The Fourth Estate in the USA and UK

Discourses of truth and power

Jesse Owen Hearns-Branaman

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds
Institute of Communications Studies

August, 2011

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

The right of Jesse Owen Hearns-Branaman to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the ways in which political journalists in the USA and UK talk about issues of truth and power as it relates to journalism's role as the Fourth Estate. The theoretical basis comes from a critique of the two major structures underpinning the Fourth Estate, that of epistemology (the study of truth) and ideology (broadly, the study of power and ideas). This involves unpacking and critically examining the ability of news media to convey 'true' information and the ideological formations in which the news media production practice is situated. The epistemological theories of Realism, Pragmatism, Antirealism and Hyperrealism will first be elucidated in an in-depth theoretical discussion, focusing on the contributions of Baudrillard. Four major theories of ideology, that of personal ideological bias, chaos, control, and ideology as fetishistic disavowal will be examined, this time focusing on the work of Žižek.

This theoretical discussion is complimented by an analysis of interview questions relating to epistemological concerns and to ideology. The empirical data consists of twenty interviews conducted with political correspondents in the USA and UK. A version of critical discourse analysis is used to examine the ways in which journalists talk about the issues raised by the questions, what is termed their 'discursive strategies.' The categories for analysis are grounded in the discursive strategies used by the journalists themselves, examined to elaborate not simply the explicit content, but the deeper implicit meanings inherent in the way they answer.

This provided both an original theoretical discussion and an original set of empirically-derived data. It also allows us to further understand the role of journalism as the Fourth Estate, the types of 'truth' it brings to us, the types of ideologies that underpin the news production process via news media professionals, and how the system is maintained despite its inherent contradictions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 – INTRODUCTION

The exact origins of the name 'the Fourth Estate' are unclear. Historian Daniel Boorstin notes that, "It was in 1828 that [British politician Thomas] Macaulay called the gallery where the reporters sat in Parliament a 'fourth estate of the realm'" (Boorstin 1961: 16). A book titled *The Fourth Estate* (Hunt 1850), a largely celebratory and uncritical history of the development of the press, was published slightly after that. Contrarily, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "its first usage with reference to the press has been attributed to Edmund Burke," an eighteenth-century English philosopher and politician, "but this remains unconfirmed."[1]

Despite the conflicting origins of the name, and despite that other institutions, such as labour unions, have been referred to as the 'Fourth Estate,' the name now almost exclusively refers to news media. And, unlike in the nineteenth century where it was subject to ridicule and jest, the Fourth Estate is a now viewed as a respectable and necessary, yet flawed, institution that is integral to democracy. The Fourth Estate encapsulates many of the important ideas of the Enlightenment, especially that democracies need to be fuelled by a well informed public who themselves are the source for the power and legitimacy of the government. This represents a major shift in the truth and power structures of society, as 'truth' is no longer said to be determined by a higher power and its representatives on earth but instead on our own reasonable observations of data, and power is similarly detached, decentralized and rationalized. Due to the centrality and ever-increasing importance of news media in particular in the twenty-first century, I argue this concept needs to be re-examined.

§1.I will introduce the origins of the concept of the news media as the Fourth Estate, that is, an independent actor to check on the power of government, and three major critiques of that normative position. In §1.II, the work of Jean Baudrillard and Slavoj Žižek will be introduced, focusing on their theories of epistemology and professional ideology. §1.III will summarize the discussion and explain the structure of the remainder of the thesis.

1.I - News Media as 'The Fourth Estate'

In order to discover aspects of the Fourth Estate that could benefit from more research, this section will examine the origins of the ideas of the separation of

---

[1]See Fourth (2011).

powers and of checks and balances (§1.I.i), and how that was extended to include the news media, creating its normative position of the 'watchdog' (§1.I.ii). I will then introduce several critiques of this normative position, stressing how they are largely of a restorative nature in that they aim to *fix* deficiencies in the Fourth Estate (§1.I.iii), before introducing the non-restorative critique of System Maintenance (§1.I.iv).

1.I.i – Checks & Balances and Separation of Powers

The purpose of having three separate yet theoretically equal branches of government (executive, legislative and judicial) was developed to ensure balance by endowing them each with enough power to be able to check the others. This reform in the power structure of society was a major project of the Enlightenment, especially for Locke and Montesquieu, drawing from their revolutionary view of human nature.

In the second of Locke's (1689) *Two Treatises of Government*, he delineates different roles for legislative and executive branches of government in preserving the 'common-wealth' of the community. Such distinctions draw from his view of the natural state of humans in that legitimate authority can only come from the consent of the people and be non-violent in nature. In *The Spirit of Laws*, Montesquieu (1750: np) develops this point further:

> Democratic and aristocratic states are not in their own nature free. Political liberty is to be found only in moderate governments; and even in these it is not always found. It is there only when there is no abuse of power. But constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go. Is it not strange, though true, to say that virtue itself has need of limits?

> To prevent this abuse, it is necessary from the very nature of things that power should be a check to power. A government may be so constituted, as no man shall be compelled to do things to which the law does not oblige him, nor forced to abstain from things which the law permits.

Montesquieu's separation of powers allowed liberal democracies to create a system where "the quarrels and rebellions, the audacities and subversions, are all absorbed and recuperated […] to our general satisfaction" (Manent 1987: 63).

These ideas are carried forth into US constitutional theory in writing such as James Madison's 'Federalist paper #51' (Madison 1788), regarded as the summation of the American Founders' thoughts on the function of the system of checks and balances (Landy & Milkis 2008). The relevant and oft-quoted section asserts:

> Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to

control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. (Madison 1788: np)

Thus, due to the 'nature' of humans, governmental powers need to be separated in order to make sure that ambition is not concentrated in one person or estate as it is under the more centralized monarchical states.

Even though this logic was adopted in both the USA and the UK, it is expressed in different ways in their respective governmental organizations. In the USA the three branches of government balance each other; the Supreme Court can judge the constitutionality of laws passed by the legislature, the executive has some power to veto the legislature's laws, the legislature and executive must work together for matters of budget, raising revenue and waging war. In the UK the three estates are (or perhaps we should say *were*) the Monarchy, the House of Commons and the House of Lords. However, the power of the Monarchy and the House of Lords has been reduced since the eighteenth-century, with most formerly-monarchical executive power as well as legislative power being invested in the House of Commons and the Prime Minister. The American President and the British Prime Minister are thus powerful but not all powerful, and certainly need to share power with and be responsible to more spheres of influence than in the era of absolute monarchy. This is replicated, to a certain extent, in the structures of states and localities in the US and local authorities in the UK, with different segments having a measure of power to check the others.

It should be noted that these early discussions of how to redistribute power in a post-authoritarian, post-mercantilist era rarely, if ever, considered the role of news media. James Madison seldom mentions the press in his writings on this subject, and not at all in the Federalist Paper quoted above. Thomas Jefferson, in his 1801 presidential inaugural address, advocated to let the press "stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it" (quoted in Ellis 1997: 235). However, he did not place it in the context of Montesquieu and Madison's 'checks and balances.' Indeed, as Levy has shown, the original framers of the US constitution had only vague notions of what free press or free speech meant (Levy 1960, 1985), and it was only through "a number of latter-day reasons […] to support freedom of expression" (Carter, Franklin & Wright 2008: 34) that modern free speech and press theories and the 'Marketplace of Ideas' concept (see §2.III.i) have been derived. It should be noted that the free press protections of the First Amendment to the US Constitution only began to be applied to the states after the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in

1868. Additionally, it was only after various Supreme Court rulings, such as *Gitlow v New York* (1925),[2] that explicit reference to the 'free press' and the striking down of state-based anti-free press laws occurred. For the majority of the nineteenth century, then, such protections *only* applied to federal laws.

As will be shown in §1.I.iii, we arrived at the modern concept of news media as the Fourth Estate after a successful movement to extend the concept of the separation of powers and of checks and balances to include of news media itself as one of the powers needed to check and balance governmental power. This is commonly called the 'watchdog' role of journalism and is considered the normative position that news media need to and should take. This has also led to two critiques of the news media's role as the Fourth Estate (§1.I.iii), that it serves more as a lapdog or attack-dog *for* those in power instead of checking on their power, or that as news media is very close with government and corporate powers, simply executes elite transactions amongst different power holders in this system. I will argue that these positions, while being critical of the watchdog role, are insufficient as a critique of the Fourth Estate because they inevitably lead back to the Fourth Estate watchdog role as the *de facto* best system. I thus introduce the Baudrillardian system maintenance theory (§1.I.iv), arguing that the system cannot be 'restored' because it *is* performing its function well. Being an attack-dog and the site of elite transactions, along with occasionally a watchdog, *is* the function of news media, and calls to 'repair' the system function only to maintain that it *can* be fixed, thus precluding the need for larger systemic reforms.

1.I.ii – News Media as Watchdog

The normative position of news media as a watchdog of government power extends directly from the above discussion of the separation of powers and checks and balances system in modern democracies. As mentioned, this position is usually treated as the default mode or ideal that news media *should*, but often does not, reach. Critiques that news media *should not* or *cannot* function as the Fourth Estate are very rare.

For example, Bromley argues that much investigative journalism scholarship, critical or not, is founded on the normative conception that it is "'a good thing'" and "central to the idea of 'the press'" and "even if flawed in practice" is "an essential component of flourishing liberal democratic systems" and that we would be "worse off without it" (Bromley 2008: 184). Investigative journalism's purpose is "to bring about positive change in existing laws or to expose wrongdoings" (Greenwald & Bernt 2000: 4). Barnett argues that "a vigorous journalistic culture – and in

---

[2] 268 U.S. 652 - 45 S. Ct. 625; 69 L. Ed. 1138; 1925 U.S. LEXIS 598

particular challenging investigative journalism – is vital to a healthy democracy" because governmental "wrongdoing will not only continue but can eventually corrupt the body politic" without it (Barnett 2005: 329). Moore states that "there is a long and noble history of journalists" fulfilling their watchdog role, recent examples include the expose of torture by US troops in Iraq, and that this "is important not just for holding those in power to account, but because those in power know they're being held to account" (Moore 2007: 33). Media legal historian Gleason states that the press as an 'institution' "should function as a watchdog" (Gleason 1990: 110), and Curran concludes that "The conception of the media as a democratic watchdog is important" (Curran 2000: 127).

And when financial crises threaten to hit the news media industry, "we have to come up with solutions that provide us with hard-hitting reporting that monitors people in power" (Nichols & McChesney 2009: np). Similarly, US journalist Bill Moyers said, "Without a free and independent press, this 250-year-old experiment in self-government will not make it. As journalism goes, so goes democracy" (Moyers 2008: np). This is also echoed by politicians around the world; for example, members of the European Parliament issued a warning that the "pursuit of profit is putting the historic role of the press as the watchdog of democracy at stake" and thus measures to support it must be taken (Phillips 2008: np).

Even very critical takes on news media performance come back to the watchdog role as a basic element. Bennett & Serrin (2007: 327) define watchdog journalism as having three main elements:

> (1) independent scrutiny by the press of the activities of government, business, and other public institutions with an aim toward (2) documenting, questioning, and investigating those activities in order to (3) provide publics and officials with timely information on issues of public concern.

While those three elements can be found in daily journalism, "there are also stunning gaps that [...] suggest the hesitance or inability of news organizations to act systematically or routinely" in this watchdog role (ibid). They point out several instances when journalism worked really well (exposing My Lai massacre, the Watergate scandal, child abuse in Catholic Church) and when it failed miserably (the lead up to the Iraq War is their only example) to explore the gaps between normative and actual performance, before concluding that "Without journalists acting as watchdogs, American democracy – at least anything close to the form we know it today – would not exist" (ibid: 327-238).

Schudson's examination of the Watergate scandal (Schudson 1993), the paradigmatic example of the news media as the Fourth Estate and 'proof' it functions as a watchdog, constructs what he believes should be the two main

interpretations of scandals, 'liberal' and 'conservative.' They both state that Watergate "was an aberration" and dependent of the specific actions of Nixon (ibid: 26), and only disagree on the extent to which the 'system worked.' The "liberal" position sees it as "a crisis over presidential abuses of power" and supports "legislative reform" and the institution of "new forms of ethical behaviour in government," and is in the end "a ringing reaffirmation of the Constitution" (ibid: 24-26). Watergate thus may be called "The System Almost Didn't Work" (ibid: 26). The lessons learnt were to sponsor "legislative reform," "educational reform to prevent the socialization of the kinds of people who made Watergate possible," as well as "general soul-searching" about the failings that let it happen (ibid: 47). One critique that Schudson has of the Liberal position is that the acknowledged systemic flaws are subsumed to a more *direct* and *personal* attack on Nixon when both are to blame (ibid: 48). The "conservative" view is that "The System Worked" in a similarly pro-Constitution way (ibid: 24), but is against "post-Watergate legislative reform" because "the procedures already in place worked to put an end to Watergate" (ibid: 26). It was "a constitutional crisis," but was due to "one man and his administration" and not the system or imbalance of power in the US government (ibid: 48).

This distribution can also be found in Hackett's (2005) outline of three major perspectives on the relationship of democracy to news media. The first critique, conservative (i.e. free market, market liberalism, neoliberal and/or neoconservative), "has gained political and cultural hegemony" since the 1980s, and within it journalism also functions as a watchdog "by exposing corruption and the abuse of power" (ibid: 86). The second, 'public sphere' liberalism, works as a critique of the first, especially in regards to the extent of public participation in political decision making processes, but also supports "an independent 'watchdog' press" (ibid: 89). The final grouping, the Radical Democratic/Politico-Economic critique is closer to the second, but infuses it with a view of democracy as "a societal environment which nourishes developmental power" (ibid: 91) as opposed to control by elites. However, it too "endorse[s] the watchdog […] functions celebrated in the other models," adding the need for counter-hegemonic measures to ensure minority voices are heard (ibid: 92).

Critiques such as by Schudson, Bennett & Serrin, and Hackett point to the general the way in which the discourse about scandals and watchdog journalism is conducted. There is a brief examination of potential systemic causes to the corruption and wrong-doing, but it, in the end, holds *individuals* to account and reinforces the efficacy of the current system of checks and balances and the necessary role of the news media as a watchdog. The only 'criticism' lies in

exposing *fixable* flaws in the current political or media structure, and the only disagreements are about the best way to achieve that. As will be further examined in §1.I.iv, this also shows an implicit agreement between all parties, critics and the establishment, of the validity of watchdog journalism and precludes questioning its inherent necessity.

Yet there are many historical aspects that question the political, economic and social changes that underpinned the casting of American and British news media as the Fourth Estate, most of which took place in the nineteenth century. For example, as Boyce notes, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, a publisher aimed at the working and middle classes,[3] all supported extending these ideas to make the news media as the Fourth Estate (Boyce 1978: 22). Conboy (2004: 110) notes quite a few contradictions to this role; that because the development of the Fourth Estate ideals

> has accompanied the incorporation of journalism into the political and economic status quo [thus] much of the history of journalism narrated from this perspective […] is paradoxically a history of increasing restriction rather than liberalization, as journalism becomes closer to those centres of power and influence which, in turn, give it their seal of approval.

This is clearly contrary to the normative position that news media, in the nineteenth-century, moved away from political partisanship to become independent power brokers.

Another aspect of this is the 'social responsibility' theory of news media, which, as Splichal (2002a: 5-6) notes,

> assigns functions to the mass media as obligations emanating from their constitutionally guaranteed freedom. Thus it accepts the 'traditional' functions defined by libertarian theory, but it hierarchizes them: the tasks of servicing the economic system, providing entertainment and making profit should be *subordinated* to the higher tasks of public enlightenment and promoting the democratic process.

