

Title of chapter:

**PROTECTION STORIES: A CASE OF MILITARY PROPAGANDA?**

Authors:

Ola Bøe-Hansen, Norwegian Armed Forces, Department of Veterans Affairs, Building 48,  
Akershus Fortress, 0015 Oslo, Norway

Email: [olabhansen@mil.no](mailto:olabhansen@mil.no)

Tone Kvernbekk, University of Oslo, Department of Education, PO Box 1092 Blindern, 0317  
Oslo, Norway

Email: [tone.kvernbekk@iped.uio.no](mailto:tone.kvernbekk@iped.uio.no)

Running head:

**Protection Stories**

Abstract:

In this chapter we analyse one particular military commercial. It was released in 2014 as part of a series of commercials commissioned by the Norwegian Armed Forces Media Centre to promote an understanding in the population for why a country needs an armed force. This particular ad is in the form of a short video. Our question is whether it can be considered to be propaganda – a question of some importance to the military, which would lose a lot of the public standing it aims to gain if it was identified as a propagandist. The ad is built up of two stories of protection, one domestic and one military. It thus has the structure of an analogy, and we analyse it in some detail to determine whether the domestic protection story serves or can serve as an argument for the military protection story. Based on an exploration of the structural and narrative affordances of the ad and on the lack of both considerations and counter-considerations, we conclude that the ad can be categorized as propaganda. Albeit, we argue, propaganda of a somewhat unorthodox kind.

Keywords:

Analogical reasoning, Armed Forces, audience, counter-considerations, differences, narrative affordances, persuasion, propaganda, second-order functions, similarities.

## Introduction

Norway is considered to be a peaceful corner in a world ridden by armed conflicts and military operations. Nevertheless, in the last several decades the Norwegian Armed Forces have participated in several international military operations of longer or shorter duration, for instance in Lebanon, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq. But in recent years there has been a redirection of focus, from military missions and operations abroad back to national sovereignty. In 2010 the Norwegian Armed Forces Media Centre increased the scope of their outreach from purposes of recruitment to include the entire populace as their target audience. This widening of audience meant a widening of the message, from the benefits of a military education to why it is important to have a national defence force. Supported by the Chief of the Armed Forces the Media Centre commissioned a series of commercials to be shown on national TV and in movie theatres. The basic aim of these commercials was to promote an understanding in the general public for why the country needs an armed force, with national sovereignty, integrity and culture as the main context.

It is necessary for any Defence Force to have a good standing in the population. The whole series of ads is part of various reputation-building strategies employed by the Armed Forces. Corporate reputation in this context refers to the sum of expectations the population has to the Defence and how the Defence is generally evaluated and looked upon. Broadly speaking corporate reputation arises from the intersection of expectations and experiences; created by the promises made by the organization in question and its delivery on those promises. We shall in this chapter single out one of the commercials from the series for specific attention and analysis. Our selected ad was released in 2014 and is in the form of a short video; it is multimodal but relies heavily on visual images. Like all ads, it is designed to convey a certain message, and the basic theme of this one is *protection*. The ad is protreptic in character; it is designed to instruct and persuade, it both speaks to and draws upon common interests and values. Critical voices have been raised as to whether the ad is more propagandistic than informational in nature, both inside and outside the military (e.g. Brannfjell, 2015). If it is the case that the ad is propaganda, it will be a problem for the Armed Forces. It would not serve the reputation of the Armed Forces well if they were associated with propaganda; that would be harmful to their standing in the general public. So is the ad propaganda? If so, of what kind? And if so, how bad is it? We shall work toward an answer to these questions by analysing how the ad communicates its message, its structure and its tools, and how it involves the reader/viewer. Basically, we argue, this ad is somewhat unorthodox

both in its logical structure and in its presumed propagandistic qualities. But before we embark on our analysis we shall briefly describe the ad and its content.

The video is very short and takes only about 50 seconds. In its bare bones the story line is as follows: It is night time. We are inside a house. The images are accompanied by tense music. The house is quiet except for the soft, rhythmic breathing of a sleeping family and a dripping tap in the kitchen. We see the parents and the children, one after the other. Suddenly the baby opens her eyes. The scene shifts to show the ceiling and we see the blinking red light of a smoke detector. A text appears saying “To protect what we have is not only important for people” (our translation).

