Discussion Paper

1    *Do all human beings have the same value?*

2    **Polar questions, biased questions and argumentative orientation in**
3    **one of the *Samhällsnytt* street interviews**

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5    **1. Introduction**

6    Since Ancient times, the desire to know oneself and to know
7    the world – to understand, attain and grasp Truth – has led to
8    a tireless quest for knowledge. The ultimate objective of each
9    quest is to find a conclusive answer, to transform doubt into
10   absolute certainty; but this objective remains an ideal which
11   has never been attained. Paradoxically, in this search for an
12   Absolute, everything becomes negotiable or questionable.
13   Questioning has therefore come to form the foundation and
14   method of any system of reasoning.
15       Socrates proposed philosophical questioning as a possible
16   means to approach subjects involving fundamental notions,
17   such as truth and beauty, but without suggesting there should
18   be single answers; this meant his followers were faced with
19   the difficulty of posing the question and finding the answer.
20   The way to the answer certainly became in some sense a way
21   of gaining knowledge of the external world, but also a means
22   of knowing oneself (Socratic questioning has been developed
23   as part of several different theories, see for example Paul &
24   Elder's Socratic Questioning and Critical Thinking 2006).
25       This form of interactional negotiation in the search for an
26   answer, even *the* answer, is a rhetorical device that is strongly
27   present in didactic contexts, but also in other contexts,

28  including discursive interactions where the intention to
29  persuade is less evident. The questioning strategy as a
30  rhetorical and argumentative art has been adopted by the
31  Swedish news digital medium *Samshällsnytt*: presenting itself
32  as an alternative forum, it has chosen to have direct contact
33  with citizens in order to question them on their beliefs
34  regarding fundamental questions of identity, equality and
35  how they see themselves and others.
36      This paper offers a semantic and pragmatic analysis of the
37  discursive and argumentative functions of polar (i.e. *yes/no*
38  questions) and complex questions that occur in one of the
39  street interviews conducted by *Samshällsnytt*. We shall
40  attempt to identify and classify the questioning strategies
41  used by the interviewer, the one who controls and orients the
42  conversation, before discussing the replies of a number of
43  interviewees in order to see how these answers are either
44  integrated into the interviewer's argumentative strategy or
45  deviate from his argumentative schema.
46      The study aims to show that the use of questions and the
47  order in which they appear are subordinated to an
48  argumentative purpose, which is not to evaluate public
49  opinion on a topic, nor to inform, but rather to orient the
50  argument towards a precise conclusion. More specifically, the
51  analysis seeks to demonstrate that the argumentative power
52  of the questioning develops throughout the whole sequence,
53  particularly through the form chosen for each question, the
54  order in which the questions occur, the choice of semantics,
55  the insistence on a given topic, the reformulation and
56  reinforcement of a question, and so on.
57      The study opens with a short description of the corpus and
58  character of the text being analysed, together with a brief
59  theoretical introduction which sets out the types of questions
60  used: questions used to elicit information *vs.* non-canonical
61  questions (i.e. interrogative sentences that are not purely
62  information-seeking).
63      The analysis itself is composed of three parts, each of them
64  examining a chain of verbal interaction, meaning that the
65  question-asking and question-answering sequence will be
66  seen as a unit. In each part, we will seek to identify the
67  characteristics of the questions, which are mostly polar in
68  form, together with the responses to these questions from a
69  pragma-argumentative and rhetorical perspective. Which

70   pragmatic and argumentative functions do questions fulfil in
71   order to reach a specific conclusion?
72       Alongside this, we shall also examine and analyse the
73   question-asking and question-answering sequences from a
74   syntactical and semantic perspective: How are syntactical and
75   semantic choices adopted to strengthen argumentative
76   purposes?


77   **2. Corpus**

78   **2.1 Presentation of the corpus**

79   In a digital era, digital forms of communication appear under
80   the media spotlight and become known through social
81   platforms and networks (videos posted on YouTube,
82   Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and so on), as well as
83   through their own websites. The actors in these sectors are,
84   for a certain part, journalists, but also militants who commit
85   themselves, more or less publicly, to a collective cause. The
86   digital media belonging to *Samshällsnytt* are part of this
87   sector. *Samshällsnytt* website presents itself as 'alternative'. It
88   has close ideological affinities with the Swedish extreme right
89   and with the Swedish Democratic Party
90   (*Sverigedemokraterna*, SD in Swedish) whose politics are
91   conservative and anti-immigration.
92       Several academic studies have been devoted to
93   *Samshällsnytt*, both in Swedish and English, notably in the
94   sphere of communication, sciences and sociology. The
95   researchers have specifically highlighted what they term the
96   biased or politically and ideologically coloured view with
97   which information is disseminated through this website (see,
98   for example, Olsson/Sturesson 2019; Andersson/Bero 2019
99   and Sarri/Westlund 2020, among others). Other studies have
100   examined the discourse of *Samshällsnytt* and its role in
101   building the Swedish political landscape (Ihlebaek/Nygaard
102   2021, Schroeder 2020, etc.). Unlike these studies, which focus
103   on written articles published on the association's website, our
104   research is centered on interviews broadcast on YouTube
105   and falls within the framework of linguistics and pragmatics.
106       We have 15 video sequences posted by *Samshällsnytt*,
107   which we have classified as part of a very specific journalistic

108 sub-genre, namely the genre of street interviews. The videos
109 were posted online, on the YouTube platform, between 2014
110 and 2020 (the majority being posted during the year 2020).
111 The entire sub-corpus corresponds to 112 minutes.
112     The present study aims to be qualitative and focuses on a
113 single text, to which the channel *Sverigebilden* gives the title
114 "Är alla människor lika mycket värda?"[1] [Do all human beings
115 have the same value?]. The total number of words transcribed
116 is 1,175[2].

### 2. 2 The street-interview discourse: presentation of a sub-genre

118 A wide range of sub-genres of oral and face-to-face Swedish
119 discourse have been subjected to scrutiny and analysis[3]:
120 research interviews (Kvale 2006), doctor-patient dialogues
121 (Lindholm 2003), news interviews (Ekström *et al.* 2020), and
122 so on. Unlike these face-to-face types of discourse, street-
123 interview discourse is a relatively under-explored area of
124 linguistics and sociolinguistics.
125     This can be explained by the newness of the genre itself.
126 The street interview might be considered to belong to a
127 journalistic sub-genre known as 'opinion genre' (on this
128 subject see Grosse 2001) which has undergone a remarkable
129 change from what it was in its previous form. In the past it
130 was not unusual, in the context of television news
131 programmes or political broadcasts, to show reports that
132 involved people in the street taking part in debates on current
133 affairs, generally by being asked short questions on subjects
134 of interest to them.
135     Unlike these 'classic' interviews, the questions asked by
136 *Samhällsnytt* journalists in their interviews do not directly
137 concern the socio-economic problems that might be
138 experienced by citizens – problems such as unemployment,
139 lack of housing, or their day-to-day anxieties, such as rising
140 prices, the quality of education or medical care.

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1   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIzwzLfosXo&t=158s [editor's note: The URLs in this article may lead to websites with content that may be anti-democratic. In consultation with the authors, we have removed links to the URLs, but not the URLs itself.]

2   The interviews were transcribed according to the transcription system presented in Lindström (2008: 309).

3   Each approach is illustrated here by just one bibliographical reference, but there are many (not to say abundant) works published in these disciplines.