However, as Conboy argues after an extended analysis of journalistic discourse in the nineteenth century, "journalism was able through this status as the Fourth Estate to provide an important rhetorical bridge between the interests of the newspapers and those of the newly enfranchised […] middle classes" (Conboy 2004: 109). In other words, Conboy posits that the system was set up that way in order to serve the

---

[3] It consisted of those such as Jeremy Bentham, J. S. Mill, Lord Henry Brougham (Lawyer, Lord Chancellor), Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton (writer, politician), Richard Cobden (manufacturer, liberal politician, pro-free trade), Albany Fonblanque (journalist, *Examiner* editor), Francis Place (moral Chartist, political reformer) (Boyce 1978: 22).

growing bourgeois classes in the USA and the UK by naturalizing capitalist practices and not simply for the 'public' benefit.

As will be discussed further in the next section, the point is not that that the research mentioned above is not critical enough of the Fourth Estate functions of news media, it just tends to conclude the Fourth Estate is needed and focuses the discussion on the best way to restore and strengthen it. When it is an attack-dog for those in power, helping to restore the public's indignation by offering a sacrifice, this is improper conduct. When the news media are a tool of political and economic elites to fight with each other, this is also improper. Such criticisms all rest on the under-critiqued assumption is that news media *should* be a watchdog.

1.I.iii – Lapdog/Attack-dog and Elite Transaction

In this conception news media is viewed as a tool of the elites, acting as its lapdog by doing the bidding of its masters, that is, politicians and business owners, being a guard-dog by protecting them from interference by those below, and as an attack-dog to go after the enemies of the state and business. Splichal believes that the concept of news media as being a Fourth Estate was threatened by the end of the twentieth century due to the fact that most owners of the media had become "part of the power elite composed of top political, economic and military people" and thus "lost its moral vigour" (Splichal 2002b: 88). Donohue, Tichenor & Olien (1995: 120) give a good summary of this position:

> A lapdog perspective is a total rejection of the Fourth Estate view on all accounts. Basic elements of the lapdog view are total submissiveness to authority, total lack of independent power, obliviousness to all interests except those of powerful groups, and framing all issues according to the perspectives of the highest powers in the system.

A very critical view of the investigative journalism function of news media is given by de Burgh, who believes that the idea of the Fourth Estate "obscures the fact that […] journalists always work closely with power-holders and can often be contained by them" (de Burgh 2003: 815). Donohue, Tichenor & Olien (1995: 122) offer one explanation for why media can attack politicians' activities and be seen as "controlled by such powers" at the same time. Their guard-dog conception explains that the news media's "conditioning may lead to raising the alarm during internal disputes as well as in the face of clear external threats," and that this is the price that must be paid in a non-homogenous system (ibid). They point out that structures can change and "such change is rare, whereas resolution of conflicts more frequently entails replacement of individuals" (ibid: 123), that is individuals *instead of* systems.

Bennett agrees, noting that "When money and influence stories do appear, they generally involve corruption or high-profile issues, rather than routine aspects of

power in government" (Bennett 2000: 210). This was even observed over 90 years ago by Lippmann (1921: 157):

> The mending of fences [with the public] consists in offering an occasional scapegoat, in redressing a minor grievance affecting a powerful individual or faction, [etc]. They [i.e. the news media] prefer to do a little service for a lot of little subjects, rather than to engage in trying to do a big service out there in the void.

Similarly, Chomsky believes that the exposures of Watergate scandal in the 1970s were "analogous to the discovery that the directors of Murder Inc. were also cheating on their income taxes. Reprehensible, to be sure, but hardly the main point" (Chomsky 1973a: 140). He argues the focus should have been covering the illegal covert war run by Congress and the Nixon Administration in Cambodia, for example (ibid).

Another variation on this is the idea that reporting on government corruption is simply a public conflict between certain political-economic elites via the news media. Curran points out that many "[m]edia attacks on official wrong-doing can be manipulative […] little more than an elite transaction" (Curran 2000: 124), and thus have little to do with democracy. Also, as Sparks (2000: 47) reminds us:

> The people who run politics and the people who run the media are not natural enemies, nor are they naturally the same people. Rather, they are normally different constituents of the same ruling class. They may squabble with one another, and make different alliances to achieve their ends, but they share the same universe of elite domination.

An early study by Hofstadter (1955: 186-214) supports this, showing how much of the 'muckraking' journalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was, in fact, political manoeuvring by the progressive political movement and not simply selfless reporters on a mission to make society better. "The news leak is a pseudo-event[4] par excellence," says Boorstin, noting that such leaks are "one of the most elaborately planned ways of emitting information" by an official often with a "definite devious purpose" (Boorstin 1961: 30-31). Leaks, the main source of information for political and investigative journalism, are often, if not always, used strategically by those in power with the media to create events or 'problems' to attack each other for political gain. Thompson (2000: 80) notes that

> the sheer proliferation of mediated forms of communication has helped to ensure that those who wish to use scandal as a political weapon are likely to find some media forum in which revelations and allegations can be turned into public speech.

---

[4] An event made for media coverage that would not exist otherwise, see §2.V.ii.

Thus, spending time focusing on the trivial aspects of *personal* scandals hides other, more serious *systematic* corruption that is going on, while giving people some sense of satisfaction that some scandals are being uncovered. Furthermore, the media is used as a powerful weapon by elites against each other and against those who would threaten their interests.

However, while most of the above would agree action needs to be taken to ensure this 'improper' function of news media does not occur, I argue that this position should naturally lead us to the System Maintenance perspective given below. This position argues that the effect of these transactions is of a more long-term action to help maintain the epistemological and ideological formations of our political-economic system over and above and short-term political-economic gains that may be made.

1.I.iv – System Maintenance

This perspective is termed by Schudson, when discussing Watergate, as the "radical leftist," which "argues that Nixon was conveniently scapegoated, diverting attention from fundamental structural flaws in the American system" (Schudson 1993: 24). In it, the media was "cooperating with the Congress and even, ultimately, the Nixon administration to manage a crisis, limiting public understanding of basic failings and contradictions in the American system" (ibid: 28). Such a 'radical leftist' interpretation of Watergate was given by the Kapitalistate Group (1975: 15, 18):

> All of these political actors had a significant stake in limiting the scope of the crisis, defining it in certain narrow ways, and in the end, turning the crisis itself into a reaffirmation of the virtues of the American system. [...] The press did its damnedest to make Nixon into the devil, so that the proper exorcism – his removal from office – could become the means of restoring faith in the system.

Schudson (1993), however, dismisses such a position for being too conspiratorial without fully exploring the implications.

Bennett notes something similar, but about a different topic, that in the media "crime is portrayed overwhelmingly as street-level violence that is lawless and requires punishment" (Bennett 2000: 206), thus replicating the societal norms for what is considered deviant, punishable behaviour (ibid: 208). As Fowler (1991: 16) notes:

> The obsession with persons, and the media's use of them as symbols, avoids serious discussion and explanation of underlying social and economic factors: the brick-throwing rioter is imaged over and over again, but unemployment and the poverty of social serves are rarely documented.

Thus, we must move away from an *individual*, personal interpretation of what 'scandal' is and what the target of the Fourth Estate should be that is dominant in the above lapdog, attack-dog and elite transaction arguments.

The most developed System Maintenance thesis is developed by Jean Baudrillard, who views Fourth Estate journalism as a function inherent to capitalism and not simply a better or more evolved structure than was had before the nineteenth century. Journalism generates and re-enforces ideology, as structured by the medium of communication, instead of being a 'neutral' medium for the flow of 'neutral' information. This is a combination of two strains of thought, that of Durkheimian sociology and Barthes' work from the 1950s. One of Durkheim's sociological conceptions is that the exposure of crime "serves the social function of protecting and reaffirming collective sentiments" and thus, sociologically, should be viewed not as pathological but as healthy, or at least *normal* (Morrison 1995: 159). Certain 'crimes' or 'deviant' conditions (i.e., prostitution, adultery, homosexuality) are not *pathological* because they are naturally occurring in all societies in all times, and thus cannot be 'cured' or 'fixed' as they are not symptoms of an infection, but part of the normal state of a system.[5] When applied to capitalism, it could be argued that corruption, graft, bribery and other 'illegal' actions are, in fact, not pathological and able to be corrected because they underpin the correct functioning of the system.

The other strain comes from Barthes' conception of the change in power structures from more monolithic authoritarian government to pluralist capitalist ones in which "the bourgeoisie no longer hesitates to acknowledge some localized subversions" because admissions of "the accidental evil of a class-bound institution" function to "better to conceal its principal evil" (Barthes 1957: 150-151). This admission of guilt "immunizes the contents of the collective imagination by means of a small inoculation of acknowledged evil" and "thus protects it against the risk of a generalized subversion" (ibid). Thus, corruption reporting investigative journalism is positioned not just as inherent and necessary in a capitalist system, but as something that functions to cleanse capitalism and reinforce the hegemonic cultural order, and thus cannot be seen as something that is beneficial to the common citizen or that will lead to a lasting fix.

Baudrillard brings these strains together in his critique about the Watergate scandal, noted that it "is a scandal effect concealing that there is no difference between the facts and their denunciation" and is "scandal as a means to regenerate a

---

[5] For example, Durkheim examined suicide, finding it to have always existed among all groups, but noting suicide rates depend on the social and economic status of people, as well as their religion. Thus, suicide is not *pathological* in and of itself and cannot be 'cured' (Durkheim 1897).

moral and political principle" (Baudrillard 1978a: 26-27). He first proposes a Bourdieuian reading[6] of scandal and ideology, that "capital, which is immoral and unscrupulous, can only function behind a moral superstructure, and whoever regenerates this public morality (by indignation, denunciation, etc.) spontaneously furthers the order of capital, as did the *Washington Post* journalists" (ibid: 27). However, Baudrillard believes that an enunciation or denunciation from that Bourdieuian perspective would also "occup[y] the same deterministic and moralistic position as the *Washington Post* journalists" because it denounces the scandal *as* a lie and thus "purg[es] and reviv[es] a moral order […] of truth" (ibid: 27-28). That is to say, the denunciation of something as a lie reaffirms the idea of a true and a false in the same way a denunciation of scandal reaffirms the idea of a legal and an illegal because it operates under the assumption that the scandal is a scandal. As "capital asks of us to [either] receive it as rational or to combat it in the name of rationality, to receive it as moral or to combat it in the name of morality," trying to prove or disprove a scandal instead "conceals the fact that there is" no scandal (ibid: 28).

Thus Baudrillard emphatically states: *"Watergate is not a scandal*: this is what must be said at all costs" (ibid). Baudrillard argues that "it is 'enlightened' thought which seeks to control capital by imposing rules on it" by means such as a social contract (ibid: 28-29) in the tradition of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. In the post-Enlightenment era, we hold out a social contract to capital hoping that capital "will fall for this phantasmagoria [...] and fulfil its obligation towards the whole of society" (ibid: 29). Baudrillard believes, contrarily, that capital "is a *challenge to society* and should be responded to as such" (ibid: 29-30) as "It is not a scandal to be denounced according to moral and economic rationality" (ibid: 30). Watergate is simply "a trap set by the system to catch its adversaries – a simulation of scandal to regenerative ends" (ibid).

Scandal acts to reaffirm that there are scandals, there is a true and a false, there is power, and the 'challenge' that journalists face is to reinforce the system-cleansing functions of scandals. To expose a Disneyland as 'fake' only serves to support that the world outside of a Disneyland is 'real,' and to expose political misdeeds as a 'scandal' only serves to support that the world outside politics is not a scandal. This perspective thus breaks through the deadlock of the lapdog and elite transaction critiques; it is not *actual* power, money and control that *individuals* are

---

[6] How exactly it is from Bourdieu is not clear for Baudrillard does not give any references. However, seeing the centrality of Bourdieuan thought in France in the mid-1970s, it is most likely Badurillard viewed such critiques as rather basic and not critical or radical enough. He is acting, then, in an *avant-garde* theoretical mode, pushing Bourdieu forward like he does for theorists such as McLuhan and Boorstin, as will be discussed in §2.V.

fighting over. It has become that the currently defunct binaries of powerful/powerless and true/untrue that underlie the *system* must be maintained at all costs. This then problematizes the utility of critiques of the Fourth Estate based on testing the veracity of news media's information, better defining the power structures at play and, most importantly, finding a 'fix' to something that is not broken but is functioning perfectly.

1.I.v – Beyond Restorative: Fourth Estate Nihilism

As I have shown in §1.I.iii, most positions purport that news media's normative function is as a watchdog: that it can be a lapdog or attack-dog but *should* be a watchdog, or that news media can be used as a weapon in transactions between political-economic elites but, again, *should* be a watchdog. All point towards finding ways to restore news media to the proper Fourth Estate role. Thus, I argue that the critical position for this thesis to take would be that, in fact, the news media should not be the Fourth Estate.

Therefore, I propose to help push forward this discussion with an examination of two fundamental aspects that underpin the Fourth Estate: the epistemology and the professional ideology of the news media. A major roadblock in moving the Lapdog, Attack-dog and Elite Transaction theories forward to the more radical System Maintenance critique of the normative position is those theories' reliance on certain epistemological and ideological formations. For the news media to be lapdogs or attack-dogs of these elites means that they are *ideologically controlled*, either directly or indirectly by the elites, and that the goals are accomplished with the distribution of *incorrect* or *misleading* information to the public. Similarly, viewing news media as active participants in conflicts between political-economic elites implies the media is being *ideologically controlled* and dealing in false, or at least politically spun, information. The solution to both is thus to change the economic base to *release the control* and provide better mechanisms for *accurate* information. In short, they rest on assumptions of there being *a true* and *a false*, *a controlled* and *an uncontrolled*.

Below I argue for the application of the theories of Baudrillard (such as those enunciated above) and of Žižek in order to support the System Maintenance theory. The focus will be on Baudrillard's radical epistemology, counter to the normative Realist, the democratic Pragmatist and the structuralist-influenced Antirealist positions. For Žižek, his innovative Marxist psychoanalytical take on ideological formations in the modern era will assist in explaining the gaps in the thesis that professional ideology is control. As will also be shown, the use of their writings in news media research is quite limited, yet their strong theoretical basis in Marxist

writings, interest in media studies and innovative ideas will help push forward these arguments.

1.II – Review of Baudrillard and Žižek Literature

In this section a review of the writings on media by Baudrillard (§1.II.i) and Žižek (§1.II.ii) and their related secondary literature will take place. In this I hope to show the strengths of their approaches and the applicability they have to a more radical critique of the epistemology and ideology of the Fourth Estate.

1.II.i – Baudrillard-related Research

In this section I will examine the nature of Baudrillardian theory as well as its place in modern media studies by examining secondary literature on Baudrillard. The work of Jean Baudrillard is noted for its theoretical complexity and the specialist terminology he develops in order to better discuss things the way he needed to. His early work (i.e., Baudrillard 1967, 1968, 1969a, 1969b, 1970) rested on structuralist-inspired analyses of consumer objects and further development of structuralist terminology. This moved later to a reworking and rejection of several key categories of Marxism (Baudrillard 1972, 1973), introducing the concept of 'sign value' as a corrective to the dominance of use and exchange value, arguing the new 'value' created in the post-Fordist era came from manipulation of signs through the mass media. His theoretical consolidation occurred in the late 1970s (Baudrillard 1976, 1978a, 1978b. 1978c) with his development of the concepts of simulation and hyperreality, which became the basis for much of his further work (Baudrillard 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1994, etc).