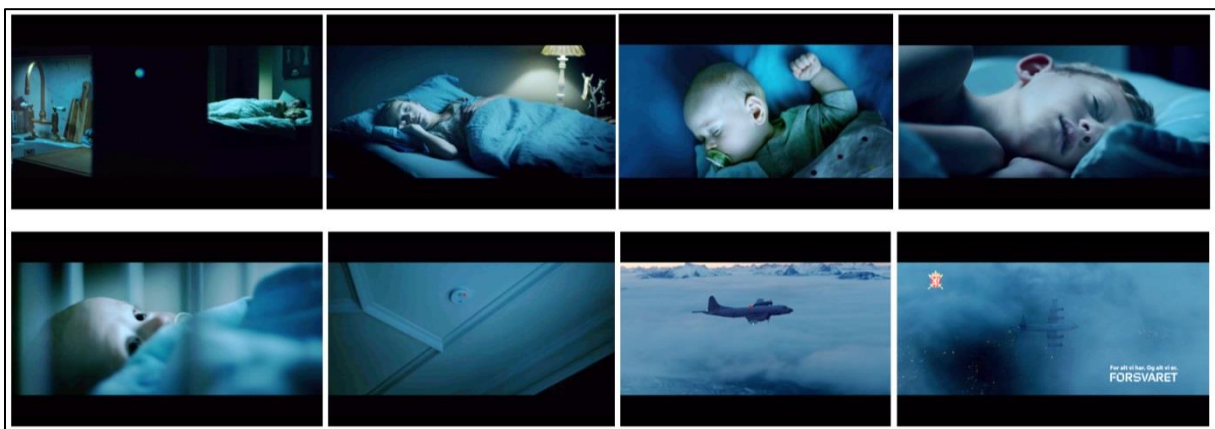


Fig 1. Screenshots from video (Armed Forces Media Centre, 2014)

Then the scene changes from the ceiling to a maritime patrol aircraft with a blinking red light flying over Norwegian territory. A new text appears: “It is important for a country too” (our translation). A couple of seconds later the video ends with the Norwegian Armed Forces logo and slogan: “For all that we have. And for all that we are. The Armed Forces” (our translation). The lighting is delicate and the colours are held in different shades of blue throughout the video. Readers are asked to imagine a red light blinking on the smoke detector (screenshot 6) and on the military patrol aircraft (screenshot 7).

This military ad incorporates two protection stories into its story line; one featuring a baby and her family being protected by a smoke detector and one featuring a country being protected by the military. This gives the ad the structure of an analogy. The two protection stories belong to different domains; the intimation naturally being that there is some kind of connection between them. Because of the chronological order of the two stories in the video, the ad invites us to make inferences about the second one on the basis of the first one. Thus, on the face of it, the ad invites us to draw the conclusion that the Armed Forces protect the

country and that we, the inhabitants, should feel safe and secure. But there is more to it than that, and we shall explore the ad in some detail; with a special view to the question of propaganda.

### **Interlude: Initial Notes on Propaganda**

In Europe and North America the term “propaganda” refers to a form of discourse which is considered to be both unethical and illogical, and which, unsurprisingly, has strong negative connotations. To categorize a piece of discourse or communication as propaganda is tantamount to suggesting that it is intentionally deceptive and manipulative and that the arguments employed are unreliable, dubious or biased. The term originated with Pope Gregory XIII (late 16<sup>th</sup> century) and his committee of church officials called the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* – congregation for the propagation of faith (Walton, 1997). The aim of the *Congregatio* was to combat the Reformation, which it did by vigorously advocating a one-sided point of view on issues of church doctrine. Clearly today’s understanding of propaganda is reminiscent of this historical content, with the exception of course that the Pope viewed it as positive. Douglas Walton defines propaganda fairly neutrally as content that pushes “a particular viewpoint in a way designed to promote it to a mass audience” (1997, p.385). Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell define it as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (1999, p.6). Interestingly, and understandably, NATO takes an interest in the topic of propaganda and defines it as “Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view” (2014, AJP 3.10.1). NATO’s interest is understandable because propaganda reaches its height in times of war, where all enemy opinion-forming activities (but not one’s own) are characterized as propaganda and therefore can be dismissed.

All definitions presuppose that propaganda is addressed to a mass audience, and as we have seen this is also the case with our ad. We have characterized its basic theme as “protection”. But this does not make sense as the *aim* of the ad – to persuade the audience (the population) of the viewpoint that the military protects you does not cut much ice, and would not by itself qualify the ad as propaganda. Propaganda is not the same as (mere) persuasion. Something stronger is surely aimed at.

How do we recognize a given piece of discourse as propaganda? Walton usefully suggests the following ten characteristics: (1) A dialogue structure with a sender and a receiver. (2) A message. (3) A purpose; often to support the existence, aims and interests of a regime or an organization. (4) Involvement of social groups; since the receiver is a mass audience. (5) Indifference to logical reasoning; if appeals to emotion work better than use of evidence (but use of evidence is not precluded). (6) One-sided argumentation; like that of the *Congregatio*. (7) Use of persuasion. (8) Justification by results; Walton suggests that propaganda is instrumental and is “justified by the supposed value of bringing about a particular outcome said to be necessary for a good end” (p.398). (9) Emotive language and persuasive definitions. (10) An eristic type of dialogue; which Walton describes as aggressively partisan and emotional. Walton holds a nuanced and subtle theory of propaganda. He views it as a distinctive type of discourse, and warns against *a priori* condemnations of it. Arguments are not necessarily false or bad because they are part of propaganda, he argues, and propaganda is not inherently irrational or deceptive. Propaganda must be evaluated, like any other argument, and the best attitude, Walton concludes, is one of careful scepticism. Interestingly, NATO also holds a nuanced view of propaganda, albeit more crudely expressed than Walton’s view. NATO distinguishes between white, grey and black propaganda, all of which we shall come back to.

