

SVEND FOYN. MEANING POTENTIALS OF MONUMENT AND SPACE

by
Eva Maagerø and Aslaug Veum

This article explores the dialectical relationship between monuments and space, the meaning potential of a monument and how the monument interacts with and is affected by its surroundings. Research on monuments emphasises that public monuments contribute to individual as well as collective and social memory and identity. The current article presents a social semiotic analysis in which the meaning-making signs of the statue is taken as the starting point, and the cultural as well as the historical context are integrated in the analysis. One specific monument located in the city of Tønsberg in Southern Norway has been analyzed. The statue represents Svend Foyn (1809 – 1894), a man who is regarded as a pioneer of whaling and whale processing. The analysis is based on a social semiotic framework, inspired by Michael Halliday's work, combined with Michael O'Toole's three-level rank system for the analysis of sculpture. Our analysis also discusses briefly the context of the Foyn monument, and raises questions concerning the limits of a monument's spatial and temporal context.

1. Introduction

Statues and public monuments function as important centres of meaning construction in villages, towns and cities. Traditionally, statues portray actions or memorable persons and are regarded as important aspects of social memory. Especially since the 19th century, public statues have contributed to the creation of different kinds of collective meaning: local as well as national, political as well as cultural (Barthes 1997; Johnson, 1995, 2002; Kruk, 2008). Statues

are objects that organise space and affect the viewer's impression of a place. As expressed by O'Toole (1994a: 35) "the sculpture defines space". The organisation of space affects in turn people's activities and the way people behave and interact with other people (Stenglin 2009: 278). This article explores how meaning can be realised in monuments; it looks into the dialectical relationship between monument and space – how the monument interacts with and is affected by its surroundings – and also into how a monument's surroundings to a significant degree are affected by it.

Unlike other types of art, e.g. paintings, monuments such as sculptures usually remain in the place for which they were designed (Duby & Daval 2010: 553). In exceptional cases, sculptures and monuments are moved or removed from their place, as happened in post-Soviet Russia, where much of the communist regime's monumental propaganda was removed and destroyed after its decline. The communist period in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with monuments of political leaders placed all over the respective countries, represents an extreme example of how authoritarian regimes are wont to use monuments in order to express their power and monopolize the social space (Johnson 1995: 51; Kruk 2008: 35). But also apparently more innocent public monuments may provoke and cause debate, and this often happens with statues that are commissioned for a particular time and place (O'Toole 1994a: 40). In 2006, a statue representing the Norwegian King Olav the Fifth (1903-1991) evoked public controversy even before it was completed. The monument was ordered by the City of Oslo to be placed in front of the town hall, in the very heart of the city. The 8 meter (25 ft) high statue, made by sculptor Knut Steen, represented the former Norwegian monarch with his right arm in a lifted position. The commission in charge of the statue feared that the pose of the royal person could evoke negative connotations that were not appropriate for the *People's King* (as Olav V was called), and refused to accept the work. Later on, the very same statue was instead placed

furthest out in Sognefjord (in the western part of Norway), in a small place called Skjerjehamn. Instead of greeting the inhabitants and visitors of Oslo, the statue is now placed near the sea, with its face turned and its right arm lifted towards the fjord, greeting people arriving to the area by boat.

In the present article, the relationship between monument¹ and space will be compared with the relationship between text and context. In our approach to text, we draw on Halliday's broad definition:

So any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation, we shall call a text. It may be either spoken or written, or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of. (Halliday 1989:10)

According to Halliday (1989), there is a systematic relationship between text and context. Drawing on Halliday and the social semiotic approach, we view text and context as two aspects of the very same process. This social semiotic view on context is based on the ethnographic and anthropological perspectives of Malinowski (1972 [1923]) and Firth (1957 [1934]), in which it is emphasized that:

[...] context is not something extrinsic to text. Rather, it is created when text users' knowledge of culture and society interact with the internal features of the text's organisation during the making and interpreting of text. (Baldry & Thibault 2006: 3)

Our article explores the meaning potential of monuments and space by analysing one specific monument, a statue placed in the city of Tønsberg in Norway. The statue was made by the 19th century Norwegian sculptor Anders Svor and represents Svend Foyn (1809-1894), a man who is regarded as a pioneer of whaling and whale processing. Foyn brought whaling into the modern age and created a new and profitable Norwegian industry by introducing the

exploding harpoon gun into whaling. The whaling industry made Foyn a rich man, and he donated part of his fortune to missionary societies, workers' homes, schools, and homes for elderly ladies in his hometown, Tønsberg, where due to these actions, Foyn is also regarded as a pioneer of social welfare.

Statues often belong to the category of 'institutional art', and may have various roles: cultural, political and commercial (O'Toole 1994a: 39). There are several historical examples demonstrating that when statues are used as 'state art', they become instruments of propaganda. This happened not only in the Soviet Union, as mentioned above, but also during the fascist regime in Italy and under that of the National Socialists in Germany (Duby & Daval 2010: 1020). The statue we analyse in this article is seemingly a rather ordinary and traditional monument representing a memorable person – a local Norwegian hero in the city of Tønsberg. However, as our approach will demonstrate, when analyzed as a rank system of functions and meaning, the statue in question is recognized as carrying a rich potential of meaning, as well as of power and influence.