141 *Samhällsnytt*'s interviews focus more on social issues that
142 affect both the individual and society, or more precisely the
143 person's view of the nation, national identity,
144 multiculturalism and the integration of foreigners. All their
145 video sequences pose problematic questions such as: [Is it OK
146 that Swedes are becoming a minority in their own country?][4]
147 [Has Sweden accepted too many refugees?][5] [How would you
148 define racism?][6] [Who is actually ready to welcome a migrant
149 into their home?][7] .
150   While concentrating on polemical subjects and political
151 issues of an ideological stamp, these street interviews (and, as
152 it happens, those we have analysed in the context of this
153 study) are not (or are not shown to be) prepared in advance.
154 This being so, they maintain a distance from any (political)
155 polemic, and are more like everyday conversations in which
156 turns of phrase can be delivered in an arbitrary way. But turns
157 of phrase in street interviews are pre-established: the
158 journalist poses the question and the anonymous person
159 offers a reply. The subject for discussion has been prepared
160 by the journalist beforehand, but the interviewee's reply is
161 innocuous. The first part of the survey (that is to say, the first
162 question) is devoted to establishing the thematic sphere in
163 which the conversation will develop.
164   Unlike other journalistic sub-genres, this one involves
165 interviewees who are non-professionals and non-specialists,
166 who have not been prepared for interview. These are people
167 who have been surprised on-the-spot. But like any broadcast
168 with visuals, the sequences are selected and manipulated (by
169 choosing the sequences, cutting some of them, and so on).
170 Added to which, street interviews are criticised as to how far
171 the opinions are representative and the choice of sequences
172 which are broadcast (SR Medierna 2020). Indeed, it is notable
173 that certain street interviews present false and almost
174 ridiculous answers to questions that are exceptionally facile

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4  "Är det okej att svenskar blir minoritet i sitt eget land?", Samnytt, 01/08/2020, 6min14s. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gew4pet9nIg&t=117s.

5  "Har Sverige tagit emot för många flyktingar?", Sverigebilden, 12/11/2019, 15min42s. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOtJBJfM8W0.

6  "Vad är rasism för dig?", Sverigebilden, 12/09/2020, 15min42s. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fl9knKCbuF4.

7  "Samnytt TV - Vem vill egentligen ta emot en invandrare? [eng subs!]", Samnytt, 06/03/2019, 4min54s. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkPJCWGnZNQ&t=7s.

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175 for an adult (ex. Q. "how many sides does a triangle have↑" A
176 1. "damn/four"; A2. "there's no sides/ (.) one↑")[8].
177      The sequences we have analysed suffer from a lack of
178 detail concerning the context of the utterance, the number of
179 persons who were actually interviewed and their percentage
180 of the total number of persons asked to participate in the
181 exchange. Neither does the report provide information on
182 the way in which contact was made with prospective
183 interviewees, nor whether there was explicit prior consent or
184 authorisation for publication. However, the interviews may
185 be considered to be voluntary and recorded with the consent
186 of the participants, who appear to reply spontaneously and
187 with goodwill to the questions asked. This hypothesis is
188 reinforced by data that are distinct from the text analysed:
189 another video which forms part of our research material
190 shows a fairly lively conversation between an interviewer
191 who is a journalist at *Samhällsnytt* and a potential
192 interviewee who expresses her indignation and refuses to
193 speak to a representative of what she considers an extreme
194 right-wing digital medium[9]. We therefore conclude that, in all
195 probability, other people were questioned in addition to
196 those seen in the videos, but that they refused to participate.
197      The interviews recorded by *Samhällsnytt* which belong to
198 the street-interview genre present certain similarities of form
199 with what are called *notion interviews* (Kvale/Brinkmann
200 2009). However, as we shall see from the present study, the
201 objective of the interviews and of this alternative medium is
202 not solely to investigate or reveal the interviewees' views on
203 a particular subject, but also the reasoning of 'ordinary
204 citizens', that is to say their prejudices and conceptions of
205 what is typical, normal or appropriate (Gee 2005) –
206 specifically (and in the case that interests us) to question their
207 belief that *all human beings have the same value*. This
208 discursive approach is criticised by Hammersley (2014) for its
209 use in research interviews: he stresses the unethical nature of
210 the divergence between, on the one hand, the interviewee's
211 assumption that the interviewer wishes to gather information

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8   'How Stupid Americans Really Are!', Domingos Moreira, 31/08/2018, 5min48s.
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihiu_gZr8gs 0min57s. – 1min04s.

9   "Samhällsnytts reporter angrips på Refugees Welcomes demonstration -
    'Svartskalle!'", Samnytt, 05/03/2020, 6min36s.
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q37S9G_FpXg.

212 (in other words wishes simply to have the interviewee's
213 opinion on a particular question) and, on the other, the
214 interviewer's goal, which is to reveal the limits (or what are
215 presented as limits) of the reasoning that leads to such an
216 opinion. We think that Hammersley's criticism is equally
217 applicable to the interviews analysed as part of our research,
218 because the interviewees seem to feel caught in a trap as
219 soon as they answer the first question – a trap from which
220 they can only escape if they contradict themselves and are
221 then led to question their own conviction about what they
222 previously considered to be obvious. This strategy becomes
223 striking in an interview by *Samhällsnytt* in which the
224 interviewees are asked whether Sweden should take in more
225 refugees[10]. As soon as these interviewees answer in the
226 affirmative, they are presented with a refugee who has
227 appeared from nowhere and are asked to welcome him into
228 their home. The implicit message: if you consider that society
229 can be responsible for welcoming refugees, then play an
230 active part in it. The interviewees, feeling caught in the trap,
231 cannot get out of it without losing face.

232 **3. A brief theoretical framework: (non) canonical, polar, rhetorical,**
233 **conducive and complex questions**

234 There is abundant research on the subject of questions –
235 their forms, their syntactic and semantic characteristics and
236 the semantic and pragmatic values of the question-answer
237 unit – focusing both on English and other languages.
238 A question is generally associated with some sort of typical
239 syntactic structure, which depends on the language (e.g. the
240 Verb-Subject order, the use of specific interrogative words,
241 and so on). From a semantic-pragmatic point of view, a
242 question is a particular sort of speech act (Caponigro/Sprouse
243 2007).
244 An initial difference is the one made between questions
245 starting with *wh-* and polar questions: the latter are distinct
246 from the former because of the absence of a *wh*-word (what,

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10 "Samnytt TV - Vem vill egentligen ta emot en invandrare? [eng subs!]",
   Samnytt, 06/03/2019, 4min54s.
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkPJCWGnZNQ&t=7s.

