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JOURNALISM AS PERFORMATIVE DISCOURSE

The Importance of Form and Style in Journalism

Marcel Broersma

University of Groningen

Until April 2004 most people in the Western world had probably never heard of a place in Iraq called Abu Ghraib. CBS's *60 MINUTES 2* (2004) then exposed the torture and sexual humiliation of prisoners by U.S. military forces running the prison. CBS showed photographs of naked Iraqis in humiliating poses and grinning U.S. soldiers beside them to prove to the public that such misconduct had really taken place. The report ended with an army spokesman expressing regrets about the events and claiming that these were isolated incidents carried out by a few immoral and undisciplined soldiers. Two days later Seymour M. Hersh published a story in *The New Yorker* that revealed the existence of a secret military report by general Antonio M. Taguba, that described in detail the misconduct at Abu Ghraib. In a series of three articles over the next few weeks, Hersh (2004a; 2004b; 2004c; 2005) claimed that these practices of torture were part of an orchestrated attempt by the Pentagon to obtain intelligence in violation of the rules of war. The shocking photographs and news reports caused a general public outcry in the United States and throughout the rest of the world.

The coverage of the Abu Ghraib story draws attention to the performative power of journalism. Why do news consumers consider these kinds of reports convincing? They cannot know exactly what happened in the Abu Ghraib prison and they certainly cannot know if the Bush administration approved, or orchestrated these events. Viewers have to believe the representations of events provided by journalists such as Hersh or CBS's Dan Rather for their perceptions, which they do. Journalism is remarkably successful in

getting people to believe that it reports 'the truth.' This is why the public is so shocked when the news turns out to be 'fake.' As an example, take the case of the Janet Cook scandal which, in 1982, confronted journalism with its extremes, shortly after the triumph of the Watergate reports of the *Washington Post*. Cook authored a report about an eight-year-old heroin user and received a Pulitzer prize for the story, however, the boy turned out to be a fabrication. Not surprisingly, readers felt deceived and the young reporter was shunned by fellow journalists (Easton, 1986). Similarly, Dan Rather had to resign a few months after the Abu Ghraib scoop when the documents used by *60 MINUTES* to claim that then President Bush had evaded military service turned out to be false.

Journalism's claim to truthfulness and reliability is crucial for its existence. It is the basis of a shared social code between journalists and their public. In scholarship, however, after both the cultural and linguistic turns, the idea that media provide a daily mirror is no longer generally accepted (cf. Fowler, 1991). News does not neutrally reflect social reality or empirical facts at all. It is a social construction. Events and facts do not have 'intrinsic importance' but become important because they are selected by journalists who adhere to a culturally and ideologically determined set of selection criteria. After this first selection filter, social reality is transformed once again to fit into media formats that give it shape. As Habermas (1990) stated: 'communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed' (p. 23). By representing the world in language, journalists construct meaning upon which the public can act.

In this chapter I argue that journalism is a discourse that is first and foremost characterized by its *performative* nature. I will use the coverage of the incidents at Abu Ghraib to illustrate this. Most studies in media scholarship use the paradigm of Anglo-American journalism which is fact-centered, advocates objectivity and focuses on news. By doing so scholars have reduced journalism to *news* discourse (Van Dijk, 1988; Hartley, 1982). However, news is merely one manifestation of journalistic discourse. A newspaper is more than its news section. Readers' perceptions of the social world are determined by the complete, interconnected content, style, and form of a paper. In addition, the ideology of a paper is recognizable throughout its departments, perhaps even more obviously in the non-news sections. Therefore it makes sense to look at journalism as an integral discourse instead of only focusing on news.

Furthermore, I argue that journalism derives its performative power from the forms and style employed and will demonstrate this by introducing a classification of styles. Journalism aims to impose and legitimize valid representations of the social world by the choice of form and stylistic devices. By way of conclusion, I will argue that the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu offers a promising framework with which to analyse the performative power of journalism.

JOURNALISM AND PERFORMATIVITY

The notion of performativity has two interlinked connotations. First, that of *(re-)staging*; retelling events and by doing so putting meaning on events. On a daily basis journalism has to convince its public that what is written or broadcast actually happened in 'real' life. However, journalism attempts to construct meaning and is by definition incomplete and not authentic at all. To overcome this paradox and to make stories as convincing as possible journalism as a cultural form has developed a twofold strategy. On the one hand it tries to hide its shortcomings or inadequacies. It presents 'facts' as natural, generally implicitly, but also sometimes explicitly. "The photographs tell it all," Hersh (2004a, p. 43) states, for example, before beginning to describe the pictures of the torture at Abu Ghraib. Journalism also uses specific forms that aim to prove an article is truthful. For example, an interview, that is structured around questions and answers, suggests both a mimetic representation of a conversation and an actual chronology and temporality. It wants readers to forget that it is an interpretation of a conversation (Broersma, 2008). In addition, news and information are framed by media. Journalists use frames such as 'organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world' (Reese, 2003, p. 11). They organize and simplify complex events and issues in order to make sense of them. To be performative these hidden structures of representation appeal to cultural codes and the existing knowledge of the public.