2. Theory

In his book *The Language of Displayed Art* from 1994, the Australian social semiotician Michael O'Toole states that sculpture² has attracted remarkably little theoretical attention compared to painting and architecture (O'Toole 1994b). According to O'Toole, only a few scholars from the field of art studies have used a theoretical point of view when working with sculpture. By contrast, cultural geographers, sociologists, anthropologists and historians, have examined sculptures in several of their studies (cf. Johnson 1995, 2002; Short 1991; Wagner-Pacifini & Schwarts 1991; Ward 1983; Young 1989); in the majority of cases, they have focused on the functions

sculptures perform as a part of collective memory or representations, destined to educate the population politically. The importance of this kind of research is in its emphasis on which events and whom we want to remember in our societies, and on the roles sculptures play in cities, parks, buildings and other places that people frequent in their daily lives. In addition, it shows how sculptures may constitute a provocation and therefore, as mentioned above, sometimes get removed (Johnson 1995: 51). These studies are, however, mainly sociologically oriented and do not analyze sculptures as systems of meaning-making signs. O'Toole (1994a: 38) claims that this makes it easier to formulate a social semiotic approach without having to refer to a long aesthetic tradition. In our analysis of the Svend Foyn monument in Tønsberg, we have adopted a social semiotic approach, a tradition in which there are few scholars who have dealt with monuments (the bulk of the work has been done by O'Toole, whose ideas frame our analysis).

In his 1994b book, O'Toole devotes a chapter to the semiotics of sculpture, in which he analyzes four sculptures. His ideas about meaning-making and his methods are inspired by the social semiotic framework for describing language as a meaning-making system developed by the British linguist and social semiotician Michael Halliday (Halliday 1978, 1985; cf. Halliday & Matthiessen 2004). Halliday states that language is a social construct that performs essential functions for people as social human beings. In his systemic functional linguistics, Halliday presents three functions of language called metafunctions. The ideational metafunction represents phenomena in the world around us and inside us: words represent objects, phenomena, thoughts and actions and enable us to create mental images and an overview of the world. However, a linguistic utterance is at the same time a communicative act: language is construed for communication; this second function Halliday calls the interpersonal metafunction. The third function relates to the ability of language as a meaning-making system to create coherence

between utterances. Units of language can be connected to other units of language and together with these, create texts; this function is the textual metafunction.

At several points in his work, Halliday draws attention to the fact that language is one among the several semiotic systems we use (often simultaneously), when we communicate, and that there is a need to systematically describe other semiotic systems, just as he has done for language in his functional grammar (see, for example, Halliday 1978). Following this lead, O'Toole (1994a) presents a systematic model for analyzing works of visual art by applying Halliday's three metafunctions to the analysis of paintings, architecture and sculpture, and calling them the representational, the modal and the compositional metafunctions respectively; this is the framework he uses elsewhere in his analysis of three-dimensional objects such as the Sydney Opera Building (O'Toole 2004).

Also other social semioticians have been inspired by Halliday's framework by using his metafunctions in their research on visual and auditory meaning-making systems (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006; van Leeuwen 1999, 2011), on multimodal texts (Baldry & Thibault 2006; Jewitt 2011; Kress 2010; van Leeuwen 2005), and on three-dimensional objects in space like buildings, exhibitions and statues (Meng 2004; O'Toole 2004; Safeyaton 2004; Stenglin 2009). An overview of the literature on space in relation to multimodal analysis is given by Stenglin (2009).

Both Halliday's work on language as a meaning-making system and the work of the scholars mentioned above build on earlier work on signs and systems of signs in meaning-making processes. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 6), the social semioticians in the Hallidayan tradition have developed their theories in the context of two schools of semiotics: the Prague School of the 1930s, where language, art, theatre, cinema and costume were studied, and the Paris school of the 1960s and 1970s, which applied the ideas on

language developed by Saussure and other structural linguists to semiotic systems such as painting, photography, fashion, cinema, music, comic strips, etc.; in the latter school, the work of Roland Barthes has had particular importance (Barthes 1968; Barthes & Heath 1977). In both schools of semiotics, just as in the original Hallidayan school, there has been a vivid interest for understanding meaning-making through both language and other semiotic systems; in recent decades, particular attention has been paid to the interplay of several meaning-making systems in multimodal texts.

The key concept of any semiotics is the *sign*. In social semiotics, the emphasis has been on the making of signs and how signs develop when people communicate. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 6-7) see representation as a process in which sign-makers seek to make a representation of some object or entity, whether physical or semiotic; their interest in the object is a complex one, arising out of the cultural, social and psychological history of the sign-maker, and focused by the specific context in which the sign-maker produces the sign. While all of the scholars mentioned above have studied sign-making in different ways, none of them have, however, demonstrated O'Toole's deep interest in the meaning-making of sculptures.