Baudrillard's three essays about the Gulf War, collected in *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (1991), are notable for their application of his earlier theory to a discrete and topical empirical event. However, this led to wide misunderstandings of his basic thesis, for example, Norris (1992) who characterizes Baudrillard as a denier of the existence of Gulf War. As Merrin argues, this reading of Baudrillard "as a nihilist denying physical reality is lazy, unsupported and philosophically simplistic" as it is based only on a partial, cursory reading of Baudrillard's *Gulf War* essays and his larger theoretical oeuvre in general (Merrin 2005: 86-87). A full understanding of Baudrillard's theoretical work form the 1960s and 1970s is needed to understand his empirical application of those theories using his specialist terminology after the 1970s.

Baudrillard's critique of the 'reality' of the Gulf War rests on firm epistemological grounds. How can we 'really' know what is going on in a war that is so far away when the 'information' we received is structured not just by the political

motives of the warring parties, but by the codes and orchestration rituals of the supposedly 'neutral' news media? The live images we get and the up-to-the-minute updates make the experience *seem* more real than the 'real' experiences of the troops on the ground. Baudrillard thus argued that transmission of such events does not increase our knowledge of them but simplifies and constrains them, in the end *destroying* information and understanding while concurrently giving us the simulacrum of experiencing the more-real-than-real that is, in fact, far removed from reality. How can we use such simplified and decontextualised data to make *informed* decisions about the world around us? Baudrillard is not arguing, as Norris accuses him, that reality does not exist. He argues that any 'reality' present in a mediation of 'reality' is, in fact, a *simulation* of reality, or as he terms it 'Hyperreality.' The 'reality' we experience by consuming such events is a reality that is contained within the mediascape itself, and thus any subsequent discussions can only be based on those Hyperreal 'facts.'

While those such as Norris (1992) read Baudrillard as celebrating or defending the destructive effects of technology on information, he is instead warning us of the dangerous effects of media, and especially news media, has on how we get 'truth' and understanding from the world, in other words, the devastation it causes to the epistemological formations that supposedly underlie democracy. This shows a great relevance of his work to critique the epistemology of the Fourth Estate, as spelled out more explicitly in §2.V, and, as I will argue, offers a needed corrective and stronger epistemological base to the highly influential Antirealist theories of epistemology, as outlined in §2.IV, which ignore discussion of the relationship of media texts to reality.

There does seem to be a gap between the specialist work Baudrillard and the more 'mainstream' news media research. Many monographs based on Baudrillard (such as Gane 1991; Genosko 1999; Lane 2000, 2009; Horrocks & Jevtic 1999; Merrin 2005; Toffoletti 2011) aim at a more introductory discussion of his theories; for Merrin (2005) specifically about media, for Genosko (1999) specifically the links between Baudrillard and Marshall McLuhan. Edited volumes of essays on Baudrillard are also recently proliferating (Bishop 2009, Clarke *et al* 2009), and the *International Journal for Baudrillard Studies*, an open-source, peer reviewed e-journal dedicated to Baudrillard-related research, was established in 2004, publishing three to four issues per year. These are all necessary steps in developing Baudrillard's work, yet, as Merrin notes, despite all of the above noted publications, many "introductory textbooks in media studies," "texts in communication studies on signs, semiology, structuralism, and linguistic and visual meaning," as well as "mainstream media studies texts" and most core media studies readers do not feature

Baudrillard at all (Merrin 2005: 2). The influence of Baudrillard's work has arguably increased in the last six or seven years, yet Baudrillard studies still seems to be a niche area.

For example, a search on Sage Online Journals for 'Baudrillard' and 'journalism' or 'journalist' or 'news media' in the abstract came back with no results. A search for 'Baudrillard' and 'media' found sixteen results, only one of which was in a media studies journal (Glynn 2009, in *Television & New Media*), and two in *Theory, Culture and Society* (Merrin 1999, MacDonald 2006), the remainder being in other cultural or film studies journals. An identical search on the Taylor & Francis journal website (informaworld.com) found eight, only one of which (Gane 2006) was in a media-related journal. Furthermore, a targeted search on the *Journalism* and *Journalism Studies* archives for 'Baudrillard' in the entire text found only six and eight matches, respectively, yet all the references in the texts were in passing, i.e. 'postmodernists such as Baudrillard and etc.' A broader search on Communication Abstracts found, since 2000, only 15 articles with 'Baudrillard' and 'media' in the abstract and none for 'Baudrillard' and 'journalism.' This shows an obvious gap between the plethora of books and articles by and for those interested in Baudrillard specifically and the 'mainstream' journalism research.

Many opportunities exist to apply Baudrillard's theories to news media studies due to the breadth of Baudrillard's previous work and the specialist secondary research on him. Therefore, I argue that more work needs to be done in exploring and elaborating Baudrillard's own epistemological theory by relating it directly to the epistemology of the news media as the Fourth Estate. Work on news media's epistemology tends to aim to restore its truth-finding abilities and help it find new ways to convey the 'truth' or 'competing truths' (see §1.I.iii above, as well as below in §2.II.ii and §2.III.ii and §3.IV.v). Furthermore, the dominant structuralist and constructivist Antirealists perspective (see §2.IV) unproductively brackets out any talk of 'the true' and 'the real.' Baudrillard's critique is radical enough to both problematize the normative Realist and Pragmatic projects *and* push the Antirealist critique forward. This will be done, in part, by better connecting Baudrillard's work to the existing Antirealist journalism studies literature in §2.V.iv. This will show his work has large similarities to and parallels much of the 'mainstream' media studies about the epistemology of news media, especially Tuchman, Hall and Lippmann, links that have yet to be explored in sufficient detail.

1.II.ii – Žižek-related Research

Slavoj Žižek emerged in the international academic scene with the publishing of his first work, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* in 1989. Since then Žižek has published extensively, often one or two books per year, further developing his

unique blend of Hegel, Kant, Marx and the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan. Žižek's work has not gone though such a radical change as that of Baudrillard, for instead of constantly developing new categories and new vocabulary to describe the same phenomena, Žižek turns his critical eye to different topics. He has focused generally on, for example, cinema studies (Žižek 2001, 2006; Fiennes 2006), Christianity (Žižek 2000, 2003), and politics and economics (Žižek 2008, 2009), while still maintaining within each work his unique mix of continental philosophy, dirty jokes, and references to popular culture and media to illustrate his theories.

Research related to Žižek features many of the same issues as with Baudrillard. Despite the similarities in their research 'methods,' that is, theoretically-informed discussions of larger philosophical questions drawing on examples from contemporary media, Žižek's approach to spreading his theory is quite different. Whereas Baudrillard never appeared on television in the USA or UK, and only very infrequently in his homeland France, Žižek is noted for his numerous media appearances around the world, including documentaries such as *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (Fiennes 2006) made for BBC, as well as writing articles for mainstream media outlets such as the *Guardian* in the UK and giving frequent public lectures. His public persona is a performance itself, relying in part on jokes and pop cultural references usually absent in 'serious' theory. But, as Taylor (2010) notes, this is all part of Žižek's theoretical strategy. His

> inimitable brand of theoretical perversity gains him notoriety and media attention but also creates the risk that his substantial intellectual points are lost amidst either the sparks of his short-circuits or po-faced annoyance at his use of filthy humour and/or speculative psychoanalytical insights. (Taylor 2010: 34-35)

Similarly to Baudrillard, monographs based on Žižek (such as Dean 2006, Kay 2003, Myers 2003, Pound 2008, Taylor 2010) tend to be broad in scope and elaborate upon the origins of his theory, Taylor (2010) (like Merrin [2005] for Baudrillard) focusing on Žižek's media theory, Dean (2006) on politics. Similarly, the *International Journal of Žižek Studies* (*IJŽS*) was founded in 2007 as an open-access peer-reviewed e-journal dedicated to Žižek-related research.

The secondary literature about Žižek (outside the *IJŽS*, at least) is not as extensive as for Baudrillard. A search, similar as above, in Sage Journals Online for 'Zizek' and 'media' in the abstracts of all of their journals only found two hits, and only one of those (Gunkel 2010) in a media-studies journal, *New Media & Society*. A search on the Taylor & Francis journal website (informaworld.com) found no results in media studies journals for the same search. Communication Abstracts found only two media-related articles with 'Zizek' and 'media' in the abstract,

Gunkel (2010) and Webb & Schirato (2006), and none for 'Zizek' and 'journalism.' Thus we can see, similar to with Baudrillard, a gap between Žižek and 'mainstream' news media studies.

However, Žižekian ideological theory was picked up to a certain extent in management theory (du Gay & Salaman 1992, Fleming & Spicer 2003) in their application of Žižek's concept of 'fetishistic disavowal' to employee behaviour. Fetishistic disavowal posits that people are permitted a great deal of latitude to be cynical of the existing order of things while at the same time still obeying that order. One can be critical of, for instance, the massive profits that banks make, but they will still use banks to store their money and get loans. The ability to be able to disavow the legitimacy of an institution while still using it is, Žižek argues, the dominant ideological formation in modern society. Du Gay & Salaman (1992) and Fleming & Spicer (2003) apply this to a more local level, looking at fetishistic disavowal in the workplace and find, as with Žižek, that such an ideological formation helps the workers do their job. They know very well and can articulate, for example, that the new management techniques are useless and superficial, or that job promotion is related more to personal connections than actual performance, but they still *act* as if those methods are legitimate and necessary. The application of this to explain journalistic performance has yet to be done and, as I will show in §3.V, contributes greatly to the understanding of the ideological formations in which professional journalists operate.

1.II.iii – Baudrillard and Žižek: Towards a New Research Program

Still, we have to ask what place can Baudrillard and Žižek's work have in critical social research which tends to rely on empirically gathered data? The 'empirical' nature of Baudrillard's work is usually not a topic of discussion within the Baudrillard studies field, which rarely, if ever, involves sociological methods. As Cole (2010: np) notes,

> many of Baudrillard's theoretical insights stem from an *empirical analysis* of contemporary consumption practices and the proliferation of signs. Furthermore, his studies of media and advertising are central to his theoretical and 'meta-theoretical' development. The absence of empirical research in the secondary Baudrillardian literature, therefore, belies his oeuvre.

In fact, it could be argued that secondary literature on Baudrillard, and Žižek as well, generally *replicates* their mode of analysis, relying on empirical observations and critiques of the contemporary mediascape and politics. While some stay 'high up' in the realm of the theoretical, most 'come down' to draw concrete examples from modern media much in the same way Baudrillard and Žižek do.

I argue that what is missing from this is a *systematic* approach to using their theories to examine media content and processes. A lack of systematization leaves open obvious criticism: if their theories are so persuasive, why can they not go through a systematic trial? It is one thing to pick a case study or example that supports one's own theory,[7] but that does not mean that it is generalizable to any extent or can function as the theoretical framework for long-term research programs. I argue that the lack in Baudrillard's and Žižek's work of systematic analysis of, for example, interview data does not preclude secondary research using their theories in combination with such sociological methods, especially if their critiques of such methods are taken into consideration when formulating the research plan.

Their lack of systematic empirical research is not based on laziness, lack of ability or that professionally they do not need to produce policy-oriented research and 'knowledge' that can be 'exchange'-able with outside actors. It was instead based off of their epistemological and ontological concerns for the conduct of social science. As Cole notes, "while science once conceived knowledge as a *mirror* of external reality, Baudrillard argues that, like the physicist's screen, computer and television screens *project*, rather than *reflect*, reality" (Cole 2010: np).

> The light from a television [...] comes from within and reflects nothing. Everything happens entirely as if the screen itself were the cause and origin of the phenomena that appear there, so serious are the consequences of current sophistication of the systems of 'objective' capture that they have annihilated the very objectivity of their process. (Baudrillard 1990b: 85)

Thus analysis of media content, for example, cannot give us a greater understanding of any underlying reality or even how that reality is distorted by the screen because any 'reality' that we observe is a product of the screen itself and is internal to the mediascape. And as Taylor (2010) noted above, Žižek's use of humour and topical pop culture examples are part and parcel of his own unique 'method'/theory-doing practice and cannot be done in a 'systematic' sociological manner.

For example, Baudrillard objects to many methods in the social sciences being intensely sceptical of the effect that researchers themselves have on the social world they are supposed to study. This is because Baudrillardian theory "problematize[s] empirical research's tendency to simulate and reproduce the very social conditions it seeks to 'uncover'" (Cole 2010: np). For example, he believes that "it is impossible to obtain a *non-simulated response* to a direct question, apart from merely reproducing the question" (Baudrillard 1976: 67). Thus, Baudrillard believes "we should be investigating what the masses are doing without such provocations"

---

7 Žižek admits as much, saying: "My first interest is theory. I am a Hegelian looking for facts to fit the theory" (quoted in Jeffries 2011: np).

(Lindsey 2007: np). As I will argue, these issues and limitations are not unknown to modern social science (see Alvesson 2002), nor do they invalidate social research methods in general. Further elaboration on the above concerns with sociological methods will be done at various points in the Methodology chapter: §4.III.iii and §4.III.iv will discuss critiques of positivist and quantitative methods, §4.V.i will explore connections between Baudrillard and Critical Discourse Analysis theory, and §4.V.ii will discuss systematization and objectivity in research.

Thus, as a secondary objective of this thesis, I propose to apply Baudrillardian and Žižekian theory to systematically collected data in order to better show the value that they have to media studies. Part of this will also be to fuse the missing connections between Baudrillardian and Žižekian theory and the 'mainstream' media theories, to illustrate how they, in fact, complement and enhance each other.

1.III – Summary & Thesis Structure

I have argued that the existing critiques of the normative position of news media as the necessary Fourth Estate to act as an independent power structure to check on the government are largely *restorative* in nature. The assumption is that the Fourth Estate is necessary, and should at all costs be restored and maintained (see §1.I.iii). I proposed to take the System Maintenance position, that news media as the Fourth Estate functions instead to help cleanse the moral integrity of the democratic-capitalist system and to shift the focus to individual actors instead of the system itself (see §1.I.iv).

In the next two chapters a discussion of the relevant epistemological (§2) and ideological (§3) theories, focusing on the contributions of Baudrillard's Hyperrealism (§2.V) and Žižek's fetishistic disavowal (§3.V), will be provided. This will be not only to review the existing (journalistic *and* academic) literature on the two topics, but to provide a theoretical discussion that will be used to underpin the analysis of the data. After this we will move on to discuss the best way in which to gather and analyse empirical data to explore how these formations function in the Fourth Estate (§4). I will conclude that semi-structured in-depth interviews with political journalists in the USA and UK, the origins of the Anglo-American model of the Fourth Estate, analysed with a form of critical discourse analysis is the best way to proceed.

In the theoretical discussion chapter concerning epistemology (§2), I will argue that there is a fundamental antagonism between Realism (§2.II) and Pragmatism (§2.III), the two epistemological pillars of the Fourth Estate. Furthermore, I contend that Antirealism's epistemology is not strong enough to act as an effective critique

of Realism and Pragmatism (§2.IV, especially §2.IV.iv), and thus Baudrillard's Hyperrealism is needed (§2.V). In the interview analysis section (§5) I find empirical evidence of this Realist/Pragmatist antagonism, highlight the journalist's strategic use of Antirealism to reinforce this antagonism, and, in the conclusion (§5.IX), further apply the Hyperrealist perspective developed in the theoretical discussion to critique the epistemology of the Fourth Estate.

In the professional ideology theoretical discussion (§3) I argue that the personal ideological bias (§3.II) and chaos/adversarialism theories (§3.III) are not adequate theories to explain journalistic professional ideology. I thus conclude that we need to combine the idea of professional ideology as indirect control (§3.IV) with ideology as fetishistic disavowal (§3.V) to provide an appropriate analysis of journalistic professional ideology. In that corresponding interview analysis (§3.VI) I find empirical evidence of indirect control in the ways in which journalists answer four questions (§6.I to **§6.IV**) and of fetishistic disavowal in three others (§6.V to §6.VI). I will conclude by arguing the combination of these two theories of ideology better explains how the journalistic professional ideological formations are stable (§6.VIII).