On the other hand, to ensure the effect of authenticity and truthfulness, journalistic texts rely on a set of professional practices, routines and textual conventions that were developed during the 20th century to guarantee that this process of construction or representation is as accurate—or mimetic—as possible. Journalists give accounts of journalistic processes in their articles. Hersh (2004a, p. 43), for example, used documents from reliable sources such as the Taguba report: "A fifty-three-page report, obtained by the *New Yorker*, written by Major General Antonio M. Taguba and not meant for public release, was completed in late February. Its conclusions about the institutional failures of the Army prison system were devastating," Hersh states. Information is attributed and multiple sources, preferably eyewitnesses, are quoted. "One of the witnesses, specialist Matthew Wisdom, an M.P., told the courtroom what happened when he and other soldiers delivered seven prisoners . . . " (p. 44). The reliability of sources must be double-checked, and reporting balanced—both sides must be heard—as CBS attempts by asking the U.S. army to comment.

An article is a convincing representation when it successfully establishes a feeling of truthfulness. By doing so it transforms an interpretation into truth—into a reality on which the public can act. That brings us to the second connotation of performativity, which emphasizes that linguistic repre-

sentations have the power to describe and produce phenomena at the same time. They are, in other words, self-fulfilling prophecies. Scholars of linguistics such as J.L. Austin (1975) developed speech act theory, which argued that "performative utterances" are ways of acting through language. The utterance 'I now declare you man and wife' in a marriage ceremony, for example, is not just a description of what is happening, but a ritual act through which the marriage is actually established—or declared true. Austin suggested that performatives had to be valued on the basis of their success and not according to their relation to a fixed reality. Did these speech acts achieve what they intended? Are they convincing? Austin's book has the elegant title, *How to Do Things with Words*, and mainly focuses on the use of performatives in personal communication.

Bourdieu (1991) praised speech act theory for "calling attention to the social conditions of communication" (p. 9). Even more than Austin, he stressed the importance of analyzing texts in their social context rather than in purely linguistic terms. Performative utterances are after all only considered true when the person who utters them is authorized to do so and their authority is recognized by others: "Legitimate competence is the statutorily recognized capacity of an authorized person—an 'authority'—to use, on formal occasions, the legitimate (that is, formal) language, the authorized, authoritative language, speech that is accredited, worthy of being believed, or, in a word, *performative*, claiming (with the greatest chance of success) to be effective" (pp. 69–70). Its institutional context and social conventions determine if a speech act 'works.' According to Bourdieu (1991), communication is not just an exchange of information or opinions, but primarily the exercise of symbolic power.

Bourdieu and notably John R. Searle shifted "the apparent focus of Austin from a few rather specialized speech situations to a recognition of the performative nature of language in general." They emphasized the intentions of the producer and the effects on the public, and they focused on the social context (Carlson, p. 63). Scholarship on media, identity and performativity has especially focused on regional, gendered or queer discourses (Butler, 1990; 1997; Bourdieu, 1991). I argue that journalism in its entirety, as a specific discourse among other communicative discourses, has a performative nature. During the 19th century, journalism successfully developed an ideology which emphasized its indispensability to democracy: journalism as the fourth estate. It claimed the right to control other powers in society because it was authorized by citizens to do so. To legitimize this authority as well as its representations of social reality, journalism developed a specific discourse. However, I argue that though the basic assumptions of this discourse, such as truthfulness and authenticity, are generally accepted, its stylistic features differ depending on the historical and cultural context of journalistic practice.

Moreover, I consider the notion of *perfomative discourse* to clarify journalism studies because it draws attention to both the news item (the text or

radio or television story) and the context in which a journalistic story is produced. By doing so it links up discourse studies to Bourdieu's field theory. The authority of a news item is established through the way it is represented in language, the reputation of the journalist, the medium the item is published or presented in and the profession as a whole. When Hersh, for example, was asked why people should believe his articles, which were based on anonymous sources, he replied, referring to what Bourdieu would have called the reporter's and the magazine's cultural capital: "Yes, you have to trust *The New Yorker* and me. However, we have built up a track record in the past decades and we deserve some credit for that" (Arbouw, 2007; my translation). The textual structure of a news item—its form and style—represents the authority that stems from its social configuration. It "manifests and symbolizes" the credibility of the profession and its cultural codes (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 109).

Performative power is essential for journalism's status and position in society. Every day journalism stages the social world in language. Every day its authority has to be reconfirmed. Millions of people take part in this large-scale ritual of meaning-making undertaken by the media. For them it is not the material, "real" world that guides their opinions but the representations of the social world in the media. The occurrence of particular events is only apparent to a broader public when they become part of journalistic discourse. This "media reality" has performative power. It determines what citizens think about and how they act, and it shapes public debate.

