

Abstract in English

This project builds on the tradition of audience research that theoretically and empirically established that meaning is formed in the negotiation between the text and the reader, that the audiences are agentic, their interpretation of media is contextual and situated, and that they have the potential to resist the media. It argues that it is important to explore people's attention to different sources: who is listening, to whom, and why – and asks how people understand the notion of an author that they encounter in the interpretation of factual media texts, and how this interpretation is brought back into the interpretative act. The thesis subscribes to philosophical hermeneutics as an overarching theoretical as well as methodological framework to devise a concept of *an understood author* that is a result of the interpretative act, where the author imagined and anticipated by the reader (in the form of prior knowledge and prejudices) is encountered and actualised by the author inscribed into the text. I carried out 28 in-depth face-to-face interviews with Czechs born between 1948-1963 to explore participants' experiences and relationship with media and media authors. Employing hermeneutical analysis, the focus is not to capture what is an author, but how it happened to be so. The analysis argues that the audiences' understanding of an author has two layers, constituted by essential and potential elements that are referred to here as dimensions. It distinguishes between dimensions of productive practices which constitute and perform the understanding of an author within a particular context, and dimensions of realisation that assess the understood author. It further provides an insight into how readers relate to the understood author and the role that understanding of the author embodies in the interpretative act. It shows that people are aware of an authorial presence behind a text, whether by acknowledging the situatedness of the text, the productive practices, or the institutional structures behind them. They reflect on these in their interpretation of the text, and their relation to the author is informed by this understanding.