A summary of the preceding discussion will then occur (§7.I), also featuring recommendations into future research into the Fourth Estate and into journalism studies using Baudrillardian and Žižekian theory (§7.II), before providing the final conclusion (§7.III).

2 – Epistemology and News Media

2.I – Introduction

In relation to journalism studies, Ekström prefers to separate epistemology as "philosophical inquiries into the nature of true knowledge" (i.e., in general) from epistemology as "the study of knowledge-producing practices" of the media (Ekström 2002: 259). He thus ignores the long tradition of epistemology as discussed by major Philosophers such as Milton, Locke, Hume, Kant, Russell, Rorty and others, and instead relies on epistemology only as it is discussed within the journalism studies literature, that is, *practical* epistemology. However, I argue that this distinction is unhelpful, for we instead should consider 'both' streams of epistemological theories, 'big P' Philosophy *and* that of media studies, in order to better show how they can be related to and help better inform each other. Also, since the Fourth Estate was founded on such Enlightenment-era Philosophical arguments about 'truth,' it needs to be met at the same level, while also talking into consideration the recent work on journalism.

This chapter will examine several of the key epistemological theories and models of truth in the news media: Realism, Pragmatism, and Antirealism.[8] After discussion of the merits and limitations of these three, I will help to construct a fourth one, Hyperrealism, from the writings of Jean Baudrillard, using it, in part, to further critique Realism and Pragmatism and to extend the Antirealist critique forward.

I will begin with the paradigmatic Platonic epistemological theory, that of the Realism school (§2.II). This will include Correspondence Theory (§2.II.i), and will be related to journalism's own normative theories (§2.II.ii) and critiques thereof (§2.II.iii). This will end with an examination of Critical Realism as explicated by Bhaskar and more recently, and directly in relation to news media, by Lau and Wright (§2.II.iv and §2.II.v). Bhaskar's work is in reaction to what he calls the 'anthropocentrism' of post-Cartesian ontology-based epistemology, instead wanting to base our knowledge of the world purely on epistemic grounds. Realism is *restorative* in nature, arguing for better techniques in which to allow news media to convey 'reality' and the 'truth' to the public as part of its Fourth Estate role.

---

[8] I capitalise 'Realism,' 'Pragmatism,' 'Antirealism' and 'Hyperrealism' and their derivatives (Real, Realist, Critical Realism, etc) throughout this thesis to emphasize the specific use of the terms as defined in their respective sections and to better consolidate them as comparable epistemological theories.

Consequently, the Pragmatist tradition of epistemological theory will be considered (§2.III), focusing mainly the Progressive notion of a Marketplace of Ideas in §2.III.i and §2.III.ii and of Neopragmatist philosophers Dewey and Rorty in §2.III.iii and § 2.III.iv. Rorty rejects the Cartesian project of epistemology, instead advocating we focus on a pragmatic view of how to make the world a better place through free discussion and debate and a contingent of truth. Pragmatism is also highly relevant to news media in democracies, for journalists must also provide competing truths and points of view to the audience so we can make up our own minds.

Antirealism, for this study defined as theories that reject a notion of an objective reality or bracket 'reality' out of their theoretical discussion, will then be explored (§2.IV). This begins with the critique by de Saussure of Realist modes of language (§2.IV.i), moving on to Hall's 'encoding/decoding' model (§2.IV.ii) and ending with social constructionist theory of media, such as Tuchman, generally stating that conceptions of 'reality' emerge from societal discussions, in which the news media has a very large, if not dominant, influence (§2.IV.iii). I argue that Antirealism, by ignoring discussions of 'reality,' is not epistemological *enough* to act as a sufficient criticism of Realism and Pragmatism, and its findings are better utilized via Hyperrealism.

A Hyperrealist theory will then be defined from an examination of poststructuralist philosopher Jean Baudrillard's critique of truth in relation to media (§2.V.iii), via his application of poststructuralist modes of analysis to the work of McLuhan (§2.V.i) and Boorstin (§2.V.ii) and. In this perspective, any Reality that we experience is, due to the self-referential nature of mass media, in fact Hyperreality, a product more real than the Real because the Real is still needed and is thus *simulated*. This undermines the notion of news media as the Fourth Estate entirely, for it posits such a role is structurally impossible and that instead of informing us of 'true' information we get a simulacrum of 'truth' which, in the end, destroys knowledge and understanding. Links between Antirealism and Hyperrealism will also be made (§2.III.iv).

The fundamental theoretical antagonism between Realism and Pragmatism, which I argue allows a stable discursive regime for talking about the Fourth Estate role of news media despite simultaneously being contradictory at an epistemological level, will be highlighted in this discussion. Furthermore, I will argue that Baudrillard's theory should be the natural extension of the Antirealist movement's insufficient epistemology. Instead of bracketing off discussions of reality or starting from the assumption that it can never be reached, we must instead more fully

interrogate the spectres of Reality that inhabit the mass media and the material effects that they have on our understanding of the world.

The terminology and theoretical frames developed in this chapter will also be used in §5 to help analyse the interview data, looking at how journalists talk about truth. Together, the theoretical discussion and the discourse analysis will paint a better picture of the epistemology of the news media as part of the Fourth Estate.

2.II – Realist Epistemology

In this section the Realist 'correspondence' theory of truth, both in its theoretical origins (§2.II.i) and practical applications in the journalistic field (§2.II.ii and §2.II.iii), will be reviewed. The tension and antagonism between such Realism and the latter discussed Pragmatism will also be introduced. I will then move on to the more modern Critical Realist conceptions of truth, again, both in their theoretical and newly emerging practical application to explain how reality in news media emerges from underlying social structures (§2.II.iv to §2.II.vi).

2.II.i – Correspondence Theory

The Correspondence Theory of truth comes from the Platonic tradition. Much of the epistemological philosophy of the Enlightenment has been dealing with this idea, trying to figure out the best way to have our knowledge correspond to an external reality, to overcome some substance that exists between us and truth. In the Enlightenment-era Cartesian tradition, the human mind is viewed as the substance inhibiting correspondence. For Descartes, the way to overcome this was having 'clarity' of thought. Locke's more explicit idea viewed sensory experience and empirical evidence as what is needed for our minds to better reflect reality. Kant's transcendental idealism, by contrast, viewed our minds as not being able to sufficiently 'mirror' an objective reality, that humans have universal 'conceptual schemes' hard-wired into our minds that inhibit correspondence, thus understanding those limitations lets us achieve a better view and hence understanding of the world. For Hegel, these Kantian 'conceptual schemes' are not universal but historically contingent, as they vary by time and place.

In the twentieth-century language has become labelled as the substance that is between us and reality, and thus the linguistic turn has deemed that that the study of language will give us a better picture of how people's thoughts correspond to reality. In the words of Rorty (1991: 2),

> language has replaced mind as that which, supposedly, stands over and against 'reality'. So discussion has shifted from whether material reality is 'mind-dependent' [i.e. Kant's transcendental idealism] to questions about

which sorts of true statements, if any, stand in representational relations to nonlinguistic terms.

Realists "have to constitute truth as correspondence to reality" and "must also argue that there are procedures of justification of belief which are natural and not merely local" (ibid: 22). Thus, "to be truly rational, procedures of justification must lead to the truth, to correspondence to reality" (ibid). Realists still search for universal categories of understanding and better ways to achieve it. Realist analytic philosopher Bertrand Russell maintains, even late into his career, that his thought is based on an "obstinate belief in a 'real' world independent of our observation" (Russell 1940: 277).

Russell states the Realist position thusly: "a belief is true when there is a corresponding fact, and is false when there is no corresponding fact" (Russell 1912: 129). Put in structuralist terms, realism "seeks to establish an identity (or at least an equivalence) between signifiers, signifieds, and their extralingusitic 'real world' referents" (Hackett 1984: 250). Correspondence is achieved because the word cat or picture of a cat (both signifiers) and the mental concept of 'cat' in our minds (signified) corresponds to real cats which exist independent of human thought (referents). If we say 'this is a cat' but the picture is of a dog, then the statement is false, if we say 'this is a cat' and the picture is a cat then the statement is true, true and false being the same universal categories of understanding as ever.

The work of Realist philosophers is, then, to solidify these concepts and categories in such a way that gives us the best possible explanation for the world. This arguably has limitations for, as Russell (1940) admits, the correspondence theory applies best to 'propositions,' that is, single sentences that are 'sensible' and can be verified. This is termed 'naïve realism,' and thus discussion is limited to the 'this is a cat'-type propositions indicated above because more complex sentences with multiple variables and texts as a whole are not propositions. Russell's work thus mainly delves into logical matters concerning propositions. This limitation of Naïve Realism in explaining journalistic 'truth' is picked upon by both Critical Realists (see §2.III.v) and Antirealists (see §2.IV).

A more modern version of the correspondence theory can be found in the Shannon-Weaver encoding/decoding model of communication (Shannon & Weaver 1949), which originated from a technical description of the communication process. The Shannon-Weaver model is concerned with long-distance communication as over a radio or television signal, and can be described as a Realist 'correspondence theory' for it rests on the assumption that the baseline should be how well the final message *corresponds* to the original message in the same way as Realists are concerned with the correspondence of thoughts to Reality. First we have the

information source which produced a message and which is encoded, for example, a radio announcer speaking into the microphone. This is encoded into an electric signal which is then broadcast over a channel (i.e. radio waves), and then received (i.e. by someone with a radio receiver). The broadcast signal is then which decoded into an electric signal, sending it to the speaker which then converts the signal to audio waves. The 'truthfulness' or veracity of this model would be in, for example, the correspondence between the voice played back by the speaker at the end of the communication with the voice produced at the beginning. If the encoder and decoder do not use the same codes to covert the electric signals in the same way, then the message at the end will bear little resemblance to that at the beginning and thus is wrong. The same can be said for the effects of noise; too much noise will cause the message at the end to be too distorted to be understood and thus be an inaccurate transmission. Thus, in the same way that Realists, such as Kant, search for better ways to train our minds in order for our thoughts to better correspond to Reality, engineers must fine tune their equipment so that a similar correspondence is achieved. This is not to say that 'accuracy' is the same as 'truth,' but that the goal of both is *correspondence*.

The Shannon-Weaver model works well as far as technology is concerned; however human language and communication is far more complex. As we will see in §2.IV.ii, Hall (1980) took the Shannon-Weaver model and adapted it with structuralist terminology to explain human communication via mass media, but in doing so he stripped out any notions of correspondence being the goal by focusing on audience interpretations of message. Yet Antirealist theories such as Hall's are neither easily assimilable nor practical for media practitioners, especially journalists. As we will now see, for journalists and their organizations, news media must remain in the realm of Realism, due not only to the historical origins of news media but its function as the Fourth Estate.

2.II.ii – Journalistic Normative and Professional Standards

This section will review the origins of and different opinions about journalistic conceptions of normativity and professionalism in relation to discovering 'the truth.' I will also attempt to highlight the ways in which these Realist standards have a fundamental antagonism with the more pluralist, democratic and Pragmatist aspects of the Fourth Estate.

In the nineteenth-century, journalists and news media "set about explaining why its behaviour was in the public interest" and therefore the "explanation has centred on the public's right to know the truth" (Elliott 1978: 182). According to the history of journalism, as told by journalists (see Zelizer 2004), the development of modern news media has been a movement away from the political party-aligned

nature of newspapers in the Nineteenth Century USA and UK, creating biased, partisan accounts of the world, towards professional, non-partisan news media which deals in the 'truth.' Comparing journalism to other fields, such as novels, plays, archaeology or history, McNair defines the main distinction being that journalism "stories tell us about things *that actually happened*" recently, presenting "snapshots of the real, narratives of contemporary events rather than those of the past," and doing so in a way that purports the events to be "*factual*, rather than fictional, artistic or scientific" (McNair 2005b: 30).

Many journalists construct journalism as an inherently Realist project. While we can never know for sure if they actually 'believe' this or not, it is still a major way in which the public discourse about journalism is conducted. "Objective journalists believe a real world exists and that one can produce a reasonably accurate description of the world" (Ryan 2001: 5). A mirror metaphor is quite common as well: Former CBS president Frank Stanton said, "What the media do is hold a mirror up to society and try to report it as faithfully as possible" (quoted in Epstein 1973: 14-15), while *New York Times*' Jack Gould, defending its coverage from Congressional investigation, compared such an endeavour to "conduct[ing] an examination of a mirror because of the disquieting images it beholds" (quoted in Foquet 1967: 11). As journalist Nick Davies says, "All that we do – and all that is said about us – must flow from a single source of truth-telling" (Davies 2008: 12). Even 'subversive' journalists and organizations, such as Julian Assange and the WikiLeaks project, are motivated by such Realist ideas of the Fourth Estate. For instance, Assange says that if people "are to make rational policy decisions […] then we have to have information that is drawn from the real world, and a description of the real world" (quoted in *Democracy Now* 2011), information that WikiLeaks endeavours to provide by helping to distribute leaked classified government and corporate documents.

Indeed, outwardly partisan news outlets (politically speaking, as in endorsing and/or being passively supported by a certain political party), such as blogs and other websites, US cable news channels, most UK newspapers, and op-ed content in US newspapers and UK broadcasts, purport that their information, opinions and interpretations are based off of facts and the truth instead of rumours, lies and innuendo. The 'partisan' spin apparently comes not from distortion of the underlying reality of the situation, but from the author's own opinions. Many in the USA also see a problem with the rise of 'opinion' or 'subjective' journalism, that it will bleed off onto the 'straight' news, and base it on Realist terms:

> The most objective journalist [...] must pick and choose in moving from reality to news. Advocates of subjective journalism claim the right to rearrange reality to confirm to their own inner vision of the truth. [...]

> Objective journalists cannot escape this possibility; their subjective colleagues embrace it (Lichter, Rothman & Lichter 1990: 147).

But what exactly is the normative journalistic perception of 'truth'? "Philosophical discussion of whether 'truth' really exists founder in semantics," so believe former journalists Kovach & Rosentiel (2007: 40). To help solve this problem they advise that "it is more helpful, and more realistic, to understand journalistic truth as a process [...] toward understanding" (ibid: 43). This is because journalism is after "a practical or functional form of truth" (ibid: 42), something that journalists have failed to clearly articulate in the past (ibid: 41). Such truth is "a complicated and sometimes contradictory phenomenon, but seen as a process over time, journalism can get at it" (ibid: 44). This is also consistent with Harcup's view, that "it is probably more accurate to say that journalists strive to give the most truthful version of events that can be obtained at any one time" (Harcup 2008: 83), and Ryan (2001: 5), who says "objective" journalists

> do not guarantee their descriptions are accurate in every respect, only that they have followed a process that allows them to produce a description that is more accurate than any other process allows, and that allows society to move closer to an understanding of the real world.

We can already see in Harcup and Ryan a hedging of terms, admitting that news not 'accurate' but *more* accurate,' not 'truthful' but *the most* truthful.' This is also observed in my interview findings, explored more in §5.I when journalists are asked about the 'mirror of reality' thesis (as well as in §6.V), and highlights the necessity to get journalist's own perspectives on how good of a mirror news media can be.

