because it is associated with some form of commercial reality.” (Kivi, lines 265-266⁸⁹). “There is a difference between the artistic and the commercial. There is a conflict and one is slightly better than the other. [...] But you should preferably not talk about it in terms of marketing; you have to be a bit careful about that.” (Kyh len & Nordlinder, lines 357-362⁹⁰). This reluctance shows that the cultural and economic dichotomy is still strong and that branding is still viewed as a disputed strategy.

While the interviews and the literature indicate that clear statements, and easily recognizable traits are emphasized when communicating authorships to different publics Aherne (2006) propagates ambiguity. “[W]hen meanings are unclear, consumer intrigue increases, involvement intensifies, and commitment accumulates.” (Aherne, 2006, p. 201). While this might at first sight indicate indistinctness Aherne is more focused on the fact that brands needs plurality, the possibility to embrace several strategic options that too many may seem completely antithetical (Aherne, 2006). This plurality is something I think would be beneficiary for branding in the industry but it would require a more holistic approach than that offered by classical branding practices. One way would be to use Thelander and Rosenqvist’s (2011) approach to branding with its closeness to strategic communication practices. Making branding more relational, long-term and less focused on isolated measures could also make it easier to integrate into the cultural logic.

⁸⁷ ”Risken finns att om man har ett v ldigt starkt varum rke som f rfattare  r att l sarna verkligen vill ha samma sak hela tiden.”

⁸⁸ ”Det finns en risk med att g ra sig sj lv till ett varum rke att man l ser in sig i en roll som g r att folk f rv ntar sig vissa saker av dig.”

⁸⁹ ”Och begreppet varum rke  r lite fult. F r att det blir v ldigt f rknippat med n gon form av kommersiell verksamhet.”

⁹⁰ ”Att det  r skillnaden mellan det konstn rliga och det marknadsmissiga. Att det blir en konflikt och att det ena  r lite finare  n det andra. [...] Men man ska helst inte prata om det i termer om marknadsf ring, det f r man vara lite f rsiktig med.”

5.6. The possibilities of modern publishing and media

There has been a change in the dynamics within the publishing industry in recent years, much due to new technology, and the possibilities it brings. The traditional view of publishing as the selling of complete physical packages of information is being transformed in the digital era when the book and its content can be separated, for example as audio books and e-books. But not only the book is presented and sold differently, the change in technology also affects the author and the relationship between the author and the readers.

The strategies developed to handle the opportunities and challenges presented by the new technology are far from complete, and new angles of approach are tested continuously (Clark & Philips, 2008). This is noticeable in *Svensk Bokhandel* where e-books and print on demand-technology are portrayed as game changers, but if the change will be for the better or the worse is still undetermined. In connection to technological advancements, both on the production and marketing side, it is the freedom of action that is emphasized. They allow authors to strike out on their own and to reach their own audience.

The changing media landscape and technological solutions impact how, where and when authors are communicated. Authors and publishers now have the possibility to interact directly with the readers, something that opens up new possibilities for relationship building. It lessens, or in some cases removes, the need for authors to adapt to the media logic, although it also presents new challenges for authors to differentiate themselves in the information flow. The interviewees have a more cautious attitude than that presented in *Svensk Bokhandel* in regards to a new kind of authorship with a basis in an online presence and print-on-demand technology. They believe that authors have new ways of reaching readers but process is hampered by restraints in regards to time, money and knowledge. "For some it's possible, for others it's not possible, but I believe that if the chance to get attention and sell as an author with a publisher is small then I believe that the chance in a corresponding way is even smaller if you don't use that method." (Jurjaks, lines 360-362⁹¹). To succeed as an author without a publishing house there is a need for unshakeable self-confidence and an enterprising spirit (Eriksson, lines 380-381). "It's yet another eye of the needle to pass through, of a million who feel that it is their calling, perhaps a thousandth will succeed." (Atterholm, lines 353-354⁹²). "There are millions out there who try and you have to be aware of it, that this makes the possibility for becoming noticed smaller and smaller." (Winkler, lines 356-357⁹³).

⁹¹ "För vissa funkar det och för vissa funkar det inte men jag tror att om chansen att nå ut och sälja som antagen författare vid ett förlag är liten så tror jag att chansen på motsvarande sätt är ännu mindre om man inte går den vägen."

⁹² "Det är ännu ett nålsöga att ta sig igenom, en miljon som känner sig kallade så är det kanske en promille som lyckas."

⁹³ "Men det är miljoner där ute som försöker och man ska vara medveten om det, att det här gör att möjligheten att bli synlig bli bara svårare och svårare."