### **The Two Protection Stories as Analogy**

The ad is in the form of an analogy. It is not difficult to understand why the Norwegian Armed Forces chose this format to convey their message; analogies are well-known tools for thinking and analogical reasoning is fundamental to human thought. As Paul Bartha (2013) puts it, history shows that “analogical reasoning has played an important, but sometimes mysterious, role in a wide range of problem-solving contexts” (p.1). Analogies come in many different versions and perform different functions. Analogies can be inductive, deductive, figurative, heuristic, structural. They can be used to make predictions, make inferences, argue for claims, persuade, illustrate, elucidate. It is unfortunate, Bruce Waller (2001) notes, that it often seems to be supposed that all analogies can be covered with a single analysis. But despite the elusiveness of the term, the occasional mysterious ways of analogical reasoning and the many varieties and functions of analogies, there seems to be much agreement about the basic workings of analogies: they contain a *source* and a *target*, and we reason from an

assumed likeness between source and target (or to several targets) to some further similarity between them (Hitchcock 2017, p.201). William Sacksteder (1974, p.235) defines analogy as an argument citing a similarity which can be the basis for an inference. Bartha's definition is somewhat more demanding: an analogy between a source and a target is a one-to-one mapping between objects, properties, relations and functions in the source case and those in the target case (p.5). But on the whole they agree; in general we specify an analogy by indicating the most significant similarities – and sometimes the most significant differences. In our case here the smoke detector protection story (henceforth called Story 1) serves as the source, and the military aircraft protection story (henceforth called Story 2) serves as the target. But how, exactly, is this source–target relation to be understood? In other words, what kind of analogy are we dealing with here?

#### *What the Protection Stories analogy is not*

We would like to begin our exploration by eliminating some common forms of analogy. Intuitively all analogies seem by their nature to be inductive – we make inferences about the target which may or may not be true, as the most common definition of analogy alluded to above suggests (Bartha 2013, Hitchcock 2017). But our military analogy does not belong to the inductive category of analogy. In inductive analogical schemes we map similarities between source and target, and then make a prediction as to whether the target also has a certain further characteristic, say characteristic *f*, which is already found to be present in the source. Such analogical reasoning is inductive, probabilistic and fallible. But the Protection Stories analogy is not about predicting specific characteristics in the target. It is already clear that both stories are about protection, so we need not predict that. Moreover, it is by no means clear which similarities we should or could start from, if we were to treat our analogy as an inductive one, or which characteristic of Story 1 it might possibly be interesting to predict of Story 2. On the face of it, there is one similarity between Story 1 and Story 2, and that is the red blinking light. And that is not sufficient in itself to get an inductive analogical argument going. Nor does this perspective on the analogy give us any intake to discuss it as a possible piece of propaganda.

Next let us look at deductive analogies and see if they can accommodate our military analogy. According to Bruce Waller (2001, p.201), deductive analogies have the following structure:

1. We both agree with case *a*.

2. The most plausible reason for believing *a* is the acceptance of principle *C*.
3. *C* implies *b* (*b* is a case that fits under principle *C*).
4. Therefore, consistency requires the acceptance of *b*.

This piece of analogical reasoning is deductive because it involves a deduction from a principle; it is not a matter of the probability that people who accept *a* also would accept *b*. This deductive analogical scheme might – paradoxical as it may seem – be closer to the Protection Stories analogy than the inductive scheme. It could run something like this: you hold the principle that you have an obligation to keep babies (and their families) from harm, and this principle would then imply that the military has an obligation to keep the country at large from harm. This interpretation of the military analogy keeps true to what the title of our chapter suggests; protection as the basic theme of the analogy and as a possible common principle to connect the two stories.

As Waller points out, there are basically two ways of querying such arguments. You can disagree with the principle and for example maintain that you do not have an obligation to keep babies from harm unless you explicitly have taken it upon yourself. Or you can maintain that the analogy is flawed because the principle does not cover the target – while the protection principle applies to the source it does not apply to the target, and so consistency does not require you to accept the target case. For example, conscientious objectors would probably find Story 1 reasonable, but would resist the inference that they are thereby required to accept Story 2. And again – how would we connect a deductive version of the Protection Stories analogy to the question of propaganda? If Story 1 and Story 2 are deductively united by the same principle it would be hard to argue that the principle is perfectly fine in Story 1 while it is propagandistic in Story 2. We conclude that the military analogy is not accommodated by a deductive analogical structure.

Waller has a third category: figurative analogies. Unlike inductive and deductive analogies, which are arguments, figurative analogies are used to illustrate or elucidate, Waller says. He uses Samuel Johnson's description of the distinction between testimony and argument as an example: Testimony is like an arrow shot from a long bow; it depends on the strength of the hand. Argument is like an arrow from a cross-bow, which has equal force even if shot by a weak hand (2001, p.200). As Waller points out, this analogy *illustrates* the distinction, it does not *argue* for it. Now, if the Protection Stories analogy is not an argument – as we suspect it is not – could it then be a figurative analogy? That does not quite seem to fit either. Figurative analogies are generally expressed in terms of “is like” and are (highly) metaphorical in character. That is not the case with the Protection Stories analogy; it is quite

concrete and there is nothing of the “is like” in it. We conclude that the military analogy is not a figurative analogy. And again – no obvious intake to propaganda, as judged by Walton’s suggested characteristics, is found here.