247 who, why, etc.) but also because all possible responses are
248 reduced to two, *yes* or *no,* which are mutually exclusive.
249     Thus, polar questions "contain only two alternatives. If p is
250 a proposition, then the polar question ?p has alternatives
251 {p,¬p}. Eliminating either alternative from the context fully
252 resolves the question:  If p is eliminated then ¬p is entailed,
253 and if ¬p is eliminated then p is entailed" (Agha/Warstadt
254 2020: 18).
255     This distinction is also applicable to polar questions in
256 Swedish (by comparison with Swedish *v*-questions: vad
257 [what], vem [who], varför [why], etc.).
258     From a semantic perspective, we can distinguish canonical
259 *vs*. non-canonical (also called standard and non-standard)
260 questions. These two types have been studied by many
261 researchers (e.*g*. Illie 1999: 979, Caponigro/Sprouse 2007: 4,
262 among others). The first role a question fulfils is to require an
263 answer, which means that information is required. Thus,
264 information-eliciting questions are normally considered
265 canonical questions. However, not all questions fulfil this
266 basic function: the so-called *non-canonical questions* elicit
267 other types of responses, such as "answers of confirmation,
268 permission-granting, suggestion acceptance, etc., or no
269 answers at all" (Illie 2015: 3). Among the most important types
270 of questions (in that they are the main ones used), we might
271 name rhetorical, conducive and trick (or complex) questions.
272     A rhetorical question can be categorized as a non-
273 canonical question given that the question is not a request by
274 the speaker for information from the addressee. A distinction
275 is also made between a neutral question and a conducive
276 one. According to Stenström (1984: 47), a conducive question
277 (such as "Isn't John coming too?") is one that conveys the
278 questioner's expectation of and preference for a given
279 answer, in opposition to a neutral question that does not
280 manifest any (detectable) expectation or preference.
281     A trick question, also known as a *complex question*, is the
282 combination of several questions into one polar question that
283 requires a yes-or-no answer. The classic example of a trick
284 question is:

285     1.  Have you stopped beating your wife?

286  If 'yes', you admit that you were beating your wife; if 'no',
287  then you still are doing so. The Latin *plurium*
288  *interrogationum* shows the multiplicity of questions, meaning
289  that one question contains many implicit assumptions. If the
290  question is complex, it is mainly due to the semantic and
291  pragmatic inference inherent in the utterance.
292      One of the main criteria used to identify and categorize a
293  question is the context. No question is canonical, rhetorical,
294  conducive, etc. by itself. Even for a complex question, in
295  which semantic presupposition is decisive for interpreting the
296  utterance, the inference is context-bound. Thus, the brief
297  theoretical description given above strongly suggests that the
298  criteria for a classification of questions are pragmatic, a
299  notion that is demonstrated by many linguists (among them
300  Caponigro & Sprouse 2007).
301      Questions and answers in Swedish have been studied by
302  many researchers: the syntax mainly by Holmberg, who
303  compares the syntax of answers to polar questions in English
304  and Swedish (2013) and in English and Finnish (2015);
305  intonation and prosody by Gårding (1979), who compares
306  different Swedish dialects; and Huhtamäki (2012), who
307  focuses on Helsinki Swedish. The use and roles of questions
308  in the pedagogic context are studied mainly by Persson
309  (2019).
310      One of the most recent and exhaustive studies of polar
311  questions in Swedish, and their syntactic, semantic and
312  pragmatic characteristics, is the one proposed by Brandtler
313  (2012).

314  **4. Brief presentation of the theoretical basis of the analysis**

315  The video sequence which bears the title "Är alla människor
316  lika mycket värda?" [Do all human beings have the same
317  value?][11] is composed of six interviews or scenes which
318  feature seven interviewees. The introductory question posed
319  directly to the interviewees is heard only once during the six
320  scenes (in scene 3, to be precise). But it is with this
321  overarching question, posed by a voiceover, that opens the
322  whole video sequence:

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11  In this paper, we have translated all transcribed texts from Swedish into
    English.

| 323 | INTVer[12] | är alla människor lika mycket värda↑ (.) / vilka svar kommer |
| 324 | | jag att få↑ (.) / vad tycker du↑ |
| 325 | | [do all human beings have the same value↑ (.) / what |
| 326 | | answers will I get↑ (.) / what do you think↑] |

In each scene, the introductory question is followed by a series of other questions (two or three) which all have the same function in the argumentative reasoning. We have called the series that forms the second question 'the intermediary question'.

| 332 | INTVer | är en mördare lika mycket värd som du själv↑ |
| 333 | | [does a murderer have the same value as yourself↑] |
| 334 | | är en pedofil lika mycket värd som du↑ |
| 335 | | [does a paedophile have the same value as yourself↑] |
| 336 | | är en terrorist lika mycket värd som du↑ |
| 337 | | [does a terrorist have the same value as yourself↑] |

This series of questions closes with another, which returns to the first question while rephrasing/paraphrasing it:

| 340 | INTVer | vad tänker du när du hör det här (.) äh i media att alla |
| 341 | | människor är lika mycket värda↑ |
| 342 | | [what do you think when you hear this (.) uh in the media |
| 343 | | that all human beings have the same value↑] |

The first two questions (introductory and intermediary) are polar questions, implying two alternatives, P and non-P. But are the two replies, P and non-P, presented as symmetrical in the question? Are they on the same level?

This question has been asked elsewhere, in the analysis of different discourses, often oral ones. Hiz (1978) has already observed that, contrary to what is asserted, questions cannot be treated in a truth-conditional context. The interpretation of interrogative clauses tends to include the conditions of the answer or, more precisely, the possible answers. This observation is confirmed, moreover, in the case of polar questions, both oriented and semi-oriented. Borillo (1978) considers that the possible answers are replaced by the expected answers that are built into the question and which may be oriented towards agreement or disagreement.

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12  In the extracts which follow, INTVer refers to the interviewer, INTVeeXY to a male interviewee and INTVeeXX to a female interviewee.

359　　This hypothesis is confirmed and refined by recent studies
360　(Raymond 2003, Pomerantz/Heritage 2013, among others)
361　which have shown that in complex polar questions, as well as
362　in simple ones, non-equivalences between alternative
363　answers (which is to say between two yes/no answers)
364　generally do not have the same status, whatever the nature of
365　the question. Earlier research (notably Raymond/Heritage
366　2021) has also shown that in a normative preferential context,
367　the speaker tends to orient their question towards an
368　affirmative reply and to minimise information that leads to a
369　*no* reply, thus favouring confirmation. Questions leading to a
370　non-preferential response are also often avoided.

371　　In a recent paper, Raymond and Heritage (2021) refine the
372　argument that question-answer sequences involving polar
373　questions have an inferred answer that is preferred. The two
374　authors develop the thesis that question-answer sequences
375　are shaped by two criteria that do not have the same weight:
376　probability and valence. As the authors explain, in principle,
377　in an interaction involving polar questions, there are: 1) a
378　preference for agreement, which is undergirded by an
379　orientation towards probability (likelihood); and 2) the
380　preference for positively valenced information (p. 61-62).

381　　The hypothesis we propose is that in polar questions, such
382　as are analysed in the context of this study, the interviewer
383　exercises control over the answer by implying the preferred
384　response. But this implicit answer is complex and somewhat
385　ambiguous because it is not certain that the preferred answer
386　will be affirmative or negative, as will be shown in the
387　following paragraphs.

388　**5. The introductory question**

389　The introductory question [Do all human beings have the
390　same value?] is the interrogative form of the corresponding
391　affirmative, *All human beings have the same value.* The
392　syntactical manipulation allowing the affirmative form to be
393　converted to the interrogative form is therefore minimal.

394　　This polar question has the characteristic of being
395　unequivocally alternative: there is no possibility of giving
396　multiple or indirect answers. In this particular case there are
397　clearly only two answers, which are mutually exclusive.