In his framework for analyzing sculptures, O'Toole (1994a:36) introduces a system of rank. The notion of 'rank' is also significant in Halliday's description of language, where the grammar is seen as a network of interrelated meaningful choices on different levels (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 31). Since viewers normally move their attention between the whole of a piece of art and the parts constituting the whole,³ O'Toole suggests a three-level rank system for analyzing sculpture: the 'work'⁴, which is the whole sculpture seen as a unity, 'figures', which are elements of the sculpture that the viewers, building on experiences from other representations and from the world, see as distinct parts of the sculpture, and 'members', which are parts of the figures (the lowest level in the rank system,

for example parts of the human body). On every level of the system, the sculpture can be analyzed in combination with the three metafunctions. O'Toole's rank system provides opportunities for the researcher to see the detailed relationships between the part and the whole and to study how meaning is realized on different levels. The rank system makes it possible to zoom in on parts and zoom out on the whole, and to pay attention to salient⁵ features in the sculpture.⁶

3. Method

Our analysis of the Svend Foyn monument will build on the three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and compositional (using Halliday's, rather than O'Toole's for the first two, and O'Toole's for the third). These metafunctions will be combined with O'Toole's three-level rank system, as it was especially developed for analyzing sculptures: 'work', 'figure' and 'member' (see Table 1).

While O'Toole (1994a) has elaborated the different levels in the rank system in a very detailed way, the present analysis will not take into account all the different meaning-making signs that constitute the whole sculpture; we will concentrate on the elements that in our interpretation of the sculpture we consider the most important and useful. These elements are presented in Table 1, to be further explained below.

In our analysis, we will first study the ideational metafunction, followed by the interpersonal and the compositional metafunctions. We should emphasize that all three metafunctions are present at the same time in the meaning-making of the sculpture; the distinction serves to provide a better overview of the analyzed elements.

Sculptures are three-dimensional, and in most cases the viewers may walk around them and study them from different angles. It is, however, not possible for a viewer to see all sides at the same

	IDEATIONAL	INTERPERSONAL	COMPOSITIONAL
WORK	Process Theme Peripeteia	Mass Modality Address	Cohesion Material Relation to space
FIGURE	Body Movement	Mass Address	Static/dynamic Rhythm Parallelism
MEMBER	Body parts Objects	Fullness of realization	Material qualities

Table 1: Analyzed elements⁷

time. Standing on one side of the sculpture, the viewer will have to imagine the other sides for the inner eye. It is therefore important to emphasize that what becomes salient in an interpretation is connected to the perspective of the viewer, which cannot take in the whole at the same time.

In the social semiotic approach to all kinds of texts, including artworks, the context is important (Halliday 1989). A monument is always physically placed in a space, either outdoors or indoors. The physical space itself we see as interacting with the monument and as a part of its meaning-making potential. Conversely, the monument gives meaning to its physical surroundings, as also emphasized by Johnson, when she says that the spaces monuments normally occupy are not just an incidental material backdrop, "... but inscribe the statues with meaning" (1995: 51). In his analysis of Bondarenko's Jurij Gagarin-monument (1980) in Moscow, O'Toole (1994a: 42) points out that the monument is placed near an eight-lane highway linking central Moscow with the university and the new suburbs to the southwest of the city – a central, busy area where people mostly hurry along. On the other hand, the physical place makes it possible for many people to see the monument daily, and thus emphasizes the importance of Gagarin as a hero for all people, an important value in the former Soviet Union.

Figure 1:
*The Svend Foyn
monument*



its meaning-making signs as the starting point. In addition, we build on biographical and historical information as well as on knowledge of the local geography. Art historians normally rely on knowledge of style and art history and of the reception of a particular artistic work; this kind of background is not taken into account in our study.

4. Analysis of the Svend Foyn monument

4.1 The ideational meaning

Our analysis of the ideational metafunction of the Svend Foyn monument will follow O'Toole's rank system (1994a: 36). On the 'work' level, we will focus on 'process', 'theme' and 'peripeteia' (the narrative 'turning point'), as we have indicated in Table 1. The statue is a naturalistic representation of the man Svend Foyn; it closely resembles the extant representations of him in painting. The statue consists of a single figure on a plinth, with the name inscribed on the front; the figure is engaged in a representative action, a movement. In their visual analysis, Kress and van Leeuwen would call this a "narrative process", "...serv[ing] to present unfolding actions and events, processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements" (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59). Svend Foyn's left foot takes a step forward; he has a telescope under his left arm pointing in the direction of the movement, ready to be moved up to his eye by the right hand. By their position, the leg and telescope emphasize the action of walking: Foyn is on his way to something. O'Toole (1994a: 48) claims that any sculpture depicting an extended action has to concentrate a whole narrative into a single moment between two phases of the action, a 'peripeteia', or turning point, including both what has preceded and what will follow.