Social media is seen as one of the possible ways authors have to reach an audience. They do not have to find an angle to get media attention; they only have to make the end consumer interested.

[T]he authors I know who are active on Twitter and Facebook and talk a lot with their readers and so, they have a lot more, bigger opportunities to influence how they are perceived, because they aren't at the mercy of the publisher or the media, but they can actually control what they want to talk about and how they want to be perceived. (Elmqvist, lines 569-573⁹⁴).

Being active in social media gives authors an opportunity to showcase themselves to an audience from multiple perspectives. But it also demands new communication strategies. “[I]t is easier to create a connection to readers for different reasons. But it is hard as well, of course. Because there is an abundance, and it is very exposed to competition.” (Kivi, lines 309-311⁹⁵). “It’s all about conveying what you’ve written, to tell [others] about it.” (Enqvist, lines 457-458⁹⁶). Differentiation could then be said to be important, to stand out. Olins (2000) see branding as the way for authors to stand out, “[e]-commerce can only be effective if it is heavily branded.” (p. 55). But Hallahan et al. (2007) questions “whether the effects of any particular communication activity can be validly examined in isolation” (p. 10). If the way an audience experience and perceive an author is the sum of their total experience, they may not differentiate between the different channels, or the different strategies, through which they gained that experience. The important thing then becomes the overall strategic picture, the intent behind every communicative effort.

⁹⁴ ”[D]e författarna som jag vet som är aktiva på Twitter och Facebook och pratar mycket med sina läsare och så, de har ju mycket mer, större möjligheter att påverka hur de uppfattas, för de blir ju inte lämnade åt varken förlagets, i förlagets händer eller i medias händer utan att de själva faktiskt kan kontrollera vad de vill prata om och hur de vill uppfattas.”

⁹⁵ ”[D]et är lättare att skapa en relation till läsare av olika anledningar. Sen är det väl också svårt, så klart. För det finns en uppsjö, det är väldigt konkurrensutsatt där också.”

⁹⁶ ”Det handlar om att förmedla det man har skrivit, att berätta om det.”

6. Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to explore and map different communication strategies in the Swedish publishing industry in regards to authors and their authorships. The results have shown that the strategies used are connected to both the author as a person, for example with references to age or profession, and to the author's production, partly through literary quality and partly through genre.

The interviews demonstrated the importance of literary quality when communicating an authorship. Although research conducted by Feldman and Holbrook showed that sales, the most obvious connection to market logic, seems to be unaffected by any criteria of literary excellence, there was still an underlying assumption that works that sold well was of a lower, or less complicated, literary quality. The discussion surrounding a work's literary quality serves the purpose of demonstrating that the dichotomy between culture and commerce still plays an important part within the publishing industry. If it did not, the discussion would not be necessary as sales statistics and profits would be enough to measure success. Instead there are different ways of communicating success, and low sales can actually equal more symbolic power than high sales, as too much commercial success indicates less cultural value in the literary field.

The goal when communicating an author is differentiation. This is achieved by positioning the author in different ways, for example with value-laden words and different elements of clarification. Achieving visibility and spreading a uniform image of the author are desirable actions. In this the strategies are like that of classical branding, as the value of a brand lies in what the brand represents in the consumers' collective understanding. The methods of differentiation go beyond that however, and more complex practices are used, for example roles and genres. They both allude to the consumers' previous knowledge about them, and the better known, the more effective they are to use, as exemplified by the role of the bestseller or the genre of crime. It is a way of making author communication more effective.

Not using these differentiators, or trying to change them when they have been established, is associated openly with a potential loss of sales. And although there is a tacit agreement in the publishing industry that success is more than sales, the discussion returns to sales again and again; international sales, making sure that bestselling authors continue their production and genres that sell better than others. So in what way is the commercial aspect of the industry compatible with its cultural aspirations, and how does it affect the communication strategies?

One way to answer that question is to try to find the mechanisms that influence certain actions to yield certain outcomes. The concrete empirical facts we can gain immediate knowledge about are in this case the communication strategies observed and used by the actors in the field. Studying them and trying to

place them in a context offers ideas to what mechanisms influence the outcome. The conclusion I draw from my result is that the Swedish publishing industry is governed by the same mechanisms that govern any other field of production, be it household appliances or sports equipment; a market logic where economic profit is the lodestar. But to remain an autonomous field it needs to distinguish itself in relation to other fields.