*So what is it?*

Thus far we have argued that the Protection Stories analogy falls outside at least three common forms of analogy. We have to look for other approaches and vocabularies. However, we will not venture too far afield, but inquire into analogy as it is discussed in literary and narrative theory. Here we find a definition of analogy as a *spatial pattern* (Sternberg 1978, p.154), a definition that is very different from the ones generally found in argumentation theory, but which, as we shall see, opens up for unexpected analytical possibilities concerning our military analogy. The definition is cashed out in much the same way, in terms of similarities and differences between at least two entities. Nilli Diengott (1985, p.229) defines analogy as a syntagmatic (combinatory) principle. Drawing on the works of Meir Sternberg and Menakhem Perry, she discusses different forms of analogy; among them a category that deals with the relations of similarities to differences in analogies. All analogies are based on the understanding that source and target are not identical; that is to say, the existence of differences is presupposed. Inductive analogies, as we have seen, focus on similarities. Deductive analogies focus on consistency. Straight and contrasted analogies take both similarities and differences into account: straight analogies are predominantly similarity-based, whereas contrasted analogies are predominantly difference-based. Now, the Protection Stories analogy provides an intriguing case. Is it a straight or a contrasted analogy? This question brings the audience into the picture, Diengott argues, since you cannot simply count similarities and differences in order to judge whether an analogy is straight or contrasted. Rather, the categorization of a given analogy depends on the actual patterns identified by the audience, and whether the audience judges the identified differentiating features to be essential or merely superficial. In our case the images from the two protection stories hardly share any likenesses at all, aside from the blinking red light. Babies and families are not like countries or physical territories, and there are many more differences than similarities between smoke detectors and military aircrafts. At the outset one would therefore assume that this analogy is a contrasted analogy that aims to elucidate source and target by portraying them as contrasts. Yet, we submit, viewers are somehow *not* invited to see Story 1 and Story 2 as contrasts. There is something about the video (hopefully it shines through in the



screenshots) that invites the perception that the differences are superficial only – the most important property they have in common.

The second category of analogy centres on how the analogical link between the components is made. Again we have two varieties, explicit and implicit analogies. Explicit analogies are announced in the text itself, by author, narrator or a character. Implicit analogies are constructs made by the reader, who notices similarities and dissimilarities between entities and uses them to construct analogical patterns. Now, the Protection Stories analogy is largely visual, but it does have some text. The text tells you that protection of what we have is important to both people and countries; hence, this similarity is explicitly pointed out. It does not require much imagination on the part of the audience, we submit, to construct implicit analogical patterns between Story 1 and Story 2 despite the lack of overt similarities.

### **Structural and Narrative Affordances**

Thus far we have implicitly presupposed that similarities largely concern entities and/or their qualities. For example the red blinking light, which occurs in both of the protection stories, and which is highly suggestive indeed. As William Sacksteder (1974) points out, similarities can also concern relations and structures. On Sacksteder's analysis these three kinds of similarity are cumulative, such that a similarity of relations includes a similarity of qualities, and a similarity of structure includes both relations and qualities. A structural analogy is "*one which cites a similarity between structures which are taken as permitting transformations among the ingredient units and connections and arrangements*" (p.241, italics in original). And indeed, this is what we think the Protection Stories analogy is: structural. But whereas Sacksteder sees structural analogies as arguments, we do not think that our military analogy amounts to an argument. We shall substantiate our viewpoint shortly. Below is the Protection Stories analogy set out in terms of what we take to be its basic structure, with four items and vertical relations:

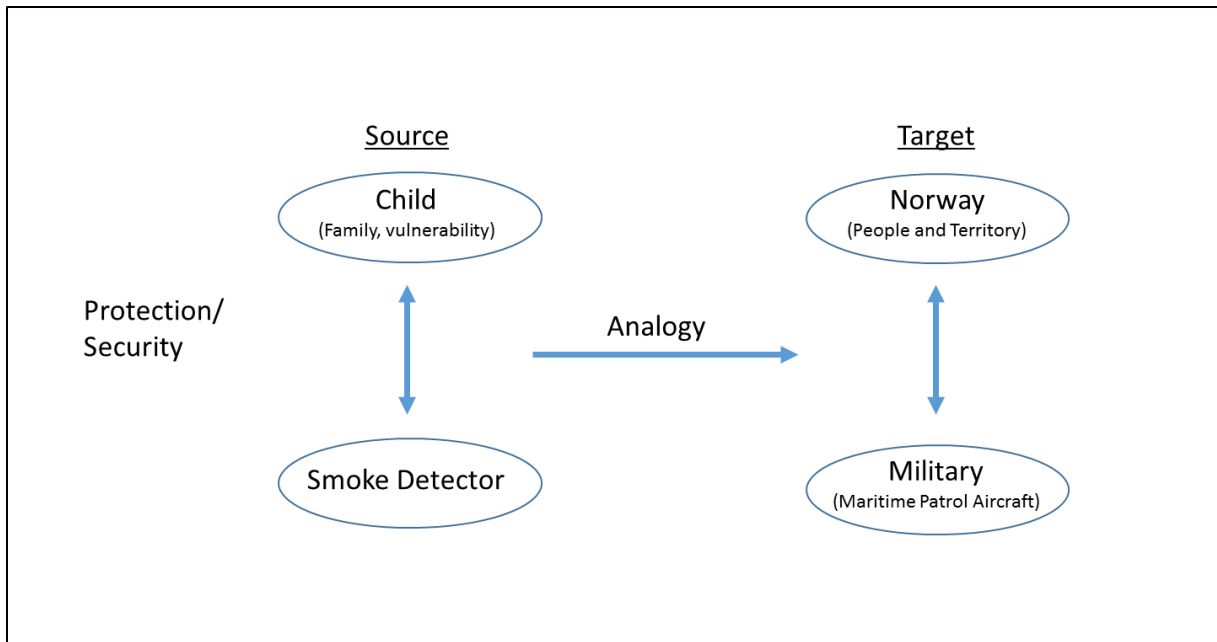


Fig. 2: Structure of Protection Stories analogy

We propose that the military analogy attempts to transmit a vertical relation from source to target. That requires not only an analysis of the vertical relation, but also of what Mary Hesse (1966) calls the horizontal relations between the items in source and target. Horizontal relations thus concern similarities and differences between Child and Territory, and between Smoke Detector and Military. We have already suggested that the analogy in that particular respect is contrasted – on the face of it; the differences between those items far outweigh the similarities. The analogy is rather an assertion that the relation between Child and Smoke Detector is essentially the same as the relation between Country and Military, and the video explicitly suggests *protection* as this relation. This is not a matter of predicting that the target will have the same type of relation as the source. As Hesse puts it, “it is rather pointing out the consequences, of a moral or normative character, which follow from the relations of four terms already known” (p.63). Furthermore, Hesse argues, whatever horizontal similarities we might find between source and target are there in virtue of the fact that the two pairs are related by the same vertical relation. Thus, when we watch this video we might come to construct implicit similarities between source and target because we first have accepted that the vertical relation is the same – the ad, it will be recalled, explicitly insists that that is the case. The vertical relation is known first, and then we construct horizontal similarities to fit the relation. Any such similarities are therefore dependent on the vertical relation. For example, babies are vulnerable and need defending, and countries too need defending against an enemy, known or unknown. The analogical link between those who do the defending is

forged by the red blinking light. The use of this light in the video is extremely effective and truly cunning.

The suggested vertical relation is that of protector-of. But there might be others. Hesse says of this kind of analogy that “the argument implicitly passes from asserting some such relations which are already recognized to persuading the hearer that other relations (...) follow from these” (p.63). This is spot on! Viewers can discover similarities and construct analogical patterns and other vertical relations which are related to the original one and assumed to hold. Vertical relations come in two versions depending on which perspective we adopt (indicated by the two-way arrows in Fig. 2). The video naturally adopts the military perspective and takes its point of departure in the two bottom items, smoke detector and military aircraft. The vertical relation then becomes protection-of, love-for, relief-from-fear, watching-over, safety-for and security-for, etc. Now, an audience might implicitly pass from these recognized relations to other relations that take the perspective of the two top items. Thus we get such vertical relations as respect-for, gratitude-to and maintenance-of. “Maintenance” here should be broadly understood. We must make sure that the smoke detector works at all times, and we must make sure that the military at all times has the capacity to protect us. Smoke detectors and armed forces provide safety and security for us. In return we, the protected, make sure they are up to the task. It is important to note that the vertical relations in this structure are not asymmetrical, with one giver and one beneficiary, as it were. Both of the two vertical relations are reciprocal and mutual – all four items are on both the giving and the receiving side and in some ways presuppose one another. Without people, no working smoke detector. Without working smoke detector, no protection of family from (potential) harm. Without country, no armed forces. Without armed forces, no protection of country from (potential) enemy.

With the structure of the analogy thus in place, we can begin to appreciate various narrative inroads. These narrative affordances do not present themselves (at least not straightforwardly) if we view the analogy as inductive, deductive, or even figurative, but come into view when we look at the qualities of Story 1 and Story 2 as stories. The importance of such narrative affordances is, among other things, that they hook up to the second-order functions of analogies, which we shall discuss below. We begin by looking at temporality, which is a central feature of all narratives. Texts have a sequential nature, and so do visual stories. The temporality of stories portrays a rhythm which may be elusive and difficult to catch, but which may nonetheless be both striking and informative, Mieke Bal (1997) argues. We wish to extract the following from her analysis of narrative rhythm, events

and pauses: first, the elliptical relationship between the “real time” event and its narrative presentation, and second, the impression this ellipsis may leave in readers or viewers. Narrative rhythm concerns the speed of the presentation (fast, slow, pause, lingering, slowing down, speeding up) and how this relates to the (physical) timeline of the narrated events. Usually the story of an event takes less time to tell than the actual event took to happen, but sometimes it is the opposite way around. Stories alternate between different tempi, sometimes lingering on details and sometimes covering years in one paragraph. The tempo termed “ellipsis” is of particular interest to us here. The defining characteristic of an elliptical rhythm is that event-time is infinitely larger than story-time. Take Story 1, the sleeping family. The video-time is a matter of about 35 seconds. But the event-time is the entire night. And not only that, we argue. In Story 1 we are shown the everyday activity of sleeping; a routine event that recurs every night as part of ordinary life. The story-time represents not just this one particular night, but *every* night. Events that get narrative time take on major importance, Bal argues, and the blinking red light of the smoke detector suggests that the smoke detector protects the family every night. Since the Protection Stories make up an analogy, we are invited to make implicit analogies, to transfer the same rhythm to Story 2: event-time is infinitely larger than story-time. The maritime patrol aircraft is on its wings not just this particular night, but every night. This is clever use of temporality: seconds of story-time convey the impression of routine everyday real-time events. The stories do not focus on unusual events, surprises or crises, but instead portray routine, continuous, recurring events – a rhythm which suggests safety, security, and prevention of harm and disruptions. Somebody makes sure business can run as usual every day. This impression, surely, is part of the aim of the ad; to win the acceptance of the audience of the view that the military helps make sure that our daily business can continue running as usual. It is not said explicitly. The audience is left to make this inference themselves; which of course makes it more convincing.