> Furthermore, journalists defend the legitimacy of their power

> on the ground of their 'professional' and above all 'fair' use of it to tell the news. By this they mean that their intention – and in general, their achievements – is to give equal time, equal space, and equally considerate attention to all popular candidate and all popular views on all popular issues. (Weaver 1973: 59)

Kovach & Rosentiel state that fairness and balance as alternative standards for truth as both of the former are too "subjective," concluding that "truthfulness, for all its difficulties, at least can be tested" (Kovach & Rosentiel 2007: 46). Hackett also notes this, that using "'balance' and 'non-distortion' as practical criteria of objectivity" is untenable because they are "incompatible at an epistemological level" (Hackett 1984: 233). In other words, a news story may be 'balanced' in having two (or 'both') sides, but 'unfair' or 'distorted' in that one side might not have the legitimacy or popular, 'common sense' support as the other. This highlights the 'incompatibility' of or, as I call it, *antagonism* between Realism and Pragmatism: if journalists *can* be efficient Realists and weed out untruths, then why would

something need to be balanced? On the other hand, if all they can do is Pragmatically 'balance' competing truths, that undermines their ability as Realists.

In spite of the above-noted contradictions in some normative theories, such journalistic normatively does not seem to be losing its allure. Glasser & Marken (2005) maintain that creating a more robust normative theory of journalism is more necessary than ever, especially facing the structural constraints of journalistic practice. They define these constraints as issues about sufficient freedom and autonomy, threats to that autonomy and methods to "retain or regain – or perhaps even establish – journalism's authority" (ibid: 264), and having a sufficient normative framework is the only way to address these concerns. This ideal is based largely on positivistic scientific theory, which Kovach & Rosenstiel equate with the scientific method, that we get at the truth "one step at a time" (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001: 46), as noted above. Glasser & Marken point out that such notions of objectivity, based as they are in Enlightenment philosophy and ignorant of postmodernist and poststructuralist influence, are the basis of modern (Anglo-American, at least) journalism, and thus precludes journalists from bringing "to the press a sense of moral independence" (Glasser & Marken 2005: 268), for that would involve rejection of the idea that journalists need to, must, and can, reflect reality through value-free language.

As was mentioned above, while we cannot know for sure if journalists actually believe their responses to surveys, it is a large part of their public discourse to state a strong belief in Realism, in the form of impartiality, fairness and balance, and to a lesser extent hard facts. A survey in 2007 by the BBC Trust found 84% agreeing with the statement "impartiality is difficult to achieve, but broadcasters must try hard to do so," with only 3% disagreeing with the statement (BBC Trust 2007:19). US journalists expressed the highest level of support for the norm" with 91% saying it is "very important" that "a journalist try to be as objective as possible" (Patterson 1998: 21). As to the definitions of objectivity, citing it

> as 'fairness' or 'balance' [...] was the plurality opinion among American print journalists (37 percent) and broadcast journalists (41 percent) and British broadcast journalists (35 percent). Among British print journalists, however, a plurality (31 percent) favoured the 'hard facts' definition of objectivity. (ibid: 22).

A 1999 survey of journalists' core values found that 8/10 national, 7/10 local and 7/10 internet-based journalists say they feel "there is such a thing as a true and accurate account of an event" (CCJ & Pew Research Center 1999: 53). A similar score is found in the 2007-9 survey of journalists around the world, in which US journalists generally agreed with the statement "I think that journalists can depict

reality as it is," averaging 3.84 out of 5, with 5 being 'strongly agree' (Worlds of Journalism 2009: np).

Professional codes of conduct can also be enlightening for the ways that journalistic organisations and news media companies view truth and bias. The American Society of News Editors' standard says, "Every effort must be made to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly" (ASNE 1975: article IV). The Associated Press news agency's Managing Editors guidelines (AP Managing Editors 1984: §2) gives a similar statement:

> The good newspaper is fair, accurate, honest, responsible, independent and decent. Truth is its guiding principle. [...] The newspaper should guard against inaccuracies, carelessness, bias or distortion through emphasis, omission or technological manipulation.

The Press Complaints Commission is a self-regulatory organization that all British newspapers are expected to join and acts to handle complaints by the public against newspapers. In regards to issues of truth, their Editorial Standards are quite brief, simply saying, "The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures" (PCC 2011: §1.i).

Broadcast media in the UK is regulated either by the BBC's own standards or by the standards of Ofcom, the independent broadcast regulator. "All BBC output, as appropriate to its subject and nature, must be well sourced, based on sound evidence, thoroughly tested and presented in clear, precise language" (BBC 2011: §3.2.2). For Ofcom: "News, in whatever form, must be reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality [...] Views and facts must not be misrepresented. Views must also be presented with due weight over appropriate timeframes" (Ofcom 2011: §5.1, §5.7). Binaries in a Realist mode are again used (inaccurate vs. accurate, imprecise vs. precise), and to 'misrepresent' something implies that it *can* be represented.

One thing missing from the above discussions and opinions is any notion of the press as a 'Marketplace of Ideas,' the Pragmatic concept of the open and free exchange of ideas as the way to get at a truth, however temporarily. This omission is very striking and, I argue, is one of the inherent contradictions in modern news media in democracies. If journalistic professionalism is what allows them to get at 'the truth,' or at least as close to the truth as possible, then why is a plurality of media institutions, information and opinions needed? This glaring omission will be touched upon in the Pragmatism section (§2.III). For now, let us turn to some critiques of the preceding normative notions of truth in journalism.

2.II.iii – Critiques of Journalistic Normativity

Not all journalists agree with the Realist concept that a 'true' story can be built from many true pieces. For instance, Murphy points out that even if "it could be shown that all the individual statements in a news story were 'true' this would not tell us that the story was 'true'" (Murphy 1978: 172). Elliott makes a similar point, that "There can be little dispute that the events reported occurred, though this does not preclude controversy over their selection and interpretation" (Elliott 1978: 184). This is echoed by Weaver, saying that "even if the media were always 'fair' by their own definition, they would not necessarily be unbiased in the larger sense" (Weaver 1973: 59), that is, over years and not just over a single article. It may certainly be true that the President or Prime Minister gave a speech saying X and the opposition party later replied saying Y, but putting the two quotes together or adding any additional context complicates being able to verify if the story *taken as a whole* is 'true'.

There is also a large body of historical critiques of the politico-economic development of journalistic normativity (Tuchman 1978; Curran & Seaton 1985, 2003, 2010, etc; Bennett 2005; Bennett & Serrin 2007; Murphy 1978; etc). Lau states, from his summary of the related material, that "the emergence of the values and practices around 'facticity' and 'objectivity' was overdetermined as journalism developed as a social practice," which relied on the "rise of 'democratic market society'," economic changes such as "broadening readership [and] cost considerations," the "rise of public relations," as well as the historical movement of society, "wartime propaganda," and development of new technologies (Lau 2004: 703). Tuchman's work viewed such normative ways of looking at truth and bias as serving to protect the journalists, both personally and for the news media organization.

> Although the formal attributes of news stories and newspapers may present problems to the newsman, they enable him to claim objectivity, and his claims may be assessed by the reader. Because of the diverse pressures to which the newsman is subject, he feels that he must be able to protect himself, to state, 'I am an objective professional.' He must be able to develop strategies which enable him to state, 'This story is objective, impersonal, detached'. (Tuchman 1972: 675)

Similarly, Murphy (1978) argues that words such as 'inaccurate,' 'bias,' and 'factual reporting' are "constructs which have meaning in journalistic and political milieux as justifications for, and descriptions of, practices which enable journalists to be seen by themselves and by others to be playing their role according to their rules" (ibid: 171). This criticism is discussed in more detail in the Antirealism section (§2.IV) in relation to Tuchman (1978).

As Alterman notes, there is a sense of 'hypocrisy' in that privately "reporters and editors concede that objectivity is an ideal, an unreachable horizon" while at the same time "few of them will publicly admit to betraying in print even a trace of bias" (Alterman 2008: np). Some advocate a change away from notions of objectivity and neutrality, as these "norms often seem to put the journalistic commitment to balance and objectivity against the values of advocacy or probity (Bennett & Serrin 2007: 334). At the same time, others view this as impossible because

> Where reporting turns away from the goal of truth and journalists treat events as open to many interpretations, according to their prejudices, assumptions, news agenda or the commercial drive towards entertainment, the justification and self-confessed rationale of journalism threatens to disappear. (Kieran 1998: 34-35)

Still, news is pre-eminently "a *realist* discourse" (Hackett 1984: 250) and it relies on the Correspondence Theory of truth to a large extent. If a news media outlet says 'the President said X' and the President actually said X then the report is true. Contrary, if they said 'Y' but the media reported them as saying 'X' then the report is false. Similarly, if the leader of the majority party said 'the economy is X,' but the leader of the opposition or minority said it is 'Y' then a simple check to see if the economy is X or Y will clear up who is right and who is wrong. However, as Tuchman (1978) notes, while a journalist might be able to verify X and Y individually, they are also obliged to give *both* X and Y. If only one or the other is given, or if X is dismissed quickly or depicted negatively, the journalist can be accused of a partisan or other bias. They must then rely on giving a multiplicity of opinions and let the audience decide, thus turning from a Realist mode of verification to a Pragmatist mode of publicity and simple transmission of information. This tension and necessary shifting between Realist and Pragmatist modes is very important to note.

Also, in an Antirealist mode, it can be argued that the identity between signifiers, signifieds and referents "is an illusion, if only because even within a single language, a signifier does not univocally point towards a single signified which in turn clearly delineates a single referent" (Hackett 1984: 250). In other words, who gets to define exactly what X and Y are? By whose standard is this veracity judged? Political speech is nothing if not hard to pin down, and if X is 'the economy is doing well' it will be next to impossible to uncontrovertibly locate such a statement in any 'truth' as there are innumerable perspectives from which to judge such a state. I will return to these criticisms later (see §2.IV.ii and §2.IV.iii).

The above discussion inspired several interview questions: A2 (see §5.I) which asks the journalists how they feel about the concept of news as a mirror of reality,

and B1 and B2 (see §5.III), which asks the journalist to provide examples of biased and unbiased stories. This is also touched upon in questions C1, C2 and C3 (see §5.IV to §5.VII) in which the journalists are asked to list good and bad aspects of several normative journalistic practices, especially the Realist practice of directly quoting subjects (§5.V).

As we can see, journalists and news media organizations have a lot at stake in maintaining a Realist position for the journalistic field while this base is being attacked by Antirealist argument. It is very important to the legitimacy of the Fourth Estate, for a news media that cannot give Real facts to citizens has no proper role in a democracy. One fix to reinforce and better defend this Realism has been developed with Critical Realism (CR), the path to which will now be traced through Bhaskar's Transcendental Realism.

2.II.iv – Transcendental Realism

Transcendental Realism was developed by Bhaskar (1978) as a fix to the above noted shortcomings in Realism. Bhaskar's main contention is against the anthropocentrism of the epistemological debate, which he calls the 'epistemic fallacy,' or, more simply, the collapsing together of ontology and epistemology. This is arguably caused by the foundation of modern Realism on Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, inextricably linking human existence with thinking and knowledge. Post-Cartesian Realism is thus based on "a metaphysical dogma," "that statements about being can always be transposed into statements about our knowledge of being" (ibid: 16) or "reduced to or analysed in terms of statements about knowledge" (ibid: 36). For Bhaskar, this fallacy, which acts by posing questions of being as *being* explored through questions of *knowing*, in the end "results in the systematic dissolution of the idea of a world [...] independent of but investigated by science" (ibid: 36-37). One result of this is the structuralist project and the Antirealist theories discussed in §2.IV.

He thus finds it illogical to believe that science can find anything out if there is no 'reality' outside humans for, as we saw above in Kantian transcendental idealism, "the objects of which knowledge is obtained to not exist independently of human activity in general" (ibid: 27). He thus proposes to re-separate ontology and focus on more pure epistemological concerns. He does so by looking at experimental science, which he views as a "social activity" (ibid: 48) instead of a Kantian universal 'conceptual scheme.' For experimental science to work at all, it pre-supposes a world exists outside of the human mind and knowledge. As Russell says, the ability of physical sciences to 'induce' findings "suppose[s] that what you observe can happen without your observation" (Russell 1940: 280). Bhaskar thus proposes the concept of 'generative mechanisms,' that "exist as the causal powers of things"

(Bhaskar 1978: 50), and are "nothing other than a way of acting of a thing" (ibid: 51).

In an experiment "the experimenter is a causal agent of a sequence of events but not of the casual law which the sequence of events enables him to identify" (ibid: 12), for "it is the activities of mechanisms and causal structure, not the occurrence of events, that are designated in statements of causal law" (ibid: 52). In the tree falling in the woods scenario, in as far as we have a science of geology and dendrology, or meteorology, the natural mechanisms and structures that *could* cause a tree to fall (if certain conditions are met) are known. Without the existence of human beings and our science soil erosion and plant metabolism, or a simple lighting strike, would still occur. Geology, dendrology and meteorology are social activities, but the causal mechanisms of nature that they help to explain exist out of human existence. In his words, "There is no absurdity in the supposition of a world without men. Rather it is a possibility presupposed by the social activity of science" (ibid: 48). Thus, Bhaskar proposes three different domains or strata of reality.

- Dr: The Domain of the Real, of the above mentioned 'generative mechanisms' and structures.

- Da: The Domain of the Actual, which consists of events which happen when the generative mechanisms of Dr are activated,

- De: The Domain of the Empirical, or our perception and experience of the events of Da.

As Lau notes, "for Da to equate to De, scientific training and (often) the use of scientific equipment are required", and "Dr equates to Da only under experimental conditions" (Lau 2004: 698).

In the realm of news media studies, Bhaskar's Transcendental Realism is re-titled as Critical Realism (CR). As it is based on explaining social phenomena and not simply scientific phenomena as described above, a slightly new vocabulary is introduced, but the Realist base still remains.

2.II.v – Critical Realism

Broadly, CR proponents reject the Antirealist conclusions of those Social Constructionists and Structuralists who view our perceptions of 'reality' as originating from our societies and languages, respectively (see §2.IV). Critical Realists view different 'domains' of reality existing, of which news media is a part. CR is in "opposition to the pragmatic and neo-pragmatic schools of thought," such as Rorty, "which evaluate knowledge according to its *usefulness*" (Wright 2011: 161), as well as "represent[ing] a middle path between constructivism and positivism: acknowledging the independent existence of objective reality, but

asserting the constructedness of human knowledge about the nature of that reality" (Wright 2011: 159). Lau wants to argue for a missing 'realist' account of both "news values," which have an unexamined "epistemological nature," and "routine journalistic practices" (Lau 2004: 696).

Lau (2004) comes to this point by, instead of the usual organizational, social, political-economic approaches such as Shoemaker & Reese (1991), distinguishing between external factors that act as "*constraints*" on news production[9] and internal factors of "journalistic *autonomy*"[10] (Lau 2004: 694-695). Lau believes that news media theory mixes Realist and Antirealist positions, for example, a political-economic "focus on extraneous factors" is "implicitly realist" because the factors examined, that is ownership, government regulations, organizational structure, etc., all "exist objectively" (ibid: 695). He notes, while news production in the USA (and we can also say the UK) is centered in metropolitan areas, which is an external influence, the events that they report on (which are given disproportionate coverage compared to other non-metropolitan events) still "exist objectively," as does the 'internal' ideology and values of reporters (ibid: 696). Lau contrasts that with "routine journalists practices" which are often approached from "an explicit anti-realist position," that of Social Constructionism, in that they are viewed "as objectifications of journalists' self-deriving meanings" (ibid).

Instead of relying on Bhaskar's earlier notions of causal mechanisms, Critical Realists view these as being, for society, social structures. As Archer (1998: 201) argues, structures originate from

> the *past activities* of agents (possibly now dead) [and thus] the emergence of such properties and powers cannot be attributed to practices of current agents, who can maintain and transform the above [structures], rather than creating them, but whose strategic actions are conditioned by their inherited structural and cultural context is so doing.