398 Unlike other polar questions such as *Are you hungry?*, the
399 introductory question cannot suppose there to be an
400 intermediate state between the yes and no: either all human
401 beings have the same value or they do not. There are no in-
402 betweens.
403     The affirmative assertion goes back to a principle that was
404 previously a subject of argument but which, in democracies,
405 is considered fundamental as well as self-evident. The answer
406 is certainly presented as obvious, but the question is not
407 rhetorical: it calls for an answer and it is upon this answer
408 that the future dialogue will be constructed. The introductory
409 question is therefore the founding pillar of the argument. Of
410 the six responses to this introductory question, five are "ja"
411 [yes] – simple but categorical:

412 Scene 1            INTVeeXY:    ja↑ (.) det tycker jag

413                                 [yes↑ (.) I think so]

414 Scene 2      INTVeeXX      jajemen↑ alla är lika värda

415                                 [yup↑ all have the same value]

416 Scene 3            INTVeeXY     ja↑

417                                 [yes ↑]

418 Scene 5            INTVeeXY     ja↑

419                                 [yes ↑]

420             INTVeeXX      ja↑

421                                 [yes ↑]

422 Scene 6      INTVeeXY      ja↑ det är de

423                                 [yes↑ they have]

424 Ideally, the introductory question in an interview should be
425 shaped in a form that "respondents will find agreeable"
426 (Raymond/Heritage 2021: 60) and that incites them to
427 formulate an answer with the desired orientation (whether by
428 affirming the proposition put forward in the question or by
429 denying it). Generally, the introductory question is oriented
430 in such a way as to procure an affirmative answer
431 (Raymond/Heritage 2021: 60). It appears to be so in this case
432 too. The absence of stimuli (Marneffe/Tonhauserthat 2016)
433 explicitly insinuating that the interviewer is awaiting a

434 negative answer makes it unlikely that a response of non-
435 agreement will emerge.
436    According to Heritage and Raymond (2021: 61), two
437 elements determine the 'agreeability' of a question: "to be
438 congruently fitted to the likelihood of the state of affairs in
439 question or to the interlocutor's likely perception of it".
440    At first sight, the question posed fulfils these two
441 conditions (it corresponds to the state of affairs in the extra-
442 linguistic world and it is highly probable that it corresponds
443 to the interlocutor's perception) and, this being so, the
444 supposedly preferred answer is naturally a 'yes'. But as
445 several researchers have remarked (Speer 2012; Robinson
446 2020), the preference principles are often complex and
447 interdependent, whereas research into verbal interactions is
448 often concentrated on just a single (and unique) preference
449 principle. Thus, in the case being studied, it is not only the
450 content which plays a decisive role in the choice of the
451 answer to be given, but also the context of the utterance.
452    Indeed, the very act of posing the question, however
453 obvious it may be, re-actualizes the 'no' alternative and, in
454 fact, implies it. 'No' does not perhaps carry the same weight
455 as 'yes', but it nevertheless exists. It is inherent to the
456 question, and part of what is implicit.
457    Furthermore, being suddenly accosted in the street
458 (without any other introduction explicitly seen in the video)
459 in order to answer such an obvious question, might give rise
460 to a series of presumptions on the part of the interviewee:
461 *Why am I being asked this question*? *Is it a trick question or is
462 it leading to another trick question*? Paradoxically, the
463 obvious nature of the question casts doubts upon it.
464    To the first question, the interviewee gives a categorical
465 answer: yes. Like the question, the answer is not negotiable.
466 It seems that the interviewee does not feel the need to use
467 arguments to support their viewpoint; and neither does the
468 interviewer ask for arguments.
469    In scene 4, the answer is less categorical and more hesitant.
470 The interviewee appears to be taken by surprise, as is borne
471 out by her interjection *oj* (*oh* ↑], the few seconds of silence
472 and the hesitation which precedes her actual reply:

473 Scene 4

| 474 | INTVeeXX | oj↑ (2.0) ähm / i grund och botten så tror jag att de |
| 475 | | är det (.) / sen tror jag att man äh (2.0) / man gör ju |
| 476 | | sina val↑ (.) / och (.) så får man ju stå för det |
| 477 | | [oh↑ (2.0) uhm / basically I think they have (.) / then I |
| 478 | | think that everyone uh (2.0) / well everyone makes |
| 479 | | their own choices↑ (.) / and (.) then they have to stand |
| 480 | | up for them] |

481 The use of the expression *i grund och botten* [*fundamentally*,
482 *basically*, *at bottom*] precedes the affirmation *they have*
483 which is rendered subjective and relative by the meta-
484 discursive comment *I think*: what was presented as a
485 universal truth becomes a personal opinion. The follow-up to
486 this utterance relativizes the assertion still further since the
487 expression *i grund och botten* implies a contrasting
488 relationship: *in principle... but...*
489     The marker *sen* [then], which follows, and which functions
490 as an adversative marker, introduces a restriction into this
491 context and is a response to the negative polarity: *in*
492 *principle, all people have the same value, but then each*
493 *person makes their choice and is responsible for it*. What
494 might be implied in this assertion is *if you don't make good*
495 *choices, you no longer have the same values as those who*
496 *have made good choices.*
497     The twofold use of the particle *ju* [well / then] (used to
498 emphasize an assertion which is expected to be obvious or
499 indisputable) suggests that the interviewee has good reasons
500 for assuming these statements are true (Lindström 2008: 95-
501 96).
502     The Swedish adjective *värda* [(to be) worth], used by the
503 interviewer in the introductory question, is derived from the
504 noun *värdighet*, which may be rendered into English as
505 *worthiness*, but also as *dignity*. Even the semantic content of
506 the Swedish word therefore implies a certain link between
507 *value* and *dignity*.
508     The reasoning of the interviewee seems to reflect an
509 implicit debate taking place behind the notion of *värdighet*
510 (in its two senses of *worthiness* and *dignity*). Defining the
511 notion of *worthiness* is not, however, as obvious as might
512 appear at first sight.

Discussion Paper

513      Certainly, the Declaration of Human Rights[13], as well as the
514 Swedish Constitution[14], insist on the right to dignity, but how
515 can this dignity be defined? How can this worthiness be
516 defined?
517      Perhaps the difficulty of offering a definition of the concept
518 resides mainly in the fact that we take its definition for
519 granted and indisputable – so obvious that no gloss or
520 explanation is necessary.
521      The concept of *värdighet* is the subject of a paper
522 published by Edlund *et al.* (2013) which deals with
523 determination of the concept of human dignity in
524 professional nursing practice in a Swedish context. The
525 authors propose the English word *dignity* as a synonym of the
526 Swedish *värdighet*.
527      In their article, the authors (2013: 854 - 855) explain that
528 "the latent content of the present-day humanistic conception
529 of human being has its root in a common European and
530 Scandinavian cultural background based on humanistic
531 values". In this conception, responsibility and freedom are
532 key words:

533      •   Creation gave human beings a freedom and a
534        responsibility that involves an indestructible holiness and
535        human value.
536      •   Responsibility, a dimension of dignity, is understood as
537        something ethical in origin and arises when people see the
538        other's face. Responsibility is mutual but also
539        asymmetrical and cannot be claimed by the other.
540      •   The human being cannot escape his/her freedom as
541        his/her unconditional actions assume.
542      •   Freedom is both an outer and an inner freedom. The inner
543        freedom means that humans always have a choice
544        regarding how they relate to a situation.
545      •   Duty is both an internal and an external duty. The internal
546        duty is something that is a responsibility of the human

---

13   All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood (UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

14   Alla människor är födda fria och lika i värde och rättigheter. De har utrustats med förnuft och samvete och bör handla gentemot varandra i en anda av gemenskap (Förenta Nationernas allmänna förklaring om de mänskliga rättigheterna); Den offentliga makten ska utövas med respekt för alla människors lika värde och för den enskilda människans frihet och värdighet (Regeringsformen i den svenska grundlagen).