Analogies often depend for their construction on the reader, especially in cases where similarities and differences are not explicitly stated but are constructed by readers and/or viewers. The military ad invites readers to analogize in at least two different ways. First, by the temporal order. Story 1 comes immediately before Story 2, and the viewer automatically comes to connect the two. Second, by salient repetition (Sternberg, cited in Diengott, 1985, p.236). Repetition of objects, themes, events or images creates a sense of unity and closure, Sternberg argues. For saliency the repetitions may be numerous, dispersed, located in beginning or ending, or concentrated in a short central scene. There are thus many ways in which repetition can entice an audience to identify an analogical pattern. The Protection

Stories analogy is, as argued above, characterized more by its differences than by its similarities, and there are hardly any repetitions to speak of – save one: the red blinking light. The red blinking light is a spectacular repetition; it is visually striking, red and blinking against a blue background. It occurs at the end of Story 1 and is continued into the beginning of Story 2 without pause, as if we ascend through the ceiling and into the night sky. Thus it serves to link the domestic and the military contexts together in a way that cannot escape the viewer. It is aesthetically pleasing and very cleverly conceived of.

Our third narrative affordance is “focalization”. Focalization concerns the vision of the story, its point of view or way of seeing things. Bal (1997) defines focalization as the relation between the vision, the agent that sees, and that which is seen. At one level, then, this is the question of who sees what. In Story 1, the parents and the older children are sleeping and therefore see nothing. The baby, on the other hand, sees the red blinking light of the smoke detector and thus acts as the focalizer in Story 1; she directs our attention and focalizes the central object for us. In narrative analyses, Bal suggests, it is important to ascertain who the focalizer is, since the image we get of the object is determined by the focalizer. But that is tricky in Story 1 – we cannot assume that a baby knows what a smoke detector is and what it supposedly does for her. The spectators in this case know more than the main character of the story. Story 2 presumably has what Bal terms an external focalizer (p.157), since it is unclear who sees the military aircraft flying above the clouds. The baby cannot see it, and in all likelihood the family does not know that the military aircraft is patrolling the territory while they sleep. We, the spectators, see the family, we see (or infer) that the baby sees the smoke detector, we see the military aircraft, and we have knowledge about its job. We see more and know more than the main characters pictured in the stories; including the external focalizer of Story 2, who does not see that the family is protected by a smoke detector. But in particular we know more than the baby, the focalizer of Story 1 – a narrative affordance which allows “us” to reassure “her” that she and her family are, in fact, *doubly* protected and can sleep safely. This presupposes the implicit analogy that the baby and her family belong to the country in question.

But spectators are not the tellers of the story, nor is the focalizer the teller of the story. The focalizer in our military ad is the baby, but what she sees and understands is limited. Still it is her vision of protection we are presented with – as told by the Armed Forces Media Centre, who is narrator of the story and sender of the message. The message is not for the focalizer, who is too young to understand it. It is for the spectators, as the spectators make

inferences on behalf of the focalizer, as it were. Oh yes, there is more to this seemingly simple ad than meets the eye.

### **Second-Order Functions: Propagandistic Overtones**

Diengott (1985, p.232-233), again drawing on Sternberg, distinguishes between minimal and second-order functions of analogies. Minimal functions concern the play of similar and dissimilar features; similarities make for unity and possible predictions, dissimilarities make for differentiation and contrasts. The second-order functions, on the other hand, can be fairly freely superimposed on the items of the analogy – for example, universalizing, normative, communicative, rhetorical or propagandistic functions. A possible universalizing function would be the bringing together of all items, horizontal and vertical relations into some universal condition; for example a wish we all have to protect our own and keep them safe and secure. This could also illustrate the establishment of norms through analogies – a positive norm is presumably activated in regard to the military. But above all, second-order functions generally tend to be rhetorical. We are now in a position to explore whether the Protection Stories analogy should be categorized as propaganda, and if so to what degree. It is by no means a straightforward judgment.

Let us begin with the vision of the stories, as it seems reasonable to connect vision to purpose and second-order functions. Any narrative vision can have a strongly manipulative effect. Both analogical traits and narrative affordances converge on the same vision: just like the smoke detector, the Armed Forces keep us secure and we in turn *owe them our support*. Here at last we come to the purpose of the ad. We have suggested that to persuade the audience that the Armed Forces protect the country is too weak – surely something more is aimed for. Walton says that propaganda is an action-getting form of dialogue and the purpose of propaganda therefore is to move the masses to action (1997, p.398). But which action, exactly? Not to join the army, not to go to war, not (merely) to be tacitly accepting of the military. It stands to reason that some form of *explicit* public support is required, such that the authorities keep up (or do not reduce) the funding of the Armed Forces. This is the maintenance-of relationship between items: they do for us, thus we are committed to doing for them. If this is the message, it is nowhere stated explicitly. The ad says that the Armed Forces provide protection. The vertical relation of the items invites a switching of perspectives and a reciprocal interpretation. Thus, the structure of the analogy serves to entice the audience to

construct the message itself by constructing implicit analogies, using the narrative affordances and playing with the perspectives. We shall briefly come back to the question of whether it works.