This is not to remove agency from journalists, but to position them as active but not fully autonomous agents, for their actions are structured by the underlying economic, political, historical, etc, situation.

Social structures are, for Manicas (via Bhaskar 1979), illustrated by the difference between the fact that we can "predicate a shape, size, color, or position of a person, just as we can of a stone of a tree" (that is, we can describe structures whether or not it is in the 'social' or 'hard' sciences), and socially constructed

---

[9] Such as "ownership, government regulations, technical and logistical factors, [and] newspaper size" (Lau 2004: 694-695).

[10] Such as "professional journalistic practices, and ideologies and values held by journalists" (ibid).

concepts, such as that when "we say that the person is a tribesman or a revolutionary, cashed a check, or wrote a sonnet, we are presupposing tribes (a social order), a banking system, and a literary form" (Manicas 1998: 317). This, for Propora, is best explained via a Marxism-based theory of social structure, that of "systems of human relationships among social positions" (Porpora 1989: 339, 343), in which systems "are characteristically modes of production" and social positions are "class positions" (ibid: 343). In short, the ability of sociology to study journalism and news media presupposes the existence of social structures, modes of production, and class positions in the same way physics presupposes the existence of atoms and gravity. This is largely consistent with earlier observations by Russell (1940: 325) in regards to history and truth:

> [...] my perception of the black marks [in a book], and my inference from this perception, are not what makes the assertion about [the historical occurrence] true. [The assertion] would be true even if I made it without any grounds whatever. It is true because of what happened long ago, not because of anything that I am doing or shall do.

Thus, even though the journalistic product is 'socially constructed,' its characteristics still have a sufficient relationship to the underlying social structure and historical occurrences from which they are constructed to call them Real.

Critical Realism therefore tries to rehabilitate the Antirealists' apathy towards understanding the Reality of journalism. CR attempts to provide a better understanding of the political and economic-based yet ever-changing social structures from which news media emerges thus gives us a sufficient understanding of reality and shows that the content of news media is not something internal to an individual journalist's mind but the effects of these fully understandable social structures.

2.II.vi – Critical Realism and Journalism

In a practical application of CR to explain news media content, Gauthier gives a 'typology of brute journalistic facts,' consisting of eight aspects (Gauthier 2005: 55-58).[11] We have first "natural phenomena," storms and earthquakes, and secondly are "biological facts," such as births or deaths (ibid). Thirdly and fourthly are ones that involve humans: "non-intentional mental facts," which are emotions, such as fear and surprise, and "human accidents" (ibid). The latter four of Gauthier's categories involve human intentionality. Fifthly we have "selective actions" such as "having found a woman suspected of murder" (ibid: 57), "continuous behaviours," such as "the prolonged possession of an object" indicating "property" are the sixth category, followed by "tendencies, dispositions and natural propensities [...] to act in

---

[11] The term 'brute facts' draws from Searle (1995), but is still in the CR tradition.

a certain matter" that are "instinctive" or "automatic" such as "human beings ... organiz[ing] themselves socially and hierarchically" or "an anti-war demonstration[s]" (ibid). Lastly, we have "verbal manifestations," such as "public declarations by political leaders" (ibid).

Gauthier then investigates the quantity of these categories by examining the front pages of the *New York Times* for two months. Interestingly, the first four categories of naturally occurring events which would happen with or without humans existing only make up 4.3% of his total, while 'verbal manifestations' are the highest with 75.9% and 'selective actions' with 10% (ibid: 58). However, Gauthier is more concerned with how direct these categories are in relation to the 'brute facts,' noting that "over 95 percent of the news was constructed from human facts" and thus "the vast majority of brute journalistic facts are social facts" (ibid).

Secondly, he finds that, since 'verbal manifestations' take up three-quarters of the stories, the majority of news 'brute facts' are thus "constructed of linguistic physical material such as sounds and other markings" (ibid). Thirdly, he concludes that, since under 5% of the 'brute journalistic facts' come directly from nature, journalism is "fundamentally iterative" (ibid), that is, it comes through layers and layers of constructed 'states of affairs.' It is this latter point that he believes gives rise to the Antirealist perspective. However, Gauthier still concludes that the construction of news media "depends on a reality that is not constructed" but, instead emerges from below (ibid: 59).

How do Gauthier's 'verbal manifestations' of politicians fit into a CR perspective? What exact 'generative mechanisms' give rise to a Presidential speech? For a tsunami it is quite obvious, geology can explain the potential energy stored in subduction plates being released, etc. For a Presidential speech it is the congruence of the biology of human reproduction, the physical impression left on a voting ballot, the way sound waves carry over the air, the political-economic support they have, and the activation and emergence of numerous other mechanisms and social structures. A Presidential speech is dependent on human existence to exist, unlike a tsunami, but both are caused by the potential of generative mechanisms (Dr) being released (Da) and the observation and reporting thereof by humans (De). De and Da are socially constructed, but Dr is not. De, the reporting of the event, is no different for journalists than for all other human beings reporting on things that we experience. As Schudson notes, "there are events in the world we can shape, distort, reinterpret, but not fundamentally change. President Kennedy was killed by an assassin. There are lots of ways to read this fact, but none of them restore John F. Kennedy to life. He really died" (Schudson 2008: 92).

However, as will be covered in the Hyperrealism section (§2.V), a better question might be, would these events, constituting over three-quarters of *New York Times*' front pages, have happened without the media present to record them? Gautheir's last four categories, especially 'verbal manifestations,' can be considered pseudo-events (Boorstin 1964; see also §2.V.ii), for it is quite rare for political speeches to be given without the media in consideration. What is their 'objective' connection to a reality outside of media other than that words were actually uttered and sound waves thus created? The underlying social structures that gave rise to representative democracy and elections pre-dated such mass media, thus while they may once have had connection to reality on the ground and structures emerging from society, they are now largely structures contained almost entirely within the media and thus cannot 'emerge' from anywhere other than the media itself.

And what of language? If, as the structuralists contend, signifiers and signifieds are mutually self-constituting (see §2.IV.i), then saying an 'assassin' killed a 'president' includes a plethora of ideological assumptions about power, law, etc, the origins of which have to be taken into consideration. We can thus see how CR fails to offer a sufficient defence of the truth-finding abilities of Fourth Estate journalism by viewing language and mass media as far too neutral a means of communication, criticisms which will be dealt with in §2.IV. Furthermore, as it is agnostic as to the antagonisms between Realism and Pragmatism, it does not offer an explanation for how such contradictions can co-exist.

2.III – Pragmatist Epistemology

In this section I will outline the concept of the Marketplace of Ideas (§2.III.i), placing it in the larger epistemological tradition of Pragmatism, which will be defined using Dewey and Rorty (§2.III.iii). The main characteristic of this approach concerns the democratic role of news media in providing competing truths to the audience from competing sources and not simply relaying definite truths. As noted above, the theoretical antagonisms and inconsistencies that come when considering Pragmatist and Realist modes of truth working together will also be further developed.

2.III.i – The Marketplace of Ideas

The Marketplace of Ideas concept states that for a 'truth' to emerge ideas must compete in an open 'market' of debate. Those that 'win' in the competition do so because they are better, or more 'true,' than the others and, thus, have more legitimacy. The origins of this generally are attributed to John Milton in his seventeenth-century argument against government licensing on the press:

> Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing or prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; whoever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter. (Milton 1644: np)

I argue that this concept should be placed in Pragmatism instead of Realism because it does not (necessary) indicate the end result will be a 'truth' *corresponding* to reality, but just the *closest* to the truth we can get at this moment. Furthermore, it indicates a need on the part of the receivers of information to rationally debate about the issues. This a far more democratic and anti-elitist notion than that expressed by Realism, dependent as it is on specialist journalists and other experts, as it is inspired by Milton's questioning of the legitimacy of a government to subjectively decree what is 'true' and 'false.'

It is not entirely an Enlightenment idea as it gained hegemony more due to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Progressive movements. Splichal defines two "intellectual currents" for free speech and free press theories originating in the seventeenth century (Splichal 2002b: 87). One is the Utilitarian ideal which "instrumentalized" free expression theory "as a means to hold governors accountable to the governed," saw "publicity primarily as a means of surveillance," and rests on the press as an extension of the public (ibid). For example, J.S. Mill wrote that the "liberty of expressing and publishing opinions [is] almost of as much importance as the liberty of thought itself" and is thus "practically inseparable from it" (Mill 1859: 16-17). Of course, the opinions Mill was thinking about were of those enlightened educated males such as himself; he also believed it is "wholly inadmissible that any person should participate in the suffrage […] without being able to read, write and […] perform the common operations of arithmetic," and thus thought that "universal teaching must precede universal enfranchisement" (Mill 1861b: 330).

The other free press concept comes through the work of Kant and his idea of "public use of reason," resting on "human generic freedom to communicate," communication "as a right of the individual absolutely necessary for *human progress,*" and attempts to make a natural right into a "civil right to communicate" with the media simply as one of the many instruments in which it can take place (Splichal 2002b: 87). This is, in a way, far more universally democratic than the elitist Utilitarians; yet it is the Utilitarian ideas, as operationalized by and appealing to the Progressive movement, made up of educated elites such as Mill and his associates, that came to dominate the debate.

The legal application of the 'marketplace' idea to speech comes from Oliver W. Holmes' dissenting opinion in the US Supreme Court decision *Abrams v United*

States (1919).[12] In it he concluded that "the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market" (quoted in Fraleigh & Tuman 1997: 98). Reinforcing this was Brandeis' concurring opinion on *Whitney v California* (1927),[13] which concluded that "If there be time to expose through discussion the falsehood and fallacies [...] the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence" (quoted in Fraleigh & Tuman 1997: 102). However, these two cases did not *expand* free speech and free press rights in the USA, instead establishing more definite guidelines on what was permissible, such as if it had a 'bad tendency' to incite violence, or if there was a 'clear and present danger' of violence occurring. These two cases and others upholding the 'bad tendency' standard were only invalidated with *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969),[14] which set it instead to 'imminent lawless action.'

However, the sentiments of Holmes and Brandeis have henceforth been echoed by many. For example, in Baggini's discussion about the epistemology of news media he states the ideal view is that news is the site of "competing truth claims" where, in the end, "the best we can do [...] is to list the various competing 'truths' which are believed by the opposing sides" (Baggini 2002: 21). His thus asserts that, in the end, "[a]ll we can do is reason carefully about what the evidence suggests and reach our conclusions accordingly, always mindful that we could be wrong" (ibid: 46).[15] This position views bias as an inevitable consequence of free speech and an open public sphere in which it is, apparently, our job to "read carefully [...] in order to discount the biases and see through to the truth" (Fowler 1991: 11). Chomsky is a staunch supporter of this concept, stating that "One legacy of classical liberalism that we must fight to uphold with unending vigilance [...] is the commitment to a 'free marketplace of ideas'" (Chomsky 1973b: 99). Rorty (1991: 39) extends this metaphor to the 'hard' sciences:

> We should relish the thought that the sciences as well as the arts will *always* provide a spectacle of fierce competition between alternative theories, movements, and schools. The end of human activity is not rest, but rather richer and better human activity.

It is interesting to see how such an idea is seductive for Pragmatist democrats, yet it undermines the above noted elitist Realist journalistic professional normative standards by, instead, investing the ability to discern what is (for the moment) 'true' in a free debate by average people and limits journalism to distrusting 'truth claims.'

---

12 250 U.S. 616, 40 S. Ct. 17; 63 L. Ed. 1173; 1919 U.S. LEXIS 1784.

13 274 U.S. 357, 47 S. Ct. 641; 71 L. Ed. 1095; 1927 U.S. LEXIS 1011

14 395 U.S. 444, 89 S. Ct. 1827; 23 L. Ed. 2d 430; 1969 U.S. LEXIS 1367; 48 Ohio Op. 2d 320

15 This quotation forms the basis for interview question A4, see §5.II.

2.III.ii – The Marketplace of Ideas and Journalism

The criticism of Marketplace of Ideas is extensive. From a Marxist perspective, Marcuse points out that "the 'marketplace of ideas' is organized and delimited by those who determine the national and the individual interest" and thus causes "the false consciousness" of the elites to "become the general consciousness" (Marcuse 1969: 110). Thus the 'range' of opinions in the marketplace does not come from the totality of ideas that can be expressed by humans, but of the ones who have the power (i.e., educational, economic, discursive), the loudest, clearest, best trained and most persuasive voices, to get them noticed. Locke's argument about the nature of reason being universal amongst 'men' could be paralleled to the argument in support of market capitalism. Thus, "if one did not profit from their 'reason' it was their own *individual* fault that they failed to do so" (Roberts 2003: 17) in the same way it is one's own *individual* fault if ones fails in one's business enterprise.

Curran is also highly critical, stating that we need to revise "the idealist premises of liberal theory. The traditional justification for media pluralism – that truth will automatically confound error in open debates – now seems implausible" (Curran 2000: 137) because the model is "extremely simplistic" and "fails to take into account the wider relations of power in which the media are situated" (ibid: 125). As noted in the introduction, the original framers of the US constitution had only vague notions of what free press or free speech meant (Levy 1960, 1985), and "a number of latter-day reasons have emerged to support freedom of expression" (Carter, Franklin & Wright 2008: 34), and it is only through the above noted US Supreme Court cases, such as the *Abrams*, *Whitney* and *Brandenburg*, that the current notion of the Marketplace of Ideas has been developed.

The Marketplace of Ideas is open to this eventual replacement of one 'true' idea with another more-true idea, however, it largely calls into question whether or not Marketplace of Ideas-approved 'truths' should be called 'true' at all. How does this help the news media in its Fourth Estate role? If news reports indicate that X is true (i.e. the President gave a speech), but if subsequent investigations found that X is false (the President did not give a speech), and instead Y happened, news media would be quite open to reporting their previous assertion of X is now false and Y is true. If true and false are so 'contingent,' as Rorty would say, then labelling the information as true and false is an insufficient description. Furthermore, if the Prime Minister says A about the economy or a similarly complex subject, is it not fair to give alternative opinions? Thus, to concur with the Marketplace of Ideas, a journalist must say 'The Prime Minister said A' and balance it with 'The Leader of the Opposition said B,' and then rely on the audience to rationally discuss A and B and decide on their own which is more legitimate.

Thus, from this perspective the news media as the Fourth Estate has nothing to do with establishing and informing the public of 'the' truth, for they only have access to various opinions and interpretations. In that case, the professionalized and 'neutral' journalism originating in the early twentieth-century is no different than the earlier partisan-biased press it, to a certain extent, superseded. Yet journalists and news media companies cannot ignore such Pragmatic points of view and dismiss the existence of other opinions, facts and news media outlets as unnecessary, for their success and legitimacy depends on competition within that Marketplace of Ideas. Furthermore, explicitly telling the audience, 'Only listen to us, we have *the* truth!' is far too elitist to be a sustained epistemological stance.

This notion of the Marketplace of Ideas will be a main analytic point in the discussion of the interviews and forms the basis for questions A4 and A5 (see §5.II) and in comparison to the Realist ideas of journalistic professionalism described in §2.II.ii. This will be touched upon as well in question C3 (§5.VII), asking about the above noted tendency to give 'both' sides to a discussion. If journalists have special skills to gather more truthful or accurate information than members of the general public, then the Marketplace is not needed. If, however, they are as fallible and open to bias as non-journalists, then the Marketplace is quite necessary, but the legitimacy of journalism as the Fourth Estate, a specialist truth-producing institution, is undermined.