Svend Foyn's body is turned towards Tønsberg harbour and the

In our analysis of the Svend Foyn monument, we want to briefly discuss its context, by raising primarily two questions: first, what are the limits of the monument's spatial and temporal contexts, and then, how important are those contexts for the analysis of its meaning potential? The overall interplay between a monument and its context in space and time is, however, a large question, by no means to be answered in a brief article, but in need of being elaborated in further research. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that a social semiotic analysis differs from analyses performed by art historians. In our analysis, we take the sculpture in front of us and

sea. The viewer sees him as leaving the city behind, perhaps heading for his ship and going out to sea. The telescope shows that he is ready for work. Also, he is represented in his work clothes, a rather long seaman's jacket, wide trousers, heavy boots, and a simple hat. While Svend Foyn had a life in Tønsberg's high society, and was often seen in elegant attire while ashore, the statue does not represent him as a member of the upper class, but rather as going about his business as a sailor and a whaler. This choice by the sculptor Anders Svor (and perhaps by the people who raised money for the monument) emphasizes Svend Foyn's important work as an entrepreneur, instead of dwelling on his social and official functions. The same emphasis is evident in the realistic representations of two of Svend Foyn's ships, one sail and one steam, that figure on copper medallions on the two sides of the plinth. One of the reasons for this strong emphasis on Svend Foyn as a seaman and whaler may have been that the monument was paid for by a group of Tønsberg whalers, as it reads (translated) on the back of the plinth ('Donated to the city of Tønsberg by the whalers. 1915'). For the latter, he was their hero at sea, owing to his seamanship and his inventions; to them, he was a figure connected to whaling, not some important member of high society.

The theme of the monument is to recall the importance of Svend Foyn's work and perhaps also to signal how vital whaling (and the shipping trade in general) used to be for the city of Tønsberg. Much of the city's development relied on income from seamen, both those working in the merchant fleet and those engaged in whaling. In Svend Foyn's youth, and for several generations after him, most young men in the area went to sea when they still were very young. Through hard work they could feed themselves and their families, and pay their taxes. Svend Foyn represents these men, and this is how he is portrayed. But Svend Foyn also became an important man in city life: his inventions made him and the area famous and, having become wealthy thanks to his inventions and his shipping

business, he was able to give large sums to charity, as mentioned earlier – a further reason to erect him a monument. Today, only few young Norwegian men, both from the Tønsberg area and from the country as a whole, go to sea, and whaling has developed a bad reputation and is mostly prohibited by international law. The Svend Foyn sculpture thus functions as Tønsberg's collective remembrance (Johnson 2002) of the historical importance of shipping and whaling as the basis of the area's shared welfare and growth.

The level of 'figure' is the intermediate level in O'Toole's system of rank. Applying it to the statue's body and movement, we see how the body is represented in a realistic pose: the arms are held in the natural way for walking or taking a step forward, they are not meant to express additional meaning. Similarly, none of the statue's body pose elements are linked to conventional representations of a hero: not even Foyn's head is raised towards the skies (as seems to be many sculptors' agreed convention for representing famous people). In this way, the body pose emphasizes the work theme presented above. The body's movement is not a hasty or quick one, and the body is not bent forward; its motion more closely resembles the quiet step of an elderly person. This calm movement, together with the heavy clothes worn, adds weight and gravitas to the sculpture. This is not a young sailor, or an inventor eagerly setting out with important achievements to come, but a mature man whose great missions have been accomplished. The movement is frozen in the statue's material, and the interplay between Svend Foyn's human body and its bronze representation creates a tension, where there is also some room for interpretation.

On the level of 'member', we will take a closer look at some basic physical forms such as parts of the body and objects. All parts of the sculpture's body are oversized, but still keep their natural proportions. This emphasizes the overall naturalistic expression of the sculpture as a whole. The same is true of the shape of the head and face. The features of the face and the beard closely resemble paintings of Svend

Foyn, as does the hat shaped like the hat Svend Foyn is seen wearing in several pictures and the way the hat has been pulled far down over his head. He is recognizable for everyone who has seen pictures of him. The moving leg is significant and becomes a salient feature of the sculpture as it contributes strongly to the representation of action, a movement forwards. The telescope makes a similar suggestion; as mentioned above, it points in the same direction as the left foot. Together with the telescope held under the left arm, the foot creates two parallel lines in the same direction, a 'vector' (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006), and in this way they support each other in the representation of action. The telescope is the statue's only attribute, and therefore stands out as significant. It is the typical telescope used by seamen, and an attribute most viewers would connect with work at sea. Placed under the man's arm, it is not in use; it is more like an object that Svend Foyn would not leave behind.

In addition, the telescope has another, more symbolic function: it helps its user to see clearly into the distance and even to observe the stars. In the times of Svend Foyn, a ship's navigation relied heavily on the position of the stars. To see far and to navigate well is exactly what Svend Foyn did through his inventions and his promotion of new developments in whaling. Through his invention of the harpoon, he gave birth to industrial whaling in a way it had never been done before. He was able to see far into the future and to understand the potential of whaling with more efficient hunting methods. Ironically, he could not, however, see that precisely those efficient whaling methods would come close to extinguishing several whale species and make whaling itself a hated business among large groups of people in the international community.