547     being, while the outer duty is understood as an obligation.
548     (Edlund *et al.* 2013: 854-855)

549 Most modern national and international constitutions present
550 human value as an absolute human right, which is not related
551 to any position, rank or condition. In a less institutional
552 context, *värdighet*, as synonymous with *dignity*, may also be
553 considered as an inner feeling: the feeling of *pride* (Swedish
554 *stolthet*).

555   What is important about the answer in scene 4 is that it
556 immediately established this relationship between human
557 value and responsibility. The interviewee would go on to
558 back up this idea in the answers that followed, by
559 paraphrasing her initial reply:

560 Scene 4

561   INTVeeXX  alltså jag måste ju ändå (.) kunna tro på att man är
562        det i grund och botten (2.) äh (2.) / det är ju galet det
563        är jättemycket vi pratar om det i skolan just nu (.) så
564        det är väldigt relevant äh (.) / och det är såklart
565        såklart man vill ju man vill ju jobba och bete sig från
566        den ut(gångs)punkten att alla är lika värda och alla
567        har ju samma rättigheter / men sen tror jag att / ja
568        som sagt / dessa val man tar gör ju att det ändrar ju
569        synen på folk ganska mycket

570        [well I still have to (.) be able to believe that basically
571        they have (2.) uh (2.) / well it's crazy we talk a lot
572        about this in schools right now (.) so it's very relevant
573        uh (.) / and it's obvious it's obvious that we would
574        like would like to work and act on the basis that
575        everyone has the same value and all have the same
576        rights / but then I believe that / yes as I said / these
577        choices you make change people's perception quite
578        a lot]

579 We can see that the interviewee repeats the same idea, by
580 reiterating the phrases and expressions *i grund och botten*
581 [basically] and *alla är lika värda* [everyone has the same
582 value]. But she also introduces the idea of *equal rights* (which
583 is not strictly synonymous with *equal value*) and adds that the
584 principle that all humans have the same value is accepted
585 (having been learned at school) rather than innate, and that

586 one learns (through personal effort) to act according to this
587 principle.

588 **6. The intermediate question: the master argument-eliciting**
589 **sequence and its argumentative orientation**

590 The second question is a specific case meant to introduce
591 some kind of awareness.

592 Scene 1, 2, 3 and 4

593     INTVer    är en mördare lika mycket värd som du/ du själv↑

594                 [does a murderer have the same value as you/
595                 yourself↑]

596 Scene 5 and 6

597     INTVer    är en pedofil lika mycket värd som du↑

598                 [does a paedophile have the same value as
599         yourself↑]

600 This question is repeated with a change in the type of crime
601 committed and therefore of the criminal involved: the
602 interviewer cites the example of a rapist (scenes 1, 2, 3 and 4)
603 and a terrorist (scenes 3, 4 and 5). Each question forms a link
604 in deductive reasoning:

605 • Major premise     all humans have the same value
606 • Minor premise 1    you are a human being
607 • Minor premise 2    a
608     murderer/paedophile/rapist/terrorist is a human being
609 • Conclusion         a
610     murderer/paedophile/rapist/terrorist has the same value
611     as you.

612 The premises are not presented in the form of an assertion,
613 but rather as a question. This reasoning aims to refute the
614 conclusion that *a murderer/paedophile/rapist/terrorist has the*
615 *same value as you.* The interviewee is encouraged to admit
616 that the reasoning which produces such a conclusion is
617 fallacious. But by refuting the conclusion, namely that *a*
618 *paedophile/murderer/rapist/terrorist has the same value as*
619 *you/me*, the interviewee is forced to admit that the major

620 premise, *all humans have the same value*, commonly
621 considered as universal, is in fact false.
622 　　The way the questions are arranged is designed to refute a
623 doxic opinion by showing that it is utopian. The interviewer
624 does not tell the interviewees that they are wrong, by stating
625 so, but, rather, 'guides' the latter in such a way that they
626 arrive at the desired conclusion by themselves.
627 　　The implied first answer is correlated with the second, as if
628 the two questions were juxtaposed. In logical-argumentative
629 terms, the global premise is considered as a fallacy that
630 enthymematic reasoning exposes and invalidates.
631 　　We believe that these utterances are conducive questions.
632 Bolinger (1957: 97) proposes one of the first definitions of the
633 concept: a conducive question is "one which shows that a
634 given answer is expected or desired". A conducive question
635 implies an answer, but an 'obvious' answer that is easily
636 inferable from previous knowledge and current evidence.
637 The desired answer in the interviews we have analysed is
638 negative; the syntax and semantics of the question lead to
639 such an answer. The interviewer indirectly suggests this
640 particular answer, an answer approved by what s/he seems to
641 consider as common sense.
642 　　These conducive questions aim to attack the common
643 truth or agreement that are supposed to be shared by all or
644 believed by all: *a murderer cannot have the same value as*
645 *me*. These questions are a premise to the controversial issues
646 that problematize a simple yes/no question.  In the following
647 paragraphs, we closely analyze two scenes (scenes 1 and 3)
648 that illustrate the argumentative strategy of the interviewer
649 and the reasoning of the interviewees.

650 Scene 1 [15]

| 651 | INTVer | är en mördare lika mycket värd som du själv↑ |
| 652 | INTVeeXY | ah: de: (2.0) / det var en svår fråga men ja det är väl |
| 653 | | lite beroende på brottet också (.) skulle jag väl saga |
| 654 | INTVer | ja (.) en mördare ju brukar ju ha mördat någon / så |
| 655 | | att säga |
| 656 | INTVeeXY | ja pre- ja precis / jo men jag tänker det finns ju också |
| 657 | | olika typer av mord / finns det ju (jamen) / det vill |

15 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIzwzLfosXo (00:00:15 – 00:01:43).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 658 | | säga att du har (.) till e- nu förs- blir det ju så att jag |
| 659 | | försöker rättfärdiga mord här men jag tänker det |
| 660 | | finns ju väldigt olika (.)/ med om du tänker (1.0) om |
| 661 | | någon har till exempel mördat ett barn till exempel |
| 662 | | är det väl skillnad på om någon har mördat (.) till |
| 663 | | exempel din dotter så mördar du tillbaka där / det |
| 664 | | blir lite (.) lite beroende på/skulle jag vilja säga men |
| 665 | | även det är ju fel i vilket sammanhang som helst men |
| 666 | | jag skulle säga det är ju skillnad på brott på brott |
| 667 | | egentligen (.) / om det är (.) ja (.) det finns ju olika |
| 668 | | grader av samma brott egentligen |
| 669 | INTVer | vad tänker du på begreppet (.) som man får höra (.) i |
| 670 | | media (.) alla människors lika värde↑ |
| 671 | INTVeeXY | jamen ja: håller väl med där / alla ska ju ses på |
| 672 | | samma sätt och alla ska behandlas på samma sätt / |
| 673 | | och du ska: liksom bli: alltså (.) ja: de alla ska |
| 674 | | behandlas på samma sätt |
| 675 | INTVer | tycker du att en mördare eller våldtäktsman är lika |
| 676 | | mycket värd som du själv↑ |
| 677 | INTVeeXY | (3.0) alltså äh (3.0) ah: ja: äh (1.0) teoretiskt sett |
| 678 | | skulle jag ju säga ja men alltså går jag bara på mina |
| 679 | | känslor så säger jag nej |
| 680 | ............................ | |
| 681 | INTVer | [does a murderer have the same value as yourself↑ |
| 682 | INTVeeXY | ah: this: (2.0) / this is a difficult question but well I |
| 683 | | do think that it also depends a little bit on the crime |
| 684 | | itself (.) I would say |
| 685 | INTVer | yes (.) a murderer is normally someone who has |
| 686 | | murdered someone else / so to speak |
| 687 | INTVeeXY | yes exac- yes exactly / well but I think there are also |
| 688 | | different types of murder / so there are / so to say |
| 689 | | that you have (.) ((laugh)) sounds like  I am trying to |
| 690 | | justify murder here but I do think that there are very |
| 691 | | different (murders) (.) if you think (1.0) if someone |
| 692 | | has for example murdered a child for example/ it's |
| 693 | | different from if someone has murdered (.) for |
| 694 | | example your daughter then you kill him in return so |
| 695 | | / it is a little (.) little  dependent on that / I would |
| 696 | | like to say / but even that is wrong (to kill) in any |
| 697 | | context but I would say there is a difference between |