2.III.iii – Pragmatism & Neopragmatism - Dewey and Rorty

Unlike Realists, Pragmatists "do not require either [...] an account of a relation between beliefs and objects called 'correspondence,' nor an account of human cognitive abilities which ensures that our species is capable of entering into that relation" (Rorty 1991: 22-23). Pragmatists reject the labels of both Realism and Antirealism due to their abandoning of the Platonic Realist epistemological project (§2.II.i). Similar to Transcendental Realism and Critical Realism (§2.II.iv and §2.II.v), Rorty's Neopragmatism is against the Cartesian anthropomorphism of epistemological discussions: "pragmatists would like to drop the idea that human beings are responsible to a nonhuman power" (ibid: 39). Realists, be they religious or not, still maintain a belief in a possible 'God's eye' view, the post-Enlightenment Realists instead replacing a deity with the deified human social practice of science.

Pragmatism rests on a progressive liberal-democratic tradition, one that is anti-ethnocentric, pro-Marketplace of Ideas and anti-relativistic. It is also against, at least in its Deweyan form, philosophical discussions that cannot be connected to and be useful in our day-to-day lives. They drop discussion of a Platonic 'substance' separating our knowledge of truth from reality, no matter if it is our senses or language. If, even after all the work of Descartes, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Hume and the

rest, we are no closer to dissolving this substance, perhaps we need to change the question we are asking (Rorty 1991).

Neopragmatism rests on the assumption that there is no objective point from which people can judge subjectivity. Its basic function is an "attempt to replace the notion of true beliefs as representations of 'the nature of things' and instead to think of them as successful rules for action" (ibid: 65). Rorty labels this as antirepresentationalism, adherents to which "see no way of formulating an *independent* test of accuracy of representation – of reference or correspondence to an 'antecedently determinate' reality" (ibid: 6).

For Rorty, Pragmatists "see the gap between truth and justification [...] simply as the gap between the actual good and the possible better" (ibid: 22-23). In this way, truth is not relative to culture nor socially or culturally constructed, but culturally or socially 'contingent.' Truth is contingent not in that it corresponds to an ever-changing reality, but that, since reality is out of the bounds of our perception, it is the best explanation we have at this moment to clarify the world. Rorty conceives of the human mind as a "self-reweaving web," that is, "webs of beliefs" (belief being "habits of action") that deal with new ideas and concepts which cause "contradictions" and "tensions" by dropping old beliefs, by "creat[ing] a whole host of new beliefs," or by "unstitch[ing], and thus eras[ing], a whole range of beliefs" (ibid: 93).[16]

Free speech and free exchange of ideas (and thus, we might say, free press), is a positive and necessary condition of our modern world, one whose basis does not need to be explained. Rorty (ibid: 43) says we need to consider

> whether free and open encounters, and the kind of community which permits and encourages such encounters, are for the sake of truth and goodness, or whether 'the quest for truth and goodness' is simply the quest for that type of community.

In other words, free exchange of ideas is not in service of a teleological goal, but a means; a means which never coalesces in a definite solution, but something that is contingent upon what best serves our pragmatic needs now. There is no end, only means.

An important concept for Rorty is that of rationality, for, if we are to depend on free and open inquiry, it must be rational in nature or else it is pointless. His sense of rationality, "something like 'sane' or reasonable' rather than 'methodical'" as is commonly accepted, especially in the 'hard' sciences. He supports a concept of

---

16 Of course, in order for this exercise to work, he asks the reader to "[f]orget, for the moment, about the external world, as well as about that dubious interface between self and world called 'perceptual experience'" (Rorty 1991: 93).

rationality that "names a set of moral virtues: tolerance, respect for the opinions of those around one, willingness to listen, reliance on persuasion rather than force," in other words, to discuss "any topic in a way which eschews dogmatism, defensiveness and righteous indignation" (ibid: 37). We must always hold out "that somebody may come up with a better idea [...] there is always room for improved belief, since new evidence, or new hypotheses, or a whole new vocabulary, may come along" (ibid: 23).

Thus, we can see a clear stance *against* Realism in Rorty's Neopragmatism, yet it is one that does not bracket out or ignore 'reality' as an object of study as Antirealism (see §2.IV) does. It is compatible with the notion of the Marketplace of Ideas, discussed above, as well as supportive of liberal democracy. However, as I will argue in the next section, it does not help alleviate the contradictions that exist between Pragmatist and Realist modes of journalism and, as I will discuss later (see §3.IV.i), Rorty's distinction of 'persuasion rather than force' holds more ideological baggage than Rorty would, perhaps, admit.

2.III.iv – Pragmatism and Journalism

Many aspects of Pragmatism are also compatible with journalistic norms. As Harcup says, "journalists strive to give the most truthful version of events that can be obtained at any one time" (Harcup 2008: 83), such as Rorty's concept of truth as being 'contingent.' If journalists one day were under the impression that a politician had made racist comments but found out the next day that their words had been edited or manipulated, they would, or at least *should*, readily admit so without losing too much credibility. In this way journalism can be seen to purport to be a 'self-reweaving web.' News media also relies on 'persuasion' in the sense that it uses words, argument, evidence and discussion, not physical violence, in order to convince the audience to believe what it says. Both are pro-free speech and Marketplace of Ideas, believing that the best idea will 'win' in the end and become a new thread in the web of belief, while ideas that lose with be 'unstitched' or 'rewoven.'

This has even been picked up by journalism scholars. Glasser & Marken draw a conclusion from similar ideas expressed in Rorty's earlier work (Rorty 1979), that "any defence of news [...] rests not on finding 'the truth'" as it is represented by journalists, "but on 'being truthful'" to the relative community standards for what is properly true (Glasser & Marken 2005: 269) because "nothing counts as justification unless by reference to what we already accept, and there is no way to get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence" (Rorty 1979: 178).

One point counter to this comes from Habermas' (1962) conception of the public sphere. The bourgeois public sphere that developed in the late 1700's was formed on a capitalist economic basis, and "the constitutional norms" that were concurrently adopted "implied a model of civil society that by no means corresponded to its reality" (Habermas 1962: 84). Thus, 'public opinion' arrived at by this 'public' debate is not an aggregate but simply "the views held by those who join in rational-critical debate" (Calhoun 1992: 17). It is not and cannot be inclusive of *everyone*, as would be needed for a truly free 'marketplace' of any type to function. Family, religion, education, class and many other social structures that inevitably create social hierarchies automatically privilege certain people over others, therefore such Pragmatic ideals innately benefit those groups and thus help to maintain their hegemony.

Furthermore, nothing in the theories of Realism/Critical Realism and Pragmatism/Neopragmatism helps resolve their inherent contradictions. Both are highly attractive to journalists and, as we will see in the discussion of the interviews (§5), this gives journalists a lot of leeway in positioning themselves epistemologically. For example, directly quoting a politician or other official directly is Realist as in that the person actually made that statement. Quoting two opposing officials is Pragmatist in that the formerly Realist 'truth' is now just another 'competing truth claim,' and the rationality of the audience is called into action. The 'balancing' of the two quotes is harder to defend from a Realist point of view, and only giving one quote is impossible to defend from the Pragmatist point of view. Thus, one can easily move between each point depending on the situation, and, I argue, the antagonism between these two positions *drives* their discourse and makes the epistemology of the Fourth Estate more stable instead of problematizing it or causing one to eventually choose sides. This important observation will be explored in greater detail in the analysis of interviews with journalists (see §5.IX).

Also, like CR, Pragmatism relies on human language being sufficient to conduct rational debates, and does not take into account the technological implications of mass mediated communication. This is highly problematic for Structuralists, Poststructuralists and Social Constructivists alike, as I will explore in the following two sections (§2.IV, §2.V.)

2.IV – Antirealist Epistemology

In this section several Antirealist epistemological theories will be explored. This starts with a basis on Saussurean structuralism (§2.IV.i), before moving on to an influential modern application of it, Hall's 'encoding/decoding' model (§2.IV.ii). Social constructivist positions (§2.IV.iii) will then be defined, before featuring a

discussion of the utility of these Antirealist theories in explaining truth in journalism (§2.IV.iv).

I will argue that Antirealism cannot viewed as a 'solution' for the above noted contradictions in Realism and Pragmatism, nor to more fully critique the truth-finding aspects of the Fourth Estate role of journalism as it is not a sufficient epistemological theory. Noting and categorizing, as those such as Hall and Tuchman do, the social and institutional influences on news media products does not help elucidate their role as truth-finding institutions of the Fourth Estate. Instead, in the next section (especially §2.V.iv), Antirealist epistemology will be positioned as the stepping stone to a stronger, more critical and truly epistemological approach, that of Baudrillard's Hyperrealism.

2.IV.i – Saussurean Structuralism

Saussurean Structuralism, originating in de Saussure's posthumously published material (de Saussure 1917), differs from Realism by its inherent scepticism about referents, that is, 'real' things to which our language and thoughts refer. Whereas the Realism sees language as corresponding to reality, Saussure detaches the two entirely. Signifiers and signifieds (the constitutive aspects of language) are mutually constitutive as their relationship to reality/referents is viewed as being arbitrary or habitual.

To clarify the terms as Saussure used them: A signifier (Sr) is "always material" (Barthes 1968: §II.3.1), that is, a picture of a car or the printed word 'car.' The signified (Sd) is the meaning that we draw from consuming a signifier, which, as Barthes explains, "is not 'a thing' but a mental representation of the 'thing'" that "can be defined only within the signifying process" (ibid: §II.2.1). Signification is "a process" which "binds the signifier and the signified" to produce "the sign" (ibid: §II.4.1). The referent is the theoretical object that exists in the real world, to which the Sr is referring and is, largely, of little consequence to structuralism which focuses more on the relationship between the Sd and Sr and the signification they may or may not produce.

Structuralism and its vocabulary were elaborated upon by many in France, such as Roland Barthes (i.e., Barthes 1957, 1968, 1974), early Baudrillard (i.e., Baudrillard 1968), and others too numerous to list here. Yet it was only brought into the Anglo-American media studies fields in the late 1970s and early 1980s, paradigmatically via Hall (1980), the focus of the next section.

2.IV.ii – Encoding/Decoding Model

What could be called an updated version of the Shannon-Weaver model (see §2.II.i) was developed by Hall in the late 1970s. The two models share many

similarities; however Hall's encoding/decoding model is applicable more towards *mass* communication and features more of a Social Constructivist conclusion. Hall says his model was developed in response to the inadequacies of 'traditional' conceptualizations of communications as a sender/message/receiver model (Hall 1980: 128). While Hall does not name a specific model or set of models he is critiquing, the paradigmatic sender/message/receiver model is from Lasswell (1948), in which communication is viewed as 'who said what via which medium to whom with what effect'. For example, the radio announcer (speaker) gives the weather forecast (message) via the radio (medium) to the audience, with the effect that they know what the weather will be like the next day. Hall notes that such a model would be improved by thinking of communication instead "in terms of a structure produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive movements – production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction" (Hall 1980: 128). The 'objects' of communication, for Hall, are "sign-vehicles" which are "organized [...] through the operation of codes within the syntagmatic chain of discourse" (ibid), 'syntagmatic' meaning the surface structure of a text.

Encoding and decoding of messages are necessary because a "'raw' historical event cannot, *in that form*, be transmitted by, say, a television newscast. Events can only be signified within the aural-visual forms of the television discourse" (ibid: 129). For Hall, the encoding practices of the producers of communication are composed of a large range of practices and forms, such as the relations of production within the media organization, the knowledge the media producers have of their audience and the subject matter, the technical skills and infrastructure available to produce the communication (ibid: 128-130). In his words, the producers "draw topics, treatment, agendas, events, personnel, images of the audience, definitions of the situation from other sources and other discursive formations within the wider socio-cultural and political structure of which they are a differentiated part" (ibid: 129).

As far as the decoding practice of the audience is concerned, Hall believes in a continuum of 'correspondence' between the received message of the audience and the intended message of the producer. Since there is inevitably an "asymmetry between the codes of 'source' and 'receiver' at the moment of transformation in and out of the discursive form" (ibid: 131), the Lasswellian idea of a message having *an* effect is largely discredited. This is a common position in cultural studies, as summarized by McNair: "The meanings derived from media coverage of real-life events depend on a myriad of contextualizing factors, as unique to each individual as the genetic structure of his or her DNA" (McNair 2003: 551). Thus, Hall conceptualizes the audience as being able to, on one extreme, decode the message

exactly as the producer intended (the "*dominant-hegemonic* position") and, on the other extreme, completely reject the intended message and reframing it in the receiver's own way (Hall 1980: 136-138). In the middle is the "*negotiated version*," containing elements of both extremes (ibid).

Compared to the apparent simplicity of the Shannon-Weaver Model we can see that human communication, conceived in this way, has little to do with truth or reality, giving it an obvious Antirealist dimension. How does Hall himself situate 'reality' into his model?

> Since the [for example] visual discourse translates a three-dimensional world into two-dimensional planes, it cannot, of course, *be* the referent or concept it signifies. [...] Reality exists outside language, but it is constantly mediated by and through language: and what we can know and say has to be produced in and through discourse. (ibid: 131)

In other words, Hall agrees with the structuralist idea of the inevitable gap between referents (reality) and Sr/Sd (language), while maintaining at the same time that language mediates reality, that referents are mediated through Sr/Sd. This is so because "Discursive 'knowledge' is the product not of the transparent representation of the 'real' in language but of the articulation of language on real relations and conditions" (ibid: 131).

He purports that the 'codes' we use in the encoding and decoding process are the link between language and reality, between referents and Sd/Sr, as they are "naturalized" by "the habituation and the near-universality of the codes in use" (ibid: 132). For Hall 'Realism' is "the result, the effect, of a certain specific articulation of language on the 'real'" with the result being "discursive practice" (ibid). He apparently relies on the presence of 'Iconic signs,' that is, signs that are pictures of real objects such as a video or drawing of a cow, in opposition to 'linguistic signs,' that is the written word 'cow,' in a discussion about denotation versus connotation. Denotation is the "'literal' meaning" of a sign, while connotation is a "more associative" meaning, the difference between them which Hall collapses, in that neither have "fixed" meanings (ibid: 133). Thus further elaboration of the relationship between his model and 'reality' is avoided, for Hall is more concerned with the flows of ideology through the media than their representational (in)abilities.

For Hall, reality lies outside his model, in some way influencing the 'codes' we develop to encode/decode messages and being represented by 'iconic signs' mediated by television or photography. Bias is thus a nonsensical concept, for it presupposes non-biased communication. All we can look at, according to this model, is an encoded message being decoded, neither of which relies on *correspondence* to reality but, instead, the codes we use. A decoding of a message cannot be 'correct'

or 'incorrect,' only more or less close to the intended decoding the encoder wanted ("preferred meaning" [Hall 1980]) but *necessarily* never reaching it. This is, in the end, not helpful for considering the Fourth Estate role of journalism because it only concerns the relationship between how the audience interprets a journalist's product and the journalist's intentions, and thus ignores discussion of the relationship between the journalistic product and 'reality.'

Hall introduces, but does not fully unpack, the potential of the concept of 'coding.' The idea that certain codes are needed to 'package' reality for mass media consumption, that all humans (i.e. media producers and consumers) use them to encode and decode media is very important. As I will argue in §2.V.iv, in linking Antirealism with Hyperrealism, Hall's 'codes' are useful in combination with Baudrillard's concepts of codes: for Hall they indicate a necessary and insurmountable distance from 'reality' and thus can only be part an extra-epistemological examination of media content. But for Baudrillard, codes are *how* Reality is simulated to create the Hyperreal. As will be argued in §2.V.iii, any Reality that appears in the news media is not a result of the Realist discourse working, nor can it be dismissed completely by Antirealist arguments. This is, in fact, the spectre of reality and reflects more a 'correspondence' between codes internal to the media than between reality and our minds.