Summing up the analysis of the sculpture's ideational meaning, we wish to particularly point out the naturalistic representation of the body, with its emphasis on the sailor and whaler Sven Foyn, not the famous and rich man. We also find it interesting that the statue's clothes and body pose underline the working man rather than the

admired hero; in these elements, we perceive a close connection to the people who were behind the installation of the sculpture, the group of whalers who somehow were Svend Foyn's peers, and to the very theme of the sculpture. Likewise, the process and the narrative turning point that give life to the sculpture and connect it to the sea are important here.

4.2 The interpersonal meaning

The interpersonal meaning of the monument is connected to the overall question of how it relates to the viewer. In a historical and cultural context, Foyn is described as a successful businessman and a benefactor of the city of Tønsberg (see above). When analyzing how his statue interacts with the public (such as for instance the city's inhabitants and the tourists), we must pay attention to the statue's concrete meaning potential. On the level of 'work', we will concentrate on three aspects: 'mass', 'modality' and 'address'. Since sculptures mostly are realized in hard materials, such as metal or stone, representing living beings such as people, animals and so on may seem paradoxical; however, when sculpted, the living being appears both abstract and concrete, according to O'Toole (1994a: 38). The Foyn statue is realized in bronze, with a massive plinth made of larvikite. The mineral larvikite, Norway's national stone, is found in abundance along the coastline near the city of Tønsberg; it has been used as building material in churches and other structures ever since the medieval period. Even though the metallic surface and the massive stone plinth may evoke static connotations, the chosen materials also realize dynamic and interpersonal meaning potentials. Used in the plinth of a statue in the city of Tønsberg, the larvikite rock expresses local affiliation as well as interplay with powerful building traditions. In addition, the surface of the rock exhibits dark and bright glimmering crystals of feldspar that catch

the eye of the viewer and give life to the plinth. When the sun shines on the monument, the viewer may perceive an association with the movements of the sea.

In linguistics, the term 'modality' refers to resources for expressing truth of utterances in terms of probability and frequency. In visual communication, Kress and van Leeuwen explain modality as 'designing models of reality' (2006: 159ff). Visual modality can be of various types, such as naturalistic, abstract, technological and sensory. In language, as well as in images, modality markers may be described in terms of their variation, as degrees along a cline from low to high. When it comes to analyzing sculptures, O'Toole (1994a: 37) explains modality as the degree to which reality is represented at each of the system's four levels: 'life-like', 'exaggerated', 'attenuated' and 'abstract'.

Svend Foyn's monumental representation may be described as an interplay between life-like and exaggerated modality. In form, the body of the statue is designed as naturalistic and authentic (see above). Dressed in a seaman's work clothes, holding a nautical telescope under his left arm, Foyn is portrayed as a man of the people in his historical context. This naturalistic representation makes the statue easily accessible in terms of comprehensibility. At the same time, the statue is oversized, compared with the human body. O'Toole claims that "... scale in relation to the human body is a crucial Modal factor in our perception of sculpture" (O'Toole 1994a: 44). The exaggerated representation of Svend Foyn's body prevents complete identification in terms of a balanced relationship between the viewer and the represented person. In general, oversizing persons portrayed in monuments is a semiotic resource for expressing power in relation to the viewer (Kruk 2008; O'Toole 1994a). Furthermore, the Foyn statue is placed on a plinth which by its height underlines the distance and asymmetrical relation between the portrayed 'hero' and the viewer.

When analyzing the interpersonal meaning of 'work', we must

also pay attention to how physically accessible the statue is for the public. O'Toole emphasizes that mass carries an important interpersonal meaning potential. He mentions the material surface of the monument as important in terms of how touchable and tactile the sculpture is. Placed on its rather high plinth, the Foyn statue appears above the public. We can look at the sculpture, but hardly touch it.

'Address' may be analyzed at the level of 'work' as well as at the level of 'figure'. At the highest rank level, the question is how a public monument addresses its actual location or place, and how the actual statue relates to the street, the square, the adjacent buildings, etc.; the sculpture's 'address' thus depends to a great extent on its public accessibility (O'Toole 1994a: 37). The statue of Foyn stands on a central place in the city, near Tønsberg Cathedral, and under the historical *Slottsfjellet* (Castle Mountain). In virtue of this location, the Foyn statue is symbolically connected to the early history of Tønsberg and Norway (see further below). By its towering presence close to the city centre, the statue stands out as a landmark in the environment, and through its symbolic dimension contributes to the articulation of collective identity (Johnson 2002).

On the back of the plinth, the Foyn statue shows an inscription addressed to the city, indicating that the statue is to be regarded as a gift ('Donated to the city of Tønsberg by whalers. 1915'). At the time when the statue was raised, the whalers represented an important and socially respected group in Norwegian public opinion, quite contrary to the general perceptions and opinions currently held internationally, which regard whaling as a controversial and even environmentally hostile activity. Notwithstanding the whalers' possible good intentions in their own local and temporal contexts, the Foyn statue can also be understood as a manifestation of the power they wielded. As emphasized by Duby & Daval "... art is the favourite instrument of power" (2010; 698).