The events following the publication of the Abu Ghraib pictures, and the ensuing stories, illustrates this social process. As Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2006; 2007) have shown, the media initially framed the events as torture and as a manifestation of new intelligence tactics in the War on Terror. As a result, public approval of the American intervention in Iraq dropped sharply in the United States. However, in the ensuing months the Bush administration succeeded in downplaying the events by framing them as regrettable though isolated instances of abuse. Although Hersh and other reporters had considerable evidence to refute these claims by the government, the mainstream media did not counterframe the events as systematic and orchestrated torture. As a result, public debate was only rekindled when influential politicians led by Senator John McCain in late 2005 started to question the Bush administration and its policy of torture as a means of conducting the War on Terror.

FORM AND STYLE AS RESEARCH CATEGORIES

At first glance one might say that the content of a news item determines its performative power and that form and style merely carry content—an article is considered true when it is factually true. However, as I have argued

above, events are in most cases multi-interpretable and not verifiable by the public or even the actual journalist. People are not able to determine whether journalistic articles are true, but will consider them true because they seem plausible when based on existing public knowledge and cultural codes. In other words, news is true because the journalist successfully argues it to be true. Of course, I do not want to imply that the material, social world is of no importance at all. However, when the claims of one article are refuted by another which declares that it has found new sources or facts, these new claims for their part are also judged by their persuasive force.

This implies that the performative power of a text not only lies in its content but chiefly in its form and style—that is, in the expression of professional routines and conventions that justify, and mask, the subjective interpretation and news selection of the individual journalist. Since news consumers are accustomed to the principles of form and style, they tend to believe the content which comes with them. To take an example which is as well-known as it is extreme: why did so many Americans on the East Coast in 1938 believe that the events being portrayed in Orson Welles' radio play *The War of the Worlds* were really happening? They should at least have considered that the newsflashes stating that Martians were invading the Earth were unlikely to be true. However, since these fictional events were announced in news bulletins which were identical in form and style to those the public was used to hearing every day on the same prominent radio station, listeners believed the coverage.

While the content of an article is unique and incidental, form and style are more universal and refer to broader cultural discourses as well as accepted and widely used news conventions and routines. They ensure the ritual function of news. The content of a paper differs day to day, but readers will recognize its design, its writing style and its ideological background. This familiarity generates confidence and credibility (Broersma, 2007a, pp. ix–xi). Conventions concerning form and style are therefore essential to make people believe that a newspaper's representation of the social world is valid. They determine which stories are told and how they are told, and by doing so they determine how we experience the world. As Michael Schudson (1995) has put it: 'the power of media lies not only (and not even primarily) in its power to declare things to be true, but in its power to provide the forms in which the declarations appear' (p. 109). Form and style are important categories in ensuring journalism's claim to authenticity and veracity because they embody the social code connecting journalists and their public.

The status and prestige of journalists depends on the performative power of their stories. To retain and strengthen their social position journalists employ stylistic innovations and 'invent' new forms without greatly challenging professional rules. The introduction and development of news forms is constrained by technological and economic conditions, but these processes are primarily determined by sociocultural factors. To make their

representations of the social world performative journalists have to embed them in the cultural codes of their own society. In this dialectical process, journalism tries to reach a more autonomous position in society as well as fulfilling consumers' needs. As Barnhurst (1994) writes, journalism has to balance "authority with popular appeal"—the style of a newspaper and the forms it uses are guided by "those opposing poles" (p. 172). The use of journalistic forms reveals what is tolerable to the public. It reflects the boundaries of the public sphere.

Form refers to the level of textual conventions that structure the presentation of news in the broadest sense. As Barnhurst and Nerone (2001) stated: "*form* is everything a newspaper does to present the look of the news." It provides a newspaper with a "visible structure" (p. 3). Even more importantly, however, the form of the news offers ritual confirmation of the existence of the professional discourse that journalism developed in the late 19th century. Instead of merely transmitting public speeches and texts—by printing verbatim records of parliamentary proceedings or chronological mimetic accounts of speeches, for example—journalists started to frame this information in a professional discourse. They developed specific conventionalized forms that articulated the new routines they used. By doing so, reporters no longer simply relied on public knowledge, but asserted a knowledge of their own. These new forms made it possible to interpret the social and political meaning of statements, texts and actions. The editor evolved from a collector who merely presented what had been found, into an interpreter who reordered and rewrote fragments of information into larger narratives (Chalaby, 1998; Matheson, 2000; Schudson, 1995).