The literary field of production traditionally has distinctive features, for example an express wish to be an upholder of culture and education. This has led to a unique position in regards to other fields, for example lower value-added tax and state subsidies. To then openly acknowledge that there is no difference between a book and a microwave in the underlying need for sales would be to invalidate the aspects that this unique position is dependent upon.

The goal of research is to make us understand our surrounding world more fully; to explore it, but also to make it systematically available. Framing my results in the terms of critical realism I can try to understand the outcome, the way an author is communicated by studying the action behind it, the strategies used by actors to communicate the author. But the outcome is dependent on the influence of the mechanisms, which in the case of communicating an author is market logic. However, the context influences the mechanisms in a way that distinguishes publishing from other fields of production. The context, in my opinion, is then what can hinder branding from becoming a truly accepted part of publishing. Not because branding would be an ineffective marketing measure but because it disturbs the veneer of cultural distinction that allows the field to retain its privileges in regards to other fields. Reframing it in different ways, as roles or instinctive ways of differentiating an author based on experience, makes branding legitimate. It is in fact a way of translating branding to fit the industry without having to accept the commercial logic, as that would mean rejecting the cultural logic and the symbolic power it brings.

Far from everyone in the industry view culture and commerce as opposing concepts, but the discursive reframing of branding makes it possible for the entire industry to accept the market logic as it is shrouded in a cultural logic. This is important because in the literary field there is no single actor that creates an author's standing; instead it is something created in the interaction between actors in the field. This indicates that for branding to be truly successful a majority of the actors within the industry have to view it as an acceptable measure to be taken when marketing an author, something that discursive reframing of the strategies makes possible.

I do not believe that the discourse associated with the literary field of production, or the inverse logic, will change soon; as long as the publishing industry holds a unique position in its role as a cultural producer it is important to maintain the field's boundaries. This includes not becoming too much like other fields of production, and thus the discourse serves as a differentiating measure, something that makes it necessary for actors to reframe the branding procedures to retain their symbolic power. That is also the reason why I am of the opinion that strategic communication serves a purpose as an intermediate between the literary field and branding. An aspect of its usefulness lies in the fact that it allows branding to

be reframed, and therefore become accepted as a strategy, but I believe that its foremost value lies in the encompassing view of communication it brings to the industry. It makes it possible for the industry to broaden its understanding of the mechanisms that govern their actions, something that would allow them to adapt their communicative strategies.

Strategic communication does not merely change the framing of branding but could also change how it is viewed and utilized. Communicating an author would become more than short-term, separate efforts, and it would not be necessary to evoke all aspects of the brand essence in every context. Instead, the intentional creation of meaning, and the causes that could hinder or facilitate that creation, would be the central aspect. With an overarching view of communication it would be the total sum of the consumer's experience of an author that is important, rather than any individual, separate action. A long-term, holistic view of an authorship would make it possible to go beyond branding, and make it easier for the industry to reconcile the author as a repository for different, and conflicting, cultural meaning and values with the market driven mechanisms that govern how authors are communicated.

6.1. Future research

This thesis focused on authors as they are the public face of the industry, and manifest representatives of the cultural field. Their connection to branding, and to strategic communication, is however more that of a receptacle than an originator. Therefore I believe that it would be rewarding to study the literary field's more prominent sources of communication strategies, the publishing houses. This would be especially interesting in the context of viewing strategic communication as a broader framework in which to understand branding. It would also allow for the organizational aspects of strategic communication to be studied further, something that could result in the construction of new theories. That would in turn enrich both strategic communication, and publishing, as research areas.

7. References

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8. Attachement 1 – Interview guide

Introduktion av uppsatsens ämne

Berätta om upplägget på intervjun

Kontrollera att du har alla uppgifter, inklusive yrkestitel etc.

Tema: Litterär kvalitet

Tankegångar: Diskuteras det? Är det en nyckelfaktor i hur en författare definieras? Kan man se på litterär kvalitet objektivt? Skapas den i processer, t ex av kritiker, av tillhörande marknadsföring, av hur författaren presenterar den?

Nyckelord: Författarstatus, recensioner, kvalitet och marknadskrafter

Anekdoter: Forskning utförd av Feldman och Holbrook tyder på att det inte finns ett tydligt samband mellan kvalitet och popularitet, vad tror du?

Tema: Strukturell dynamik

Tankegångar: Hur är förlagsbranschen uppbyggd? Hur fungerar strukturerna? Finns det hierarkier? Finns det skillnader mellan författare? Skillnader mellan förlag? Hur skulle respondenten beskriva sin plats på det litterära fältet? Hur skulle de beskriva författarroller?