Let us assume, then, that the Protection Story analogy aims at making the general public commit to support and funding of the Armed Forces; a view many people in all likelihood did not embrace before. How does it do it? Which tools does it use? Walton argues that propaganda is not necessarily against informed judgment or logical thinking, if the sender thinks that these are the best means of achieving his/her purpose. But if that does not work, any persuasive means can be used: stories, visual imagery, myths or appeals to group loyalties – any technique of persuasion that might be effective. Throughout his article Walton speaks of *arguments* used in propaganda. But, as we have already hinted, this analogy is not an argument (a property it shares with Waller's figurative analogies). The Protection Story analogy appeals rather unashamedly to *pathos*, to the emotions and the commitments of the audience; there is no content that appeals to the critical sense of the audience. The military ad provides no reason for us to think that Story 1 in any way serves as evidence for Story 2. It is not reasonable to argue that *because* smoke detectors protect sleeping families, *therefore* the Armed Forces (must, should) protect the country. No reasons are in fact presented for the legitimacy of transferring the vertical relation of Story 1 to Story 2, even though both concern protection. There are no appeals to considerations or counter-considerations in the video. Examples of relevant counter-considerations might be that Iceland has no army, but people still (as far as we know) sleep peacefully at night; that while various armies are deployed to Afghanistan, people there still may not sleep peacefully at night, or that in some countries the military actually harasses people instead of protecting them. Incidentally, these counter-considerations point to the importance of the local context – the ad is intended for a mass audience that has no historical reason to *distrust* the military. So while arguments, evidence and possible counter-considerations are conspicuously absent, there is still an invitation to make inferences from Story 1 to Story 2, but it appeals to emotion and sentiment. The persuasion is purely emotional and that not only evokes propagandistic overtones, but places the analogy squarely in the propaganda category.

Is the analogy deceptive? Is it intentionally manipulative? Does it convey lies? The NATO Doctrine for Information Operations (2006) divides propaganda into three subcategories according to degree of seriousness: white, grey and black. The seriousness we take to Centre on degree of deception, and NATO employs two main criteria: the source/sender and truthfulness of content. White propaganda has an open identified source

and the content is truthful. Black propaganda is intentionally deceptive and conceals who the true sender is, and it tells lies in order to mislead the audience and attain its purpose. Grey propaganda finds itself somewhere between those extremes. Now, the Protection Stories analogy is far from qualifying as black propaganda. The sender is openly stated, the Armed Forces Media Centre never tried to hide purpose of the ad (despite lack of specificity of action aimed at) and we cannot say that the analogy contains any lies. What little it does say, is true: smoke detectors do protect families from harm, and military aircraft do patrol the territory. Walton does not discuss concealment of the identity of the sender. Nor does he pay much attention to truth. While NATO deems truthfulness central to decide the seriousness of the propaganda, Walton states that propaganda involves a use of argumentation that is simply not directed toward the truth of a matter, but to pushing a mass audience to a certain course of action. Nor does truth come into the evaluation of propaganda: "Propaganda is an instrumental type of discourse that is justified (appropriately) by the use of argumentation from consequences," he says (1997, p.410). This is in keeping with his views on the relevance of evidence or reasons in propaganda; that too is dependent on whether it contributes to the purpose of the discourse (p.391). This may be unduly instrumentalist. Viewed from the sender's viewpoint lies may well be considered to further his or her purpose. But if an audience identifies lies in a piece of propaganda, they will surely not swallow it just because it furthers the purpose of the sender.

The Protection Stories analogy does, however, proceed on a selection of facts. It is clearly one-sided and as such it places itself in the tradition of the *Congregatio*. We would like to point out two aspects of this one-sidedness. First, we suggested above that one of the second-order functions of the analogy is to activate a positive norm in regard to the military, without supplying any analogical contrasts that could suggest negative connotations or activate negative norms in regard to the Armed Forces. Such negative norms might be surveillance, feeling of being controlled and watched at all times, loss of freedom. But with no contrasted analogy, no negative norms are invited. Second, there is much information that could have been included, information that would have been relevant to an audience making up its mind about the message of the analogy. As Julie Brannfjell (2015) points out in her critical discussion of the ad: We are not told anything about what the Armed Forces do besides flying maritime patrol aircraft. Nor are we told how exactly such patrols contribute to the protection of the country. Which enemies and what kind of (potential) harm do military patrol aircrafts protect us from? At what cost? Do they protect us from internal enemies? From terrorist attacks by single persons? The ad is not deceptive because facts and lies are



mixed together (which is a common propagandistic format), since no lies are told. It is rather that a whole range of problematizing information is left out altogether. While there are obvious practical reasons why such information is not included in a video that lasts less than a minute, it also suggests a lack of openness to information that would throw doubt on the message. This gives the ad a distinctive propagandistic flavour. Thus, while the Protection Stories analogy might be white or innocent propaganda if we look at the open identity of the sender, openness about purpose and the truthfulness of the information, the one-sidedness of the analogy and its appeal to emotion at the expense of reason move it into grey propaganda.