Form can be analyzed into three subcategories that cover structure, design and genre. The length of news items, for instance, reveals ideological and strategic choices. The space required by an item represents the importance editors attach to it, while the way a story is structured—linear or nonlinear, chronologically, by applying the conventions of the inverted pyramid, merely narrative or discursive, polemic or factual—stresses the interpretation of social reality that is voiced in a newspaper. The use of rhetorical devices does the same. In a study of the Serbian daily newspaper *Politika*, Verica Rupar (2007) showed, for example, that the paper published more about politics on its front page when the political situation in the Balkans was insecure. However, stories were fragmented, with a large number of items in a loose hierarchy. News facts were not interpreted, with the readers instead only being provided with several versions of a particular event. The paper reinforced this strategy by using longer headlines, which again provided just a description of the event with no journalistic interpretation.

Newspaper design is the most captivating expression of form. Design determines the face of a newspaper. Through its arrangement of articles, departmentalization, typography and use of graphic elements such as photos, drawings and charts, the number and the size of articles and headlines,

a newspaper expresses how it wants to be read. Barnhurst and Nerone (2001) argued successfully that newspaper design embodies ideological positions about the social world. "The form includes the way the medium imagines itself to be and to act. In its physical arrangement, structure, and format, a newspaper reiterates an ideal for itself" (p. 3).

The ideological transformation of journalism is traceable in newspaper design. Elsewhere (Broersma, 2007b) I have argued how Dutch newspapers, before World War II, opposed Anglo-American news design. They feared that newspapers would become sensationalist and market-oriented if they took news value as the most important selection criterion. The use of visual tools such as headlines, typographical cues and photographs to make newspapers more comprehensible was despised as cultural degeneration. Dutch newspapers aimed to educate their readers, as well as express and reflect political or other opinions. They were organized into departments, combining a geographical and thematic classification of reality. Foreign, Home and Local sections were followed by Art, Finance and Economic News, and so on. Papers expected their readers to read the complete paper from the first sentence on the front page to the last sentence on the back page.

As a third category apart from structure and design, genres are textual forms, or patterns, that organize a story. They transcend individual articles and can be used to categorize them. There is an important difference between the notion of genre in Anglo-American journalism and European journalism. The first is centered around beats and practices: crime reporting or show business reporting, for example, are considered genres. In Europe, genre is interpreted as the character and organization of the text. An interview, for example, can be about a criminal, a sportsperson, or whoever, but it always contains the representation of a conversation and it is always structured according to the same genre conventions. Professional education and reporting are centred along these lines: journalists learn these conventions and then apply them in an interview or a feature, a situationer, a news analysis or a background article.

In other words, journalists write their stories according to culturally determined genre conventions and are aware readers are familiar with these. As such, genres represent an unspoken agreement between the journalist and the reader about what to expect. They structure the public's reception of information, making it possible for them to understand what is meant by the author. Genres help people to make sense of texts. However, genre conventions also influence what is included in or excluded from a story. A journalist who chooses to publish an interview as a monoloque of the interviewee cannot include any background information that is not voiced by the interviewee. Alternatively a hard news story will not contain comments by the author. Picking a genre implies a choice about the way in which a subject is represented in the newspaper.

Journalism uses forms to articulate different styles of reporting. Where form operates at the textual level, style is connected to the sociocultural context of journalism. It refers to both the level of practice and the level of routines, that is, cultural values that are commonly shared by groups of journalists and that underlie their practices. In scholarship, as well as in popular speech, style is often interpreted in terms of the personal qualities of individual journalists and "the aesthetics of language." This is, for example, voiced in the well-known aphorism: *le style c'est l'homme*. However, style is to a large extent not a personal quality of an individual journalist but a marker of sociocultural context and group identity.

When journalism became a distinct occupation, practices, routines and conventions that facilitated quick and reliable production were standardized. Writing had increasingly less to do with personal genius or literary talents but instead became an almost industrial process—"a skill anyone could learn" (Roggenkamp, 2005, p. 126). Through education and socialization in the newsroom journalists all relate to a shared set of rules that structure their stories. In many cases, these rules are even formalized in style guides. Style expresses ideological points of view about what journalism is, or what it should be to a certain group—what news is and how a journalist should act. Moreover, it articulates how the medium wants to be seen and how it wants its readers to experience social reality.

Style can be defined as "the choice between functional equivalents of language." As Bell said, "a 'that way' which could have been chosen instead of a 'this way' … and these different ways of speaking can carry different social meanings" (quoted in Mattheson, 2000, p. 560). However, as Van Dijk (1988) argued—and I agree—a broader definition is possible and desirable. Van Dijk introduced the term *thematic style* which indicates that the choice of a particular topic is also a marker of style. In his definition, style is "the total set of characteristics, variable structural features of discourse that are an indication of the personal and social context of the speaker, given a semantic, pragmatic, or situational invariant" (p. 73). Within the various styles of journalism there are differing institutionalized rules of the game, or routines. These determine the selection of certain topics and what is included in and excluded from stories. Routines offer the ideological framework that structures the process of gathering, selecting and presenting news. Because they represent the ideological framework of a journalistic style and restrict a journalist's freedom of action, routines are much contested and defended by those actors in the journalistic field who want to retain or strengthen their positions. Routines are constantly at stake.