At the level of 'figure', 'address' has to do with how the statue

addresses the viewers or passers by, in terms of face, stance and gaze. Basing ourselves on the rank system, we can analyze 'address' by zooming in on specific parts of the sculptured body. In a multi-modal analysis of social interaction, bodily and sensory modes are considered as important resources of meaning (Flewitt 2009). Unlike what is the case for a living body, statues are immobile; even so, the position of the hands and the body's stance may be interpreted as a way of addressing the viewer (O'Toole 1994a: 62). In the case of the Foyn statue, the hands appear, as we have seen, in a rather passive position, as not really addressing the viewer. Svend Foyn's stance is majestic, but relaxed.

In social semiotics, gaze is considered another important way of addressing the viewer. Since (unlike e.g. paintings) statues are three-dimensional, gaze will usually operate from one angle at a time. In the case of the Foyn statue, for a viewer standing in front of it, the represented person is gazing at the sea and the landscape, rather than at the viewer. Since viewers have to look at the statue from a low angle, the person represented has symbolic power over the viewer. And, as Foyn does not gaze directly at the viewer, the imagined power relation between the statue and its viewer appears rather distanced and impersonal (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 90ff). The statue does not demand anything of its viewers; instead, the viewer is constructed as an observer and possible admirer, someone who can look up to the local hero, in a concrete as well as in a metaphorical sense. (See Fig. 2)

4.3 The compositional meaning

In the matrix of functions and systems in sculpture, O'Toole (1994a) considers the third function as being compositional. It is explained as combining Halliday's textual metafunction, including its textual, cohesive and spatial features, with the compositional function of



Figure 2:
*Interpersonal
meaning of the
statue*

painting. In sculptures, according to O'Toole, form and material are foregrounded aspects of the compositional function; similarly, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) use the term composition in their framework for analyzing visual texts. However, due to the fact that a statue is three-dimensional, the task of analyzing sculptural composition is rather different from that of analyzing a printed page. A broader definition of the compositional function, which includes three-dimensional objects, is presented by van Leeuwen in his book

Introduction to Social Semiotics as follows: "Composition is about arranging elements – people, things, abstract shapes, etc. – in or on a semiotic space – for example, a page, a screen, a canvas, a shelf, a square, a city" (van Leeuwen 2005: 198). According to van Leeuwen (2005: 198), composition structures the information value of elements, both in relation to each other and in relation to the viewers.

We will now have a look at the three compositional aspects on the level of work: 'cohesion', 'material' and 'relation to space'. Analyzing 'cohesion', we shall take into consideration all the elements which form Svend Foyn's monumental representation. We shall identify four significantly different elements: the plinth, the statue, the visual representations of ships (placed at the two sides of the plinth), and the verbal inscriptions (placed on its back). While the former two elements are three-dimensional, the latter two are not. Between all of the four elements, there is thematic cohesion. The statue itself represents a sailor, especially emphasised by the nautical telescope which Foyn holds in his left arm; as mentioned above, the telescope functions as a symbolic attribute (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 108). The statue faces the harbour and the sea. The sea theme occurs in the two ships represented on copper signs placed on each side of the plinth, and is repeated in the verbal inscription on the back of the plinth ('Donated to the city of Tønsberg by whalers. 1915'). See Fig. 3.

The materials used in this monument are, as mentioned above, bronze, copper and the mineral larvikite, Norway's national stone. These materials appear heavy and traditional and are anchored in a local and national context. Using bronze in a statue which represents a memorable person – a local hero – is a traditional choice of material which connects the Foyn statue to similar public monuments of famous persons.

As to the compositional function's relation to space, the statue's composition may affect the viewer's movement and actions. Van



Figure 3: *The inscription on the back of the monument*

Leeuwen (2005: 216-217) describes how the composition of rooms in a museum affects how visitors negotiate the museal space. In this respect, the design of the Foyn monument is extremely interesting. As with any sculpture, the statue is three-dimensional and the viewer can see it from all sides; this is also exploited in the design of the plinth, each side of which contains specific information. Thus, the composition is leading the viewer around the monument. On whatever side the viewer stands, he or she will find new information: on the front and back sides, there is verbal information about Svend Foyn and the whalers who donated the statue to the city of Tønsberg, while on the left and right, there are images of ships.

Next, we analyze the aspects of 'static/dynamic', 'rhythm', and 'parallelism' on the level of 'figure'. Even though a sculpture is three-dimensional, the human body can be understood as having a

front (face) and a support (back). Arms and ears function as lateral and symmetrical features of the human body (van Leeuwen 2005: 212). In our analysis of the ideational function, we explained how Svend Foyn is represented in a dynamic position: moving, with his left foot taking a step forward. We also pointed out how the foot and the hand holding the telescope create two parallel lines pointing in the same direction. Thus, the ordinary parallel between the arms of the human body is replaced by the parallelism between left foot and left hand, created by the sculptor.