| 698 | | one crime and another/ actually (.) if it is (.) yes (.) |
| 699 | | there are of course different degrees of the same |
| 700 | | crime actually |
| 701 | INTVer | what do you think about the concept (.) that one |
| 702 | | hears (.) in the media (.) all human beings have the |
| 703 | | same value↑ |
| 704 | INTVeeXY | well yes:/ I agree with that / all human beings should |
| 705 | | be considered in the same way / and all should be |
| 706 | | treated in the same way and you should: like be: so |
| 707 | | (.) yes: they should all be treated in the same way |
| 708 | INTVer: | do you think that a murderer or a rapist do have the |
| 709 | | same value as yourself↑ |
| 710 | INTVeeXY | (3.0) well eh (3.0) uh: yes: eh (1.0) theoretically I |
| 711 | | would say yes but if I just follow my feelings then I |
| 712 | | would say no] |

The transition from the general to the specific, in this instance from *all human beings* to individuals belonging to the same group, establishes a comparison between two categories in this group: on the one hand a murderer and, on the other hand, you, the interviewee. This specification, together with the comparison, lead to a change of perspective on the part of the interviewee: the categorical *yes* to the introductory question becomes a more hesitant response. The [yes (.) I think so] becomes [this is/was a difficult question].

This hesitation is perceptible on the paraverbal level – the sounds of hesitation and the pauses [ah: this: (2.0)] – as well as on the verbal level: the use of the particle *väl* [well], together with the meta-discursive comments "det var en svår fråga", [it was a difficult question] and "skulle jag väl säga", [I would say]. The absence of a clear answer or even of any answer to the question asked is a sign that the interviewee wants to avoid contradicting himself and so begins to search for a convincing explanation.

The interviewer's intervention at this precise moment diverts the conversation in a slightly new direction:

| 734 | INTVer: | ja (.) en mördare ju brukar ju ha mördat någon / så att säga |
| 735 | | [yes (.) a murderer is normally someone who has murdered |
| 736 | | someone else / so to speak] |

737 The assertion is presented as a definition which aims to
738 explain the term 'murderer' whereas, in fact, there is nothing
739 to suggest that the interviewee is unaware of the meaning of
740 this term, especially since the defining utterance uses the
741 derivative verb *mördat* [murdered] to explain the noun
742 *mördare* [murderer]. The explanation of the meaning is
743 therefore not really an explanation at all. In order to
744 understand this utterance, we need to interpret it, by teasing
745 out its implications: a murderer is a murderer (in other words,
746 all murderers have committed the – abominable – act of
747 depriving someone else of their life). The interviewer's
748 implicit message is that the interviewee is wavering around
749 the answer, and this implicit message is what gives the
750 utterance an ironic, even sarcastic air.

751 This intervention represents a catenation on the part of the
752 interviewee, who is attempting to justify his previous
753 assertion, reaching the conclusion that there are various
754 degrees of murder, and that any evaluation needs to be made
755 at the level of ethics: it is the nature of the crime which helps
756 determine the criminal's 'value' (a child murderer does not
757 have the same value as someone who kills their daughter's
758 murderer). Faced with these explanations, the interviewee
759 comes up against a fresh difficulty, namely that of being
760 forced to justify certain crimes, "blir det ju så att jag försöker
761 rättfärdiga mord här" [sounds like I am trying to justify
762 murder].

763 But the comment which follows the reasoning, "skulle jag
764 vilja säga" [I would be inclined to say] implies that the
765 interviewee is fairly satisfied, even though his use of the
766 conditional still points to some uncertainty. The particle *väl*
767 prolongs this dichotomy of certainty/uncertainty, while at the
768 same time concluding the reply and ending the reasoning.

769 The interviewer goes a step further by posing a question
770 which seems more problematic, since it indicates his
771 dissatisfaction with the previous reasoning and marks a desire
772 to obtain an answer to the first question:

773 INTVer     vad tänker du på begreppet (.) som man får höra (.) i media
774              (.) alla människors lika värde

775              [what do you think about the concept (.) that one hears (.) in
776              the media (.) all human beings have the same value↑]

777  The question is complex because the confirmation or
778  refutation of the *dictum* that *all human beings have the same*
779  *value* necessarily implies that the interviewee accepts the
780  presuppositions of the assertion, in particular that this
781  concept is put about by the media; that this discourse is
782  imposed on us (*får höra*); and that equality of human value is
783  a media **concept** and not a **principle.**

784      This question, which constitutes a return to the first,
785  emphasizes the superabundance of negativity and the
786  insistent tone introduced by the interviewer's use of
787  reformulations and his mention of the second enunciator as
788  being the source of an opposing point of view (*the media*).

789      Instead of replying to this complex and open (non-polar)
790  question, the interviewee himself formulates an heuristic
791  question which is closely linked and more practical, as well as
792  polar (yes/no): this concerns whether or not *all people should*
793  *be seen and treated in the same way*. He answers this
794  question with a clear yes.

795  INTVeeXY    jamen ja: håller väl med där alla ska ju ses på samma sätt
796              och alla ska behandlas på samma sätt och du ska: liksom bli:
797              alltså (.) ja: de alla ska behandlas på samma sätt

798              [well yes:/ I completely agree with that/all human beings
799              should be considered in the same way/ and all should be
800              treated in the same way and you should: like be: so (.) yes:
801              they should all be treated in the same way]

802  The paraphrastic reformulation of *ska behandlas på samma*
803  *sätt* [should be treated in the same way] marks the fact that
804  this assertion, when repeated for a second time, becomes a
805  definitive conclusion. The assertion is also presented as a
806  reformulation of the original proposition, *alla människor är*
807  *lika mycket värda*, to turn it into a new proposition that is
808  more objective and less polemical: whatever value human
809  beings place upon themselves (*inre värdighet* [deep value]) or
810  they think that others place on them, they must be treated
811  like everyone else. Although this answer is presented by the
812  interviewee as definitive and in some way conclusive, the
813  interviewer reiterates his second question, while at the same
814  time slightly rephrasing it:

815  INTVer      tycker du att en mördare eller våldtäktsman är lika mycket
816              värd som du själv↑

817            [do you think that a murderer or a rapist has the same value
818            as you do↑]