During the 20th century, journalism developed from a mainly partisan institution into an independent profession that emphasized its task as the fourth branch of government. I suggest that this ideological transformation of journalism expressed itself in stylistic changes and the "invention" of new

journalistic forms. To identify these journalistic ideologies and to offer a framework for the analysis of journalism, clarity is gained by distinguishing between three styles of journalistic discourse. I will first make a distinction between the reflective style and the news style. The latter can then be divided into the information model and the story model. To sharpen my argument I will link these styles to the three models of journalism discerned by Schudson (1999): the advocacy model, the trustee model and the market model respectively. Because styles of journalistic discourse derive their performative power from their sociocultural context they must link up with the expectations of news consumers to be persuasive. A model that distinguishes between different styles can be helpful in the analysis of the media landscape as a dynamic field of relations. Political, social or cultural transformations might lead to style changes that are articulated through the use of different forms.

The model presented aims to overcome the teleological perspective that dominates the study of media history. In this research tradition, the development of journalism and the press is interpreted as being predetermined by pre-eminently Anglo-American notions such as objectivity, balance, impartiality, and the distinction between facts and opinions. In this approach, the history of the press is a history of the struggle for press freedom. The focus on Anglo-American journalism has prevented serious analysis of other styles and forms—because in this approach these do not belong to the domain of *journalism*. Too often they are interpreted as just a necessary stage in the development of journalism as an "independent" profession. They are seen as a backward though necessary step towards 'modernization.' By contrast I argue that various styles can exist alongside each other in a single country—and at some transitional moments even in one medium—though usually one of them will dominate at a certain time in history. Therefore, this classification of styles does not represent a historical development or a strict periodization.

A CLASSIFICATION OF STYLES

The reflective style is first and foremost discursive. It has its roots in partisan journalism, that wanted to educate, instruct and persuade readers of certain political or sociocultural positions. In this partisan approach the journalistic field has no autonomous position, on the contrary, it is closely connected to the fields of politics and literature. Journalists intentionally tell readers what they need to know from the standpoint of a political party or a social movement. The organizing principle of this kind of journalism is "the mediating subjectivity of the journalist," as Chalaby (1996) said in a comparison of French and Anglo-American journalism. "Journalists did not

only wrap information into their own observations but constructed their articles according to their interpretation of the related events, thus mediating between readers and reality" (p. 312). Reporting news is considered of less importance than judging the social world from political and sociocultural standpoints. Views rather than news is the credo of the reflective style.

This style derives its performative power from the use of genres reflecting on news facts instead of news reporting itself. It is centered around opinions and analysis. Editorials or background articles, for example, describe, explain and analyze events and comment on the news. In this style, reporters were held in low esteem. At least, until World War II they were despised as clerks who merely recorded events or what other people had said. Professional journalists considered themselves more literary artists or intellectuals than craftsmen. The great men of journalism wrote political commentaries and analytical essays. True journalists expressed their vision of the world in measured words and a superb literary style—they added *intelligence raisonnée* to the facts.

While the reflective style was organized around opinions, the news style that emerged in the United States after the 1830s derived its performative power from its factuality. According to Høyer and Pöttker (2005) "new American journalism" introduced five new elements to journalism. *News value* instead of political bias became the key principle of news selection. The increased speed of news supply that was triggered by the introduction of the telegraph caused the emergence of a *24 hour news cycle*. For an event to be newsworthy it must have occurred since the paper's last publication. The *news interview* became the most important tool for reporters, allowing them to gather fast and reliable information. Stories were structured by using the *inverted pyramid* formula and contained a summary lead. Finally, *objectivity* became the moral norm for reporting.

The emergence of the Anglo-American news style (Williams 2007; Høyer 2007) had much to do with the rise of a commercial press and a highly competitive market. This kind of journalism could only appear in democratic societies with no juridical or financial impediments. In the 1830s the U.S. press grew into a press for the masses. The spread of literacy and technological innovations in newsprint production, printing and distribution created profitable market conditions, whereas the growth of mass democracy, urbanization and the rise of a consumer society increased the demand for the news. Editors leapt to fill the needs of the "democratic market society" that had emerged (Schudson, 1978). While they were reaching for a mass market they were encouraged to take a non-partisan though not necessarily neutral stand in the race to increase their readership. The news style aimed to blur the boundaries of the public sphere in order to reach a more autonomous position in society as well as fulfill consumers' needs. Scoops and disclosures "sold," and also strengthened journalism's reputation as an independent social force.

To distinguish itself from the political and the literary fields, Anglo-American journalism concentrated on facts and information, and presented itself as a neutral and independent guardian of the public interest. In the United States, objectivity was firmly established as a leading norm in the 1920s (Schudson, 2001), with journalism affiliating itself with the rising public demand for facts as a basis for rational choices and actions. This need was stimulated by scientific progress and changes in the political culture that transformed voting from a partisan activity to a rational act. Furthermore, journalism, as an emerging profession, needed to distinguish itself from propaganda and the public relations industry. Additionally, the objectivity norm provided rules for the craft, making it easier for editors to discipline reporters, compelling them to conform to the industrial patterns of mass newspaper production. A single news format emerged which turned reporters into "machines, without prejudice, colour, and without style" of their own (Matheson, 2000, p. 565).