Walton's final characteristic of propaganda concerns the manner of communication. Propaganda is eristic, Walton says, it is aggressively partisan in its communication of the message. But in this respect the military ad is unorthodox propaganda. It has nothing of the aggressively partisan about it. In written propaganda one often finds strongly emotive language such as good versus evil, fight, struggle, danger, enemy, etc., especially of course in war-time when polarization is typical and an eristic communication style is convenient and pertinent. However, the Protection Stories analogy is not a war-time ad; it is a peace-time ad. Its structural and narrative affordances point toward peaceful, routine everyday activities – sleeping families, dripping taps – not toward disruptive, dangerous events which would suit an aggressively partisan type of discourse. The low-key style fits both the message and the intended audience much better than an eristic style. The sender has good general knowledge about the audience.

## **Conclusion**

The Protection Stories analogy is a military ad in the form of a video. Since it is an ad, and shown as such on TV and in movie theatres, it naturally tries to sell you something. Our question has been whether the ad pushes its message so hard that it qualifies as propaganda. We have come to the conclusion that the answer is yes; the ad does have distinctly propagandistic overtones. The strength and seriousness of these overtones we leave up to readers and viewers to decide for themselves.

The ad is in different ways unorthodox. It is somewhat unorthodox if we consider it as an analogy. It is not an inductive analogy, it is not a deductive analogy, and it is not a figurative analogy, and attempts to analyse it in such terms led nowhere. The analogy is, we have argued, a structural analogy consisting of two different stories, involving four different

items and vertical relations whose basic theme is that of protection. It possesses certain narrative qualities which provide a good inroad into the vision of the story, its possible second-order functions, and thereby its propagandistic connotations. The visual imagery of the stories is highly suggestive and the music accentuates the atmosphere. There is no hint of an argument in the analogy; Story 1 is not a premise for Story 2 and provides no evidence for it, and any counter-considerations are left out. Taken as a whole the Protection Stories analogy appeals unashamedly to our emotions and sentiments and not to our judgment and reason.

But even as a piece of propaganda the analogy exhibits unorthodox qualities. It satisfies many but by no means all of Walton's proposed characteristics of propaganda. It is, for example, not exactly clear what the message is, what the ad wants the audience to do, besides accept the claim that the military protects the country and thus is needed. But mere persuasion is not enough to make the ad propaganda, and we have suggested that some form of active public support is meant. The ad makes no use of arguments; it makes no use of an emotionally charged language, although it obviously makes use of emotionally charged imagery and music. The mode is not aggressively partisan but rather low-key.

When you see the video, hear the music and read the sparse text, the message that the military is important to a country is blatantly obvious. At the same time the video is subtly manipulative. You see it many times, and you can begin to make implicit analogies, construct analogical patterns between the stories, explore the reciprocity of the vertical relations of both stories, and employ the narrative affordances that present themselves. And if you make the inferences and constructions yourself, you are likely to be more convinced by them. Oddly, the video is obvious and subtle at the same time. But does it work? Since it is overly clear that the ad tries to manipulate the viewers, it is easy to recognize. The very awareness of being manipulated will help you resist the attempt. Viewers of the video might thus shake their heads, smile a little, and perhaps appreciate the aesthetic qualities and exquisite craftsmanship of the video, for example the red blinking light which connects the two stories. But the event of receivers who are aware they are being manipulated, might come back to bite the sender. Especially a sender who has a lot to lose by being identified as a propagandist.

## References

Bal, M. (1997). *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Bartha, P. (2013). Analogy and Analogical Reasoning. In E. Zalta (Ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reasoning-analog/>  
Retrieved November 25, 2015.
- Brannfjell, J. (2015). Politisk reklame fra Forsvaret [Political advertisement from the Armed Forces]. <https://www.minervanett.no/politisk-reklame-fra-forsvaret/>
- Diengott, N. (1985). Analogy as a Critical Term. A Survey and Some Comments. *Style*, 19(2), 227-241.
- Hesse, M. B. (1966). *Models and Analogies in Science*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Hitchcock, D. (2017). *On Reasoning and Argument. Essays in Informal Logic and on Critical Thinking*. Berlin: Springer.
- Jowett, G. S. & O'Donnell, V. (1999). *Propaganda and Persuasion*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- NATO (2006). Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations, AJP-3.10, Pre-Ratification Draft.
- NATO (2014). Allied Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations, AJP-3.10.1.  
Norwegian Armed Forces Media Centre (2014). Video.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QhXocjkvgA>
- Sacksteder, W. (1974). The Logic of Analogy. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 7(4), 234-252.
- Sternberg, M. (1978). *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Waller, B. N. (2001). Classifying and Analyzing Analogies. *Informal Logic*, 21(3), 199-218.
- Walton, D. (1997). What is Propaganda, and What Exactly is Wrong with It. *Public Affairs Quarterly*, 11(4), 383-413.