819    The addition of the example/category of rapist has a dual
820    purpose. Firstly, with regard to the immediate co-text, the
821    interviewer appears to take into consideration the fact that
822    the interviewee makes clear he thinks there are 'grades' of
823    crime, and some are perhaps less reprehensible than others.
824    The new way of formulating the question implicitly admits
825    that the judgment made about the value of a murderer
826    depends on the circumstances of the murder, its reasons and
827    the culture of the society to which the person judging this
828    murder belongs; whereas a rapist is a rapist and nothing
829    justifies his action. Rape, moreover, is often judged, both
830    culturally and socially, as the basest of crimes, even among
831    criminals themselves. From a certain point of view, therefore,
832    a murderer might have more 'value' than a rapist.
833        In attempting to show that the premise is fallacious, and
834    resorting to the extreme examples of a murderer and a rapist,
835    the interviewer's reasoning is built upon the confusion
836    between two standards. In fact, the principle according to
837    which *all humans have the same value* identifies humans as
838    beings, presenting them as they **are**; whereas the premise *a*
839    *murderer is not worth as much as you are* identifies humans
840    by what they **do**, through their choices and actions. And this
841    is not quite the same. Furthermore, the choice of the two
842    terms of the relationship is not a neutral one. The dichotomy
843    is presented as two opposite extremes, namely absolute evil
844    and absolute good. By suggesting that the paedophile,
845    murderer or terrorist is the embodiment of absolute evil, the
846    *you* is presented as an absolute good. But a certain
847    overvaluation of the interviewee's ego is at work in this
848    dichotomy: the *I* of the interviewer infers that the symbol of
849    absolute Good he is suggesting is not an emblematic, religious
850    or historic individual – rather, it is you, whose true worth he
851    appreciates. By overvaluing the person he is speaking to, by
852    flattering his ego, the interviewer is encouraging him to play
853    the game and to show indignation at being classed as a
854    murderer or terrorist.
855        The combination of questions is based on an amalgam –
856    one might even say a confusion – between nature and
857    culture. On the one hand, there is the world of *phusis*, or

858 nature, with its laws, its logic and its hard and fast rules,
859 which are imposed upon everyone (in the form of birth,
860 death, etc.); and on the other there is the *polis*, the city,
861 whose rules are constructed, contractual, deliberated and
862 negotiated. Judgment of an assassin, a paedophile or a
863 murderer belongs to the realm of ethics (and, more widely, to
864 the cultural realm) and, within this realm, it is actions, and not
865 people, that are assessed. This dichotomy was explicitly
866 mentioned by the interviewee in scene 4, who spoke of what
867 is learnt at school and the efforts we make to regard all
868 people as having the same value.

869     The other scenes do not differ fundamentally from this
870 one: the categorical *yes* to the first question (*Är alla*
871 *männinskor lika mycket värda*↑) turns into a hesitant *no* in
872 the face of questions such as *Är en*
873 *mördare/våldtäktsman lika mycket värd som du själv*↑ 'does
874 a murderer have the same value as you/yourself↑'. However,
875 there is just one scene in the batch that is different. The
876 transcription of this scene goes as follows:

877 Scene 3[16]

878     INTVer     är alla människor lika värda
879     INTVeeXY   ja
880     INTVer     är en mördare lika mycket värd som du själv
881     INTVeeXY   absolut
882     INTVer     är en våldtäktsman lika mycket värd som du
883     INTVeeXY   absolut
884     INTVer     är en terrorist lika mycket värd som du
885     INTVeeXY   absolut
886     INTVer     du är helt säker på det
887     INTVeeXY   ja
888     ...........................
889     INTVer     [do (all) human beings have the same value↑
890     INTVeeXY   yes
891     INTVer     does a murderer have the same value as yourself↑

16 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIzwzLfosXo (00:02:38-00:02:57).

| 892 | INTVeeXY | absolutely |
|---|---|---|
| 893 | INTVer | does a rapist have the same value as you↑ |
| 894 | INTVeeXY | absolutely |
| 895 | INTVer | does a terrorist have the same value as you↑ |
| 896 | INTVeeXY | absolutely |
| 897 | INTVer | are you entirely sure about that |
| 898 | INTVeeXY | yes] |

899 Unlike the other interviewees who justify their answers, the
900 person in scene 3 makes do with a yes, which even becomes
901 categorical in the questions which follow (*absolut*
902 [absolutely]): since no paradox has been detected, there is no
903 justification for arguing.


904 **7. The concluding question and close of the argument**

905 Once the force of the argument contained in the intervening
906 question (or series of questions), *är en*
907 *mördare/våldtäktsman/terrorist lika mycket värd som du*
908 *själv* [does a murderer/rapist/terrorist have the same value as
909 you do] has had its effect on the interviewee, the interviewer
910 repeats his initial question "*är alla människor lika mycket*
911 *värda*" [Do all human beings have the same value?] in a
912 different form:

913 Scene 2

| 914 | INTVer | hur ska man då rättfärdiga att alla människor är lika |
|---|---|---|
| 915 | | värda (.) om de ändå inte är det↑ |
| 916 | | [how is it then possible to justify that all human |
| 917 | | beings have the same value if they even do not↑] |

918 Scene 4

| 919 | INTVer | vad tänker du när du hör det här äh (.) som (.) kablas |
|---|---|---|
| 920 | | ut i media (.) att alla människor är lika värda↑ |
| 921 | | [what do you think when you hear this uh (.) that (.) |
| 922 | | is being blazoned in the media (.) that all human |
| 923 | | beings have the same value↑] |

924 The final question may be considered as designed to elicit
925 confirmation, explicitly and forcefully directing the answer
926 towards a negative utterance. The reformulation of the

927 introductory question through these utterances is
928 accompanied by a change of viewpoint. From here on, the
929 propositional content 'all humans have the same value' is not
930 expressed in the form of a general truth, but rather in the
931 form of a modalised utterance. The *dictum* previously
932 presented as a universal principle is now relativized, through
933 the change of enunciative perspective: it is no longer
934 'they/people' who affirm that all humans have the same value,
935 but the media. The positioning of the enunciator/interviewer
936 becomes more explicit: the viewpoint he projects onto the
937 content is unquestionably negative, as is evident, first and
938 foremost, from the lexicon used.
939     In scene 2, for example, the question is no longer polar; it
940 is now open, complex and strongly directed. What had been
941 implicit in [Do all human beings have the same value?] – the
942 answer being that they do not – now becomes an
943 assumption: Human beings **do not** have the same value. What
944 becomes a presupposition, and is therefore presented as
945 unquestionable, is the falseness of the assertion that *all*
946 *human beings have the same value.* Also implicit is the effort
947 at justification that is made, to convince us of the truth of
948 such an assertion, which is false at its root. Indeed, the
949 construction *om ändå inte p. hur är då q möjlig?* [if p is still
950 not true, how then is q possible?] (p is the assertion and q its
951 justification) gives the question a rhetorical form. How can
952 one justify an assertion that is not even true?
953     Scene 4 also closes with an open question, but one which
954 is strongly oriented. The reference to the media as source of
955 the viewpoint and responsible for disseminating the assertion
956 explains the enunciative positioning of the
957 utterer/interviewer in relation to the propositional content
958 being reported: he changes this positioning from the brief
959 neutrality which characterises the introductory question, to
960 outright disagreement in the final question.
961     As in other scenes, mention of the media tends to relativize
962 the truth of the assertion's propositional content: *All human*
963 *beings have the same value* is not a universal principle, but a
964 proposition circulated and propagated by the media. This
965 idea is reinforced by the use of the verb *kabla ut*, whose
966 literal meaning is 'to send/publish by cable'). It offers a
967 technical image of the way in which sounds, images and texts
968 are disseminated by cable at breakneck speed. This image

969 suggests that information is published *en masse*, with no
970 control or filter, and it therefore casts a rather negative light
971 on the material propagated by the media.
972     None of the interviewees answers this final question,
973 which is phrased slightly differently from one scene to the
974 next. As in the following extracts, the interviewees (with the
975 exception of the one in scene 3) prefer to close the
976 conversation with a comment that shows, on the one hand,
977 their implicit refusal to adopt the new reasoning and, on the
978 other, their ability to express their convictions in a different
979 way, which they consider to be more appropriate.