Zooming out again, we find a similar dynamic in the plinth, by which the two ships represented in the copper medaillons on each side of the plinth likewise form a parallel. To the viewer walking around the whole monument, the ships will appear as repeated and rhythmic elements. This dynamic effect is not only due to the parallelism, but also to the two ships being represented as if they were in action, moving across the rolling sea. The ships' movements are parallel, but not identical. They are visualisations of two different variants of ships: one side shows an old-fashioned windjammer, while the other shows a, for that time, modern steamship. When these two ships are brought together in one and the same monument, we can interpret them as narrating the historical development of shipping. See Figs. 4 & 5.

The statue's material qualities are further related to the level of 'member'. The statue is made of bronze, and due to the years of exposure to rain and wind, it has acquired the greenish patina and irregular surface which are typical for public statues of this kind. The irregular surface increases the notion of authenticity – it breathes life into the figure, so to speak. Zooming in further, we may notice the representation's details, and how they increase the degree of naturalism and life-like representation: the viewer can even observe the structure of Foyn's clothes, and how they are folding around his body. Likewise, the viewer senses that the hat is not new: it



Figures 4 and 5: *Svend Foyn's ships on the plinth of the monument*

looks like it has been worn for a long time. In general, a hat may be interpreted as the 'crowning element' of a represented person: without a hat, the represented individual would appear exposed (van Leeuwen 2005: 213).

4.4. The context of the monument

As mentioned above, the social semiotic model of context is inspired by ethnographic and anthropological perspectives. A text is, according to Halliday, a realization or an actualization of the language system in social situations; its origins are found in oral communication (Halliday 1985). At the same time, however, the text may influence the context, and the relation between text and context is therefore *dynamic* – a dynamic relation between system and realization which obtains in any semiotic system.

Another kind of context is present when a reader encounters a pre-existing text, or when a modern viewer comes face to face with a monument from an earlier time. In the latter encounter, the cultural and personal knowledge and experience that the viewer brings to the sculpture play an important role. Whereas cultural

knowledge and experience are acquired by the viewers in virtue of their membership in a society, their individual knowledge and experiences are the result of their personal history. When we analyze the context of the Svend Foyn monument, we have to consider its physical surroundings, the *space* and *time*, but we also have to take the knowledge and experience of possible viewers into account.

The Svend Foyn monument is placed in a prominent location, close to Tønsberg cathedral (see Fig. 1); this provides it with spatial power. The location lies a little away from the city's busy shopping centre, in surroundings where people go for a walk or go to church; it is called 'Svend Foyn's place'. The monument is placed at the top of a slope descending to the harbour, and both the location and the meaning-making of the sculpture (as analyzed earlier) connect Svend Foyn with the sea. Even a viewer with little knowledge of Svend Foyn and the whaling history will easily make this connection, also aided by the representations of the two ships on either side of the plinth and the inscription on its back, telling who donated the monument. In addition, an information sign is placed close to the monument with the seal of the city of Tønsberg and an inscribed picture of Svend Foyn with his ship⁸. The verbal text's headline (in translation) is: 'Local history. Seals and whaling', and the text gives information in Norwegian about the importance of sealing and whaling and of Svend Foyn's work. The sign anchors the monument in time and connects it to the history of the city and the nation, extending the historical context of the sculpture for the viewer.

The informative sign does not, however, link the sculpture to the nearby church, even though its location close to the church gives it a certain prominence: the cathedral of Tønsberg is a significant building in the city space, not only due to its physical size, but also on account of its status as a religious building. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) emphasise that viewers will normally try to make a connection between objects that are placed in close proximity. For viewers without knowledge of the city of Tønsberg, this location will prob-

ably merely underline the importance of Svend Foyn. For viewers with extensive knowledge of Svend Foyn and the city's history, the location has a deeper meaning. Foyn supported the building of the cathedral with large sums of money; he also paid for the font and for a sculpture of Christ inside the church. This fact links the monument to the church and conversely, the church to the monument.

The sculpture is also located close to the hill called *Slottsfjellet* ('The Castle Mountain'), which is a prominent place in Tønsberg both physically and historically. Again, the spatial context is linked to the context of time. The hill towers over the town, and can be seen from all angles within the city. Historically, the fortress of Tunsberghus, with a royal residence (the castle), churches and a monastery was located on the top of this hill. The fortress and castle are mentioned in historical sources from the 12th century; they are closely related to several Norwegian kings from the medieval period and to important events in the history of the Norwegian nation. The buildings burned in 1503, and only the ruins of their foundations are left. Today, Slottsfjellet is a historical site adjacent to Slottsfjell museum; it is visited by tourists and school classes, walkers, joggers and people on Sunday picnics. For a viewer standing in front of the Svend Foyn sculpture and looking up slightly to the left, Slottsfjellet is in the direction of the church. Especially if the viewer has some knowledge of the history of the city, he or she will be able to construct a link from the sculpture to the mountain and vice versa. Both the events of the medieval period and those of the history of whaling in the 19th and 20th centuries are prominent parts of the city's past. In this way, the hill with its history and the Svend Foyn monument reinforce each other in the city space.