The news style can be used in either a story model or an information model. This distinction results from the ambiguous character of Anglo-American journalism which embodies the "journalism of action" employed by the yellow press, as well as the detached and impartial style of the quality papers (Campbell, 2006). As Williams (2007) stressed, Anglo-American journalism should be understood as "an eternal debate about expansion of mass culture and the deep seated ideological divisions between satisfying public wants and educating and improving the public taste" (p. 25).

The story model has a primarily narrative character. Newspapers that stress their storytelling function want to create for their readers "satisfying aesthetic experiences which help them to interpret their own lives and to relate them to the nation, town, or class to which they belong" (Schudson, 1978, p. 89). They follow the market and try to fulfill their readers' wants. Usually such newspapers are labeled popular or sensational. This style is emotive and aims to appeal to readers at this level (Broersma, 1999). The information model is just like the reflective style in being primarily discursive—that is, descriptive, explanatory, and involving argumentation. However, unlike the reflective model, papers conforming to the information model primarily want inform and therefore favor the rational, positivist ideals of objectivity, balance, fairness and neutrality. Journalists consider themselves professionals who "provide news they believe citizens should have to be informed participants in democracy" (Schudson, 1999, p. 119). Generally, newspapers that operate in this trustee model are labeled quality papers. They use a restrained and detached style that, rather than reach for the hearts of its readers, tries to appeal to their minds (Broersma, 1999). The trustee model embodies the professional ideology that presently dominates journalism.

The Diffusion of Anglo-American Journalism

After the 1890s, the Anglo-American news style spread across Europe and the rest of the world. This process of diffusion required two preconditions: a substantial market for newspapers and a democratic political system. This is why diffusion progressed along the lines of the three media systems distinguished by Hallin and Mancini (2004). The North Atlantic or liberal model is characterized by the early development of a mass circulation press, the early professionalization of journalism, and its neutral and commercial character. It is market oriented, with the state removing legal impediments comparatively early in the 19th century. The United States, Canada, and Great Britain are included in this model.

In the Old World, Great Britain was fertile ground for the "new American journalism," as it was called. With hindsight, it can be said that while the news style has been dubbed "Anglo-American," British journalism had much in common with European journalism. Initially, the British press was just as reluctant to accept the American news style as the Continental newspapers. Schudson (2001) strikingly characterized British journalism as "a kind of a half-way house between American professionalism and continental traditions of party-governed journalism with high literary aspirations" (p.167). British new journalism of the 1880s aimed to make newspapers more readable but strongly emphasized the role of the press as the Fourth Estate (Wiener, 1988).

Newspapers adhering to the northern European or democratic corporatist model were even more hesitant about what they called "Americanization." Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries exhibited the characteristics of this model. They traditionally had a strong party press, which was opinion-based and noncommercial. Moreover, there was severe state intervention in the press. Close connections between newspapers and political parties or social movements, and strict press control by the government curbed the speed of commercialization and the rise of a mass circulation press. The Anglo-American news style and its practices were, as we have seen, closely connected to professionalization and commercialization.

Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and France can be included in the Mediterranean or polarized pluralist model, although France is a borderline case as it also displays characteristics of the democratic corporatist model. Newspaper circulation was low in these countries—their economies were underdeveloped, and journalism had strong political roots and weaker professional standards. There was also strong state intervention, which hindered the rise of a commercial press for much longer than in other areas. Newspapers in countries fitting this model were the most unwilling to adopt the Anglo-American news style.

Journalists and the elite in most European countries distrusted Americanization (Broersma, 1999; Requate, 2004). In a broader discourse of cultural pessimism it was seen as a degeneration and as a terrifying consequence of modernization. In Europe, articles were preferably written as essays, in contrast to the concise American news reports that used summary leads containing the most important news facts (the inverted pyramid). Because American journalism was fact-centered, it was considered stylishly poor and unattractive. Emile Zola, for example, wrote in 1894 that it was regrettable that "the uncontrolled flow of information pushed to the extreme … has transformed journalism, killed the great articles of discussion, killed literary critique, and increasingly gives more importance to news dispatches, trivial news, and to articles of reporters and interviewers" (cited in Chalaby, 1996, p. 309).

Those journalists working in the reflective style showed strong cultural resistance to Anglo-American journalism. Their arguments focused on the story model and paid little or no attention to the information model. By doing so they were able to proscribe the latter's emphasis on the spectacular and sensational, and its appeal to the emotions. Its links to commercialization and sensationalism were both to be rejected. Opinion leaders thought the introduction of American practices and conventions would cause social upheaval and were afraid that the standards of journalism would drop if the American focus on news was adopted. Interviewing, for example, was viewed as a "monstrous departure from the dignity and propriety of journalism" (Silvester, 1993, p. 7).