980 Scene 2

981     INTVeeXX          alltså det be- det handlar kanske lite mer om
982                       sina (.) vad de gör eller om sina (2.0) jag vet
983                       inte hur jag ska sätta orden rätt (.) men ja

984                       [well / it maybe deals a little more with their
985                       (.) with what they do or with their (2.0) I do
986                       not know how to put the words correctly (.)
987                       but yes]

988 Scene 5

989     INTVeeXX          alltså från grunden så stämmer det ju / men
990                       sen så kan det ju ändras (2.0) tänker jag

991                       [well / basically it's true / but then it can
992                       change (2.0) I think so]

993 The final question requires a response that confirms the
994 utterance *all human beings do not have the same value*,
995 rather than the interviewee advancing his own argument or
996 justifying his own reasoning. However, the interviewees seem
997 disinclined to formulate an answer affirming the negative
998 proposition inherent in the final question. They attempt,
999 rather, to arrive at a form of consensus, by recalling the role
1000 of actions in determining human value – even though the
1001 interviewee in scene 2 is conspicuous for her desire to
1002 reiterate her initial answer and reconfirm her earlier
1003 assertions. The conclusion of the proposition "men ja" [but
1004 yes] appears to be the answer to the introductory question –
1005 [Do all human beings have the same value?] – rather than to
1006 the one expressed in the final question.
1007     The nature/culture and being/doing dichotomy is
1008 introduced in the third sequence (final question-final answer),

1009 either explicitly or in a veiled fashion. The presence of this
1010 dichotomy might be explained by the effect of the
1011 intermediate question, [Does a murderer/paedophile/terrorist
1012 have the same value as yourself?] We can see that the
1013 previous mention of specific categories of human deviation
1014 relates the concept of *värdighet* (value) to its ontological
1015 determination. By ontological determination we mean not
1016 only the concept's etymological and semantic determination,
1017 as described above, but also its archaic and theological use in
1018 Swedish (and Scandinavian) tradition: the value of a person is
1019 determined by his/her actions. This contextual meaning of
1020 *värdighet* can be defined as "external dignity, aesthetic
1021 conduct that exhibits dignity in action" (Edlund *et al.*, 2013:
1022 854).

1023 This idea is developed in the Delphi study and summarized
1024 as follows by Edlund et al. (2013: 854-855): in its contextual
1025 determination, dignity may have two different references,
1026 namely *given dignity* and *evolving dignity*. *Given dignity* is
1027 granted to all human beings and is therefore absolute and
1028 constant; whereas *evolving dignity* is changeable and can be
1029 destroyed but also restored. "Changing dignity is shaped by
1030 the values that human beings bear and includes the morals
1031 and the standards and values that the culture prescribes.
1032 Human beings show their changing dignity in actions and
1033 external attributes".

1034 Construction of this new conception of human value is the
1035 result of verbal interaction between two interlocutors and is
1036 therefore contextual. Even if the interviewee does not accept
1037 the interviewer's reasoning, he puts himself in the position of
1038 justifying his reasoning while, at the same time, modifying it:
1039 basically, we all have the same value, but then it is our acts
1040 which strengthen or detract from that value.

1041 **8. Conclusion**

1042 *Do all human beings have the same value?* is a street
1043 interview which engages interviewees in a debate that is
1044 philosophical, ethical and political, and for which they are
1045 not necessarily prepared.
1046 We have observed that the interview is composed of three
1047 sequences: the introductory question, the intermediate

1048 question and the final question. The introductory and
1049 intermediate questions are polar. The polarity is subject to
1050 the principle of alternative presupposition, according to
1051 which only one of the propositions contained in the question
1052 is true; the other, therefore, is necessarily false. Each
1053 alternative is presented as exclusive.
1054 The questions asked by the interviewer are controlled and
1055 purposeful. They are also conducive and complex.
1056 Conduciveness and complexity result from the syntax and
1057 semantic features of the questions posed, but are also due to
1058 other pragmatic and contextual factors revealed in the
1059 analysis.
1060 Every single question has a role in this argumentative-
1061 oriented discourse. Each question overlaps with another, and
1062 functions argumentatively in relation to another and to the
1063 expected responses. Questions and their corresponding
1064 responses seem to be instrumental in the interaction, and this
1065 instrumentalism is based on argumentative and pragmatic
1066 moves.
1067 A first distinction has been made between the introductory
1068 question and the master argument-eliciting question. While
1069 the introductory question is intended to clearly state a
1070 common premise and make it explicit, the master argument-
1071 eliciting question is meant to evoke a counter-argument that
1072 entirely destroys the first utterance. The intermediate
1073 question is the main one, but it is less predictable.
1074 The last question, which reformulates the introductory
1075 question, has the same propositional content, but the
1076 enunciative positioning is changed. With the addition of the
1077 enunciative source, *the media*, the orientation towards
1078 negation/negative orientation becomes more explicit.
1079 The answer to the first question is the one expected; the
1080 answer to the controversial intermediate question indicates
1081 the interviewee's cultural and ideological background; while
1082 the answer to the final question reveals the interviewee's
1083 interpretation of facts and ideas presented by the interviewer
1084 as a fallacious perception of the truth – a perception
1085 presented by the media as obvious facts.
1086 If the questions are biased, therefore, it is not merely in
1087 their semantic content, but also and especially in their
1088 sequence. An open question on the same theme, beginning
1089 with an interrogatory word, as, for example, along the lines of

1090 *What do you think of the principle|idea that all human beings*
1091 *have the same value?* or perhaps, *Why do we tend to think*
1092 *that all human beings have the same value?* would have
1093 made room for problematization and debate, and would have
1094 reduced the risk of the interviewee finding himself caught in
1095 a rhetorical trap from which it was manifestly difficult to
1096 extract himself.
1097 The sequence of questions then sets up a contrast between
1098 *människor* (human beings) as an almost abstract notion and
1099 the categories of such beings whose lives are judged to be
1100 deviant and shameful. The bias is created and maintained by
1101 the presence of the nature/culture amalgamation. The result
1102 is an apparent contradiction in interviewees' responses: yes,
1103 all humans have the same value, but a murderer, a paedophile
1104 or a terrorist do not have the same value as I do. As human
1105 beings, we all have value, but the choices we make determine
1106 the added value of each one of us. The explanations which
1107 replace a simple yes or no are presented as a negotiation, a
1108 search for an accepted agreement which might resolve the
1109 contradiction in the reasoning. This negotiation ends with the
1110 interviewee abandoning his initially entrenched position and
1111 modifying his assertion without, however, rejecting it. His
1112 new reply proves to be less categorical and more
1113 accommodating, as he searches for possible explanations to
1114 resolve the difference of opinion.

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