Nyckelord: Rising star, midlist, bestseller, branschstruktur, hierarki, värderingar

Anekdoter: Ann Steiner, som är litteraturforskare, skriver om författarroller, t ex stjärnförfattaren eller outsidersn. Hur ser du på författarroller? Hur skulle du definiera rising star, midlist och bestseller? Hur ser du på förlag och roller?

Steiner skriver också att dessa roller är något författare kan välja, medvetet eller omedvetet, eller tilldelas, vad tror du?

En av de bäst säljande böckerna genom tiderna är Dan Browns Da Vinci koden, men Brown hade skrivit flera böcker innan dess och aldrig fått något större genomslag. Vad förändrade sig? Hur kan författarroller förändra sig? Vilka faktorer skulle kunna göra att en författare förflyttar sig från en roll till en annan?

Tema: Strategisk kommunikation

Tankegångar: Vad definieras den strategiska kommunikationen av i branschen? Positionerar sig aktörerna medvetet? Tycker folk att det är viktigt? Ser man PR och marknadsföring som en del av kommunikationen? Tar man kommunikation för givet?

Nyckelord: Anekdoter:	Strategisk kommunikation, positionering Jag har lagt märke till att i texter om olika författare ofta använder sig av olika markörer för att indikera vilken typ av författare skribenten anser att det är. Det kan till exempel vara "Den lovande debutanten" eller "Bästsäljaren..." Hur tror du att författare kommuniceras? Hur kommuniceras andra aktörer?
Tema: Tankegångar:	Personlighet/Marknadsföringsbar persona Vad ligger bakom valet av en författare hos en agent eller ett förlag? Behöver författare idag var marknadsföringsbara? Finns det en balans mellan att vara marknadsföringsbar och ha en litterär kvalitet i arbetet man utför? Kan det ena väga upp för det andra? Kan en författare också vara ett varumärke?
Nyckelord: Anekdoter:	Marknadsföring, PR, varumärke, O'Reilly skriver i Consuming Books att det är inte bara en författares verk som avgör när de blir antagna av ett förlag utan även faktorer som hur stor marknaden är för just den typen av litteratur, om författaren är fotogenisk, vältalig, hur lång produktcykel han eller hon kan tänkas ha, om ämnet de skriver om är aktuellt, om boken kan förvandlas till tie-ins, om författaren är känd sedan tidigare etc. Han skriver om den anglosaxiska marknaden, hur tror du det ser ut i Sverige? Camilla Läckberg har också sagt att bara hälften av att vara en författare är skrivande, resten är marknadsföring, vad anser du?
Tema: Tankegångar:	Nischer i marknaden Är utrymmet för olika typer av författare begränsat på marknaden? Eller i en nisch? Är vissa positioner redan tagna? Är det svårt att förskjuta någon som redan är etablerad i en position? Är det en utmaning om en ny författare passar i en nisch som redan anses väl fylld?
Nyckelord: Anekdoter:	Nisch, författarkonkurrens Efter Twilight ökade den övernaturliga romansen, speciellt på ungdomssidan, explosionsartat. I Sverige har vi sedan länge en omfattande utgivning av deckare. Tror du att en marknad kan bli mättad, eller att en nisch kan fyllas? Att komma som ny in på ett redan väl etablerat fält, vad kan det innebära?
Tema: Tankegångar:	Modern utgivning, internet och e-böcker Kan egenutgivning, sociala medier, e-böcker förändra dynamiken i branschen? Kan det förändra hur författare uppfattas? Kan författare, med en direkt kontakt till sina läsare, förändra sin roll själv, utan hjälp av industrin?
Nyckelord:	E-böcker, sociala media, rollförändring

Anekdoter:

I USA skrev Brittany Geragotelis på Wattpad, en Internetsida där man självpublicerar och lägger upp kapitel för kapitel, en bok som heter Life's a Witch. Hon fick så många läsare, varav flera som ville att hon skulle ge ut boken i fysiskt format, att hon gav ut boken på egen hand, på ett framgångsrikt sätt. Detta trots att hon i många år försökt få en agent till sina böcker, men inte lyckats. Kan författare själva nå sin publik, skapa sig en egen författarroll? Hur skulle det fungera i Sverige?

Till saken hör att Geragotelis, efter att ha gett ut sin första bok själv, sedan tecknade ett kontrakt på tre böcker med Simon & Schuster. Vad skulle du säga att det indikerar?

Finns det någon de skulle rekommendera mig att ta kontakt med?

Fråga om du kan återkomma med komplettering, via mejl eller telefon.