However, these journalistic innovations seemed to offer a formula for reaching the masses. In most cases, one newspaper, or a small number, took the lead in this process of so-called "Americanization." Press barons such as Lord Northcliffe in Great Britain, Henrik Cavling in Denmark, and Hak Holdert in the Netherlands considered the news style to be a promising tool to attract new readers. Journalists and the general public were ambivalent, as a French commentator observed: "The taste for the short and sharp, unadulterated news item is Anglo-American. It appeals to French taste but does not completely satisfy it." (as cited in Albert, 1972, p. 278). Nonetheless, in the course of the 20th century, journalism in all European countries adopted the new practices, routines, and conventions. They were adapted, moderated, and transformed within the confines of the bourgeois and political press—a process that took decades and which was only completed in the years after World War II. It started in Great Britain, then took off in the northern European countries and before finally reaching the Mediterranean. The journalism we are familiar with today has even been described as an "Anglo-American invention" (Chalaby, 1998).

The extent to which the reflective style disappeared from the media landscape differs from region to region. In most southern European countries many characteristics of the reflective style are still present. For

instance, the French news media are still very opinionated, mixing facts and opinions, and they still reject an "objective," informative style of practicing journalism (Benson, 2002). In 2002, the editor-in-chief of the leading daily *Le Monde* still had to promote the Anglo-American news style to his reporters:

> A journalist at *Le Monde* should always ask himself what happened factually (what, who, where, when, how?) before worrying about what to think of it intellectually. He must force himself to tell before judging, explain before commenting upon, demonstrate before condemning. To accept, day in day out, proof of the facts, is to admit that they are not immediately reducible to a single, unique explanatory scheme of which journalists in general and those at *Le Monde* in particular would be the favoured guardians. (as cited in Benson, 2002, p. 67)

The French media neither welcomed nor rejected American news practices, but adapted them into the reflective style: "from this original combination was born the French version of modern journalism" (Benson, 2002, p. 53).

Today, the reflective style still dominates journalism in countries in Africa and Asia, but in the Western world it is despised as a hangover from the days when journalism was closely connected to politics. Professional journalists cherish their hard-won freedom. Although the news style is generally accepted, the dichotomy between the information and the story models is still very present in the public debate on journalism. With the rise of commercial television and the decline of circulation, newspapers now tend to convert themselves from the information model to the story model. This results in complaints about infotainment and sensationalism. Furthermore, the rise of the Internet and 'new' digital media raises questions about the paradigms of journalism. The boundaries of the journalistic field are becoming increasingly blurred, every citizen can be a reporter and a media entrepreneur today. Those new "journalists" do not care about norms such as objectivity, neutrality and balance. They tend to use the reflective style, mixing facts and opinions, and they are openly partisan. Ironically, for professional journalists, the postmodern citizen seems to like this style and it seems to fulfill present-day public needs. This might even lead to a revival of the reflective style in the mainstream media.

Style, Distinction and Autonomy

As a performative discourse, journalism has to appeal to broader cultural values that differ in time and place. To strengthen its performative power, it uses a particular style and textual forms. Therefore, journalism studies

should link texts to their context. In this respect Bourdieu's notion of *field* offers a useful complement to discourse analysis which tends to focus on texts. Field theory can illuminate how "external forces are translated into the semi-autonomous logic" of journalism (Benson, 1999, p. 479). According to Bourdieu, society is divided into multiple, semi-autonomous or autonomous fields. He defined a field as "a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 30). A field is an arena of conflict in which the actors strive for power. In addition, the various fields in society (politics, journalism, literature, academia and so on), which all belong to the general field of power, also strive for autonomy from each other. Fields are also interrelated. For example, politicians and journalists meet each other regularly. They have an interdependent relationship as they need each other to obtain either positive publicity or news, respectively. In this daily fight, they both strive for the power to control public discourse.

The position of the media in society rests on its ability to represent the social world to a broader public. In my opinion, journalism should therefore be studied as a continuous contestation of the boundaries between the public and the private sphere.[1] Journalists determine to a large extent which subjects are discussed in public. They are the gatekeepers of the public sphere. Furthermore, they determine how subjects are discussed and with which goal and effect. By making choices about the form and style of news, journalists affect how reality is experienced. Journalistic texts then should not primarily be understood as attempts to mimetically describe events, but as strategic interpretations of them, that offer journalists the possibility of asserting moral authority and, as a result, obtain power. Each individual news story transcends its specific content and contributes to a larger story. A report about a death sentence, for example, describes us a specific event, but it also—or chiefly—contributes to a discussion on crime, punishment, and cultural values.