When trying to anchor the Foyn sculpture in the history of sealing and whaling, one should be aware that its historical and modern contexts may be interpreted in very different ways in accordance with a viewer's background. An older generation of inhabitants



Figure 6: *The monument of Svend Foyn is placed outside the cathedral of Tønsberg, near the harbour (square 15). The location of the sculpture is also close to the hill Slottsfjellet (The Castle Mountain, square 13 and 14).*

of the city and the area will have quite extensive knowledge about Svend Foyn and appreciate him as a seaman, whaler and inventor, while the younger generations have less or no knowledge of him as a person and may not appreciate his achievements. A third group of viewers may even have strong negative attitudes towards sealing and whaling. Upon reading the text on the informative sign, they may approach the sculpture in a negative way and see the monument as a manifestation of Norway's current bad reputation as a country defending and practicing sealing and whaling. Which shows that the context of a monument may change considerably over time, in the same way that people's attitudes towards many other sculptured figures (for instance, the monuments of Soviet leaders) have changed.

5. *Summing up*

Our analysis has built on Michael O'Toole's three-level rank system of analysis of sculpture (O'Toole 1994a). Like Boeriis (2012: 136), we too see O'Toole's system as a positive contribution to the analysis of visual art, in particular with reference to O'Toole's statement about how we normally read a piece of art: our eyes tend to scan the surface and *home in* on configurations that we recognize as a member or a figure, so that a kind of shuttling process begins to take place between our images of each unit and the object as a whole (O'Toole 1994b: 12). The three-level rank system has made it possible for us to focus on different levels of the sculpture's meaning-making in a systematic way and to zoom in and out, linking the three levels together in order to make meaning. We want to stress that this zooming (or 'homing in') process is key to seeing how all elements on the 'figure' and 'member' levels achieve the overall meaning of the work. On the other hand, we also want to emphasise that the three levels of the rank system cannot be seen as clearly separate categories; rather they form a continuum in the process of reading

the individual elements and the whole of a sculpture. The three metafunctions are crucial in order for us to see the three fundamental kinds of meaning, working together in every visual representation as they do in verbal text.

In our current analysis, we could only focus on some of the elements in O'Toole's framework for analyzing sculptures in Table 1 above; as the framework contains many details, a more thorough analysis would require more space than was available in the present article.

In particular, two questions were asked about a monument's context (in the method section above): one, where are the limits of the spatial and temporal contexts of a monument, and two, how important are these spatial and temporal contexts for the analysis of its meaning potential? As our analysis of the context of the monument has shown, it is difficult, if not impossible, to completely circumscribe the contexts of space and time. These contexts depend not only on the monument's content, but also on the cultural and individual knowledge and experiences the viewer brings to it. Certain layers of physical contexts appear to be of importance in encounters with sculptures; in their turn, these layers combine with time, and therefore evoke historical contexts in different ways. In addition, our analysis has shown that both the physical context and the temporal context are significant for a monument's interpretation. A prominent location gives prominence to a sculpture; but conversely, a prominent sculpture increases the prominence of its physical surroundings. A monument always tells a history in relation to its context in space and time.

*Department of Language
Vestfold University College, Norway
Email Eva Maagerø: eva.maagero@hive.no
Email Aslaug Veum: aslaug.veum@hive.no*

Notes

1. We use the notion *monument* for the statue and the plinth on which the statue is placed. In this case, the foundation is of great importance for the meaning potential. This will be made clear in the analysis.
2. O'Toole uses the notion *sculpture* in his book. This notion is used for both realistic and non-realistic representations. We will mainly use the notion *statue* in this article, as statue is often used for realistic sculptures in the relevant literature. When referring to O'Toole's framework for analysing sculpture, we also use the notion *sculpture*.
3. The same process takes place when an artist is developing a piece of art (Thorsnes & Veum 2013).
4. O'Toole (1994b: 283) defines 'work' as "The highest unit of the Rank scale for painting and sculpture". In other words, in the analysis of sculpture, he does not prefer to use the term 'text'. O'Toole emphasizes: "Although it ['work'] appears as a self-evident category, a distinct entity on display in a gallery, or a city square or a park, it needs to be recognized as the rank within which particular systems of choice in the Representational, Modal and Compositional functions operate." (O'Toole 1994b: 283).
5. In our analysis, we draw on van Leeuwen's definition of salience: "Salience is one of the three key aspects of a composition. It creates difference between the elements of a composition in terms of the degree to which they attract the viewer's attention" (van Leeuwen 2005: 284).
6. Boeriis gives a presentation and an evaluation of O'Toole's rank system in his article *Tekstzoom. Om en dynamisk funksjonel rangstruktur i visuelle tekster* (Boeriis 2012).
7. The table is inspired by O'Toole's table 'Functions and systems in sculpture' (O'Toole 1994a: 36).
8. The picture is the same image that was used on a stamp from 1947.

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