Journalism can be conceptualized as a dynamic field of relations with specific conventions and routines—its *habitus*. According to Bourdieu, each field has its own "rules of the game" that sustain belief in the structures and

[1]Habermas' concept of the public sphere, which he first formulated in his *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962), and reformulated in his *Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns* (1995) and *Faktizität und Geltung* (1992), has been criticized extensively (for a good overview, see Calhoun, 1999). Although many of the historical and political-theoretical points of criticism are valid, the concept of the public sphere *in itself* still offers an inspiring conceptual device and cohesive theoretical framework.

principles of the field, and are at stake in a continuous battle for symbolic power at the same time. Field theory stresses the interplay among the individual journalist, social processes in the news room, the media company a journalist works for and the interdependence of cultural, economic, and political circumstances. The agents in the journalistic field try to distinguish themselves, striving for authority over and autonomy from other actors in the journalistic field as well as actors in other social fields. On the one hand, they do so by using methods such as investigative reporting and scoops (exclusive and new information that is both striking and persuasive), by writing brilliant analyses, or producing well-written columns. On the other hand, they try to distinguish themselves by contesting the habitus of the field—by contesting conventions of form and style. To exist in a field is "to differ," to impose "principles of vision and division," while a "dialectic of distinction" causes constant transformation (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 36; cf. Schultz, 2007).

A historical example might illustrate this mechanism and the comprehensive character of field theory. The nature of the interview as a journalistic form, which was introduced in the 1870s as one of the key elements of the news style, can be elucidated if one takes into account that it was a strategy designed to strengthen the position of an individual reporter, win readers, acquire authority, and gain autonomy from politics (Broersma, 2008). Interviewing was one of the practices that was helpful in developing journalism into a separate field, independent of politics, and in the establishment of a distinct journalistic discourse. Well-chosen quotations and the attribution of speech increased the credibility of stories and journalism's claim to truth. Additionally, the new practice, as a joint enterprise and also as a power struggle, allowed a sense of equality to develop between journalists, politicians and other public figures. One-way communication—reporting a speech without the possibility of interruption—was replaced by a dialogue that provided the opportunity for journalists to intervene, change the subject, or even take the lead in the conversation. The interview gave journalists more control over public discourse and strengthened journalism's position as an autonomous field (Chalaby, 1998, p. 128).

The economic capital of journalism increased because newspapers developed into mass media. Dramatic interviews were a selling point for papers, which aimed at expanding their market. They were helpful in fulfilling the public need for "the real thing," the "state of mind of the nineteenth century," as an 1887 commentator wrote (Roggenkamp, 2005, p. 20). Readers liked the new genre because it revealed new facts, but they also liked "the illusion it conveys of intimacy with celebrities and those who are the witnesses of momentous events" (Silvester, 1993, p. 5). Human interest stories attracted readers, who were given an insight into the private lives and thoughts of public figures. In these news organizations, reporters who succeeded in interviewing important politicians and celebrities were held in

high esteem. For individual reporters, the interview was a tool with which to distinguish oneself and which could make one's career.

The diffusion of the interview stresses the importance of cultural differences in the adoption and adaptation of journalistic forms. The interview was pre-eminently an "invention" of American journalism. In European countries that had embraced the reflective style interviewing was adapted reluctantly because the division between the private and the public sphere was more strict and because reporting was held in low esteem. Journalists considered themselves as meaning makers rather than news makers (Broersma, 2008). This emphasizes the importance of choosing both a historical and a comparative approach when researching the structure of the journalistic field and the nature of journalistic discourse. The configuration of the journalistic field differs both historically and in the various styles of journalism I discussed here.

Although organizational and extra-organizational conditions are culturally situated, comparative research can shed light on the diffusion and adaptation of forms and styles in national contexts and it can elucidate the performative power of journalism. The organization of newsrooms, for example, represents the ideological foundations of journalism and also determines the processing of news and the representation of social reality, as Esser (1998) showed in a comparative study of editorial structures and work principles in Germany and Great Britain. British newsrooms are centrally organized and the division of labor is high, whereas German journalists reject editorial control and consider themselves all-round professionals. "News reporting, writing editorials, editing, and technical production are all regarded as equally relevant for the job profile of the German redakteur." (p. 379) Esser concluded that German journalism after World War II, adapted the Anglo-American news style only in terms of form, that is, in its presentation of news. However, in terms of style and routines, that is, their editorial work processes, it still embodies the reflective style. Therefore, reporters' personal biases have more impact on news coverage than in Great Britain (cf. Wilke, 2007).

Studying the struggles over journalism's habitus—its routines and conventions—as well as struggles with the boundaries of the public sphere will thus deepen our understanding of the nature and function of journalistic discourse. If we want to understand media and the "logic" of the public sphere, we have to examine the forms and styles of journalism that embody its performative power. Such an approach stresses how societies are shaped by representations of social reality through journalistic media. It reveals how newspapers function as 'social maps,' that is, how they construct meaning, how they articulate social worlds and how they build communities. And it allows us to reveal the strategies of journalism understood as performative discourse.

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