2.IV.iii – Social Constructionism

Social Constructionism is often seen as being Antirealist in that the argument is that "journalism, regardless of the integrity of individual journalists and editors, is always a selective, partial account of a reality which can never be known in its entirety by anyone" (McNair 2009: 41). This can be seen by several assumptions made by proponents in the field. "There are no facts 'out there' apart from human observers. Events are not events until they are interpreted by human beings (Novak 1970: 39-40). Similarly, Molotch & Lester conclude that "Our conception is not of a finite set of things that 'really happened out there' from which a selection is made" (Molotch & Lester 1974: 102), while Fishman states that "news is neither a reflection nor a distortion of reality because either of these characterizations implies that news can record what is 'out there'" (Fishman 1997: 211). According to Gauthier, such Social Construction theories "justifiably oppose a naïve, pre-critical empiricism [i.e. Naïve Realism] which identifies news journalism as the result of the natural order of things, or reflecting a totally given environment" (Gauthier 2005: 51).

This concept is said to have originated from Alfred Schutz's Phenomenological Social Constructionism in which 'reality' emerges from a competition between discourses (Lau 2004: 700). It is also a point made by

Foucault, that "effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false" (1980: 188), meaning that what we define as truth is relative to certain times and cultures, thus there is no universal, eternal truth. Berger & Luckmann (1966: 177) also give a more Relativist version, noting that, for instance,

> Rural Haitians *are* possessed and New York intellectuals *are* neurotic. Possession and neurosis are thus constituents of both objective and subjective reality *in these contexts*. […] The respective psychological theories are empirically adequate in precisely the same sense.

In other words, demonic possession occurs in Haiti but not New York because it adequately explains the Haitians' experiences better than the foreign concept of 'neurosis' and because each concept is relative to and dependent on the culture's own history. This is a harsh critique of "modern epistemology's universalism, suggesting that no one philosophical system or vantage point can grasp the plurality of discourses, institutions, or modes of power in modern society" (Mirchandani 2005: 91), nor, we could argue, claim that any one thing is 'better' or 'worse' than another.

This critique has extended to media studies as well, with a long lasting debate about whether news is a social construct created by journalists, or if it is simply formed by a group of facts selected by journalists from reality (i.e., Hjarvard 1995). Tuchman's (1972, 1978) landmark work examined how the work routines of journalists largely structured the way in which they selected their information. Her productive metaphor is that journalists are less 'hunters and gatherers,' going out daily to find what is happening and then brining the information back home, but more like 'fishermen,' sitting by the same pond each day, catching the same types of fish over and over, only venturing out when the pickings are slim (Tuchman 1978). For instance, information that is deemed the most credible is that which comes from official governmental sources, therefore that information (often the easiest to get access to) is gathered before other sources, privileging the government's spin on events. The relationship of this information to reality is only a small part of the equation, its legitimacy is more important because legitimacy is easier and quicker to judge than validity (ibid).

Also, certain cultural tropes and/or stereotypes exist in news, ones that vary from country to country, that effect the way in which stories are framed. As Hall similarly concludes (1982: 64):

> The media defined, not merely reproduced, 'reality.' Definitions of reality were sustained and produced through all those linguistic practices (in the broad sense) by means of which selection definitions of 'the real' were

represented. It implies the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping [...] of *making things mean*.

This is, however, a more extreme social constructionism; softer points are given by others, such as Murphy who says, "The production of news is a social achievement. In order for something to be acceptable as news it has to be the product of certain socially approved procedures" (Murphy 1978: 174-175).

However, many (i.e., Lau 2004, Siegel 2004) criticize such relativistic Antirealism as being 'self-invalidating' or 'self-refuting.' Lau believes that social constructionism is founded on an inherent contradiction and is thus "epistemologically self-invalidating" because news "is seen as purely discursive by [...] 'bracketing' its ontological basis" and "supposing it to record nothing out there" (Lau 2004: 701). This might be fine on its own, but, as Lau notes, the "ontological status of referents is tacitly taken as given" (ibid), in that the 'external' political-economic forces that influence news production must *objectively* exist or else they would have no effect. This criticism is also given to 'relativistic' epistemological notions such as of Berger & Luckmann describe above. If truth is relative, then there can be no *truth* in the statement 'the truth is relative' because it comes from one's own relative position. Thus relativism is epistemologically "self-refuting" because "defending the doctrine requires one to give it up" (Siegel 2004: 747). These critiques effectively, and necessarily, pushes relativist Antirealism out of the bounds of being an epistemological theory at all.

At the same time, this is not an entirely fair criticism for the Antirealists above, as they *are not* and *do not* say they are dealing with Reality. However, I argue that a theory that can effectively challenge Realism and Pragmatism, and thus the Fourth Estate, must meet them on *epistemological* terms, ones that Antirealism cannot provide. As §2.V will argue, this job instead belongs to the Hyperrealist epistemology.

2.IV.iv – Antirealism and Journalism

The above criticism by Lau is fair, for how can our knowledge of the world be based completely on 'nothing out there'? If news media reports did not relate to an already existing reality in *some* way and consist entirely of the 'false' ideas of a ruling class that are transmitted directly to us, would this not be easy to unmask? And how can one rely on a critique of the actually existing political-economic structures that cause this distortion to happen if we assume they as are socially constructed as the news? This, again, gives rise to the Critical Realist project (see §2.II.v), in that these 'structures' are seen as real, while the ways in which news is reported is 'socially constructed,' but that does not mean that *all* news content exists

entirely in a self-referential *social* realm due to the really existing political-economic-etc structures.

Antirealism is largely incongruent with the more Realist positions taken by journalistic normativity. This gap, as we have seen, has been attempted to be resolved by the Critical Realist project with some level of success. While models like 'Encoding/decoding' to give a sense of autonomy to journalistic production and audience reception, the (news) media are still viewed as carriers of elite ideology, or at least that they replicate and reproduce the constraints that language, viewed as the interplay of signifiers and signifieds, structurally puts on human discourse.

This Antirealist discussion inspired several of the interview questions. For example, in contrast to viewing news media as a 'mirror' or reality (question A2), A3 asks the journalists to think about the social, political and economy influences on news media production, and how 'all news is always reported from some perspective,' a highly reasonable yet thoroughly Antirealist perspective (see §5.I). Questions C1, C2 and C3 are all based on Tuchman's (1972) 'strategic rituals' journalists use for maintaining objectivity which she argues does not help journalists get at any 'truth' but instead consists of practical routines they adapt in order to do their job (see §5.IV to §5.VII). And lastly, E4 asks the journalists to consider the Antirealist nature of the information they receive by providing them with the journalistic perspective that 'All politicians are liars and nothing they say should be believed' (see §5.VIII).

As my interpretation of the interviews will show (see §5.IX), Antirealism is expressed by journalists in relation to their *audiences* as expressing Antirealist demands, the Antirealist tendencies of the medium of news and politicians' discourse. Hence, they talk about their job as being the keepers of Realism, re-injecting 'truth' into public discourse.

The Antirealist critique and its necessary focus on the nature of language and media, largely missing from or viewed as being neutral in Realism and Pragmatism, is not easily dismissed, but, as I have argued, on its own it is an insufficient epistemological theory. As I will argue in the next section (and more specifically in §2.V.iv), Antirealism needs an infusion of new blood to keep up its critical angle by re-introducing discussion of 'reality' via Baudrillard's concept of Hyperreality.

2.V – Hyperrealism

> [...] the real message, *the real ultimatum, lay in reproduction itself.* Production itself has no meaning: its social finality is lost in the series. (Baudrillard 1976: 56)

In this section, much of the preceding Antirealism will be strengthened by connecting its observations to Baudrillardian Hyperrealism. I will argue that it is not that language and media are Antirealist and cannot reflect reality (which, as noted, is in fact not a true epistemological theory). Instead, Hyperrealism posits that language, via the media, *simulates* Realism by creating the perception of reflecting 'reality' through the manipulation of codes, thus returning a critical epistemology to the discussion. Baudrillard argues that the signifier and signified have imploded in each other, expressed by McLuhan as the 'Medium is the Message,' thus ending the Structuralist project of better figuring out the relationship between the Sr and Sd (i.e., Barthes 1957). To this he adds Boorstin's concept of pseudo-events, events that exist purely due to the media, as evidence of this implosion of meaning.

McLuhan's idea of 'The Medium is the Message' will be introduced followed by Baudrillard's critique thereof (§2.V.i). Then I will move on to Boorstin's idea of the 'pseduo-event' and the adaptation by Baudrillard (§2.V.ii) before exploring the nature of Baudrillard's theory itself (§2.V.iii). This section will end with an attempt, as noted in the Antirealism section, to link several Antirealist theories, such as Hall, Molotch & Lester, Tuchman, and Lippmann, arguing that they are, in fact, more productive being used in a Hyperrealist mode (§2.V.iv).

2.V.i – The Medium is the Message

Baudrillard's first published essay (Baudrillard 1967) is a critique of McLuhan's influential book *Understanding Media,* (McLuhan 1964). McLuhan's formulation of 'The Media is the Message' (MitM) and his general program of technological-determinism[17] went against the then-dominant Marxist economic-determinism,[18] thus provoking a theoretical shift for Baudrillard. He does not necessarily agree with all of McLuhan's ideas, but many aspects of McLuhan's thinking, especially MitM, form the starting point for Baudrillard's early analyses, which he radicalizes and, often, reverses.

McLuhan's historical analysis of media and communication distinguishes three movements, that of tribal/oral communication, that of literacy/printing and the (then) current "Electric Age" (McLuhan 1964). Oral traditions are constantly changing, evolving from speaker to speaker, and quickly adapting to new contexts as they arise. Things were, certainly, still written down, but the main medium was oral, not textual, due to low levels of literacy. The rise of typographic communication technology, based upon "the principles of continuity, uniformity and repeatability,"

---

[17] i.e. That changes in technology are what drive changes in society, in other words, technology forms the base and economy, culture, etc, form the superstructure.

[18] i.e. That the relations of production, and thus the economy, form the base that drives change in the socio-cultural superstructure.

and thus "the visual organization of time and space," became the "rationalizing" factor for "all the procedures of communication" (Baudrillard 1967: 39-40). The new movement towards automated, electrical media technology, which become extensions of our central nervous systems, McLuhan argues, returned us more to the social interaction mode of the 'oral' age.

At a technologically deterministic level, the medium is the message "because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action" (McLuhan 1964: 9). For example, the social relations we get with newspapers are different in 'scale and form' than that of the internet, newspapers do have interaction with their audiences, such as letters and phone calls, but it is far slower and in a much more limited, time consuming fashion then with the internet's instant comment boxes and email. On another level, there is the audience's reception of the communication. Whereas previously we could discern between the message ("buy our cigarettes") and its medium (a printed advertisement giving details about the benefit of the product), the increasing ability of people to use new technologies to manipulate these messages allows us to have, for example, a short commercial of attractive people having fun and smoking, making the message implicit in the medium.

Baudrillard is more receptive of McLuhan's MitM formula than his other work, yet still modifies it. Baudrillard conceives of MitM as not only "evident" (Baudrillard 1967: 42) but, in fact, as "a *theory of signification*" (ibid: 39), just not entirely in the sense that McLuhan meant it. That is to say, MitM means the Sr and Sd have collapsed in each other, thus the structuralist project to find ways differentiate them or find a better way to describe their relationship is a dead end. McLuhan intended MitM to be "a paradox which one can push quite far in order to expel ideologies of content," a "ruse" that forces one to admit "that there is never a cultural dictatorship of the message (or of the medium) as such," thus avoiding any sociological or historical/political analysis (ibid: 43). In other words, McLuhan seems to be saying 'do not shoot the messenger, no matter what their political-economic motives may be, for one is simply at the mercy of the message.' Baudrillard disregards this de-politicising aspect of MitM and focuses on how MitM indicates the implosion of the signifier and the signified (Baudrillard 1976). To this he productively adds Boorstin's concept of the pseudo-event as evidence of this implosion of meaning.

2.V.ii – Pseudo-events

Boorstin derives the idea of 'pseudo-events' from an examination of the historical changes surrounding the development of news media. Before the mid-nineteenth century, news media were largely *reactive*; news was published when

events actually happened (Boorstin 1961: 7-8). Boorstin gives several quotes of people espousing the causal relationship between news media content and reality was of a more spiritual nature, Divine Providence, the hand of god or even the devil (ibid). This changed with the rise of mass popular press, in that responsibility for making the world interesting" was shifted "from God to the newspaperman" (ibid: 8). This conception lays an interesting parallel between the rise of the Enlightenment and the change in the 'providence' of news media content. As people's belief in the spiritual causes of events was shaken, the scientific or rational causes then became the basis.

This new rational basis for evidence, however, did not last for long, as our increasing expectations for more and more news, and thus more and more information about the world we live in, which we apparently needed more than ever before. Boorstin, however, lays the blame squarely at the feet of the audience: "it is we who keep them in businesses and demand that they fill our consciousness with novelties" (ibid: 9). In the end, instead of successful journalists being the ones who transmitted the more accurate facts, they became the "one who can find a story, even if there is no earthquake or assassination or civil war. If he cannot find a story, then he must make one" (ibid: 8). Boorstin's historical analysis is strikingly similar to the sociological analysis of Tuchman (1972, 1978, see §2.IV.iii), yet as we can see Boorstin draws out the implications more thoroughly than Tuchman. Thirst for knowledge resulted in the creation of more knowledge, one might say, but what exactly is the nature of these new types of news events?

Boorstin labels these as 'pseudo-events' and defines them with four characteristics. Firstly, it is an event that "is not spontaneous" in that it has been "planned, planted or incited" by an interested party, in opposition to an accident or natural disaster (Boorstin 1961: 11). Furthermore, pseudo-events are "planted primarily (not always exclusively) for the immediate purpose of being reported or reproduced" and has the "convenience" of the news media and its wide-spread reportage as one of its main concerns (ibid). Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, "[i]ts relation to the underlying reality of the situation is ambiguous" and that the interest in it "arises largely from this very ambiguity" (ibid). People's interest in the 'event' now extends from a discussion of the event's nature, "in *whether* it really happened and in what might have been the motives" (ibid). Lastly, in the end it tends to be nothing more than a "self-fulfilling prophecy"; the celebration of the "distinguished hotel" is what makes the hotel "distinguished" (ibid: 12), or the interview with the 'influential' personality further enshrines their influence.

An example would be from a business that wants to increase its profits; instead of improving the quality of its services or goods, it embarks on an advertizing

campaign for an anniversary or other man-made events in order to get more publicity. In Baudrillarian terms, instead of increasing the 'use' and 'exchange' value of their product, the hotel instead generates 'sign' value via the media (see Baudrillard 1970). The media cover the anniversary, getting the business into the news for free, and create this event not out of 'usable' and 'exchangeable' reality, such as increasing the quality of service or redecorating, but of the PR professional's manipulation of 'signs' and the codes of the media by creating such a brand.

In the example given above (see §2.II.vi) from Gauthier (2005), over 95% of the news stories he identified originated from human activity, 76% of them from 'verbal manifestations' alone. How many of these human-created events and verbal manifestations would have happened without the news media there to cover it? Certainly, a very large percentage of speeches from politicians are given with the media in mind, they would not go on a political talk show if there was no television. Even politicians in the nineteenth century had newspapers in mind when giving campaign speeches. As all speeches then were local, transcripts would be given to newspapers so their words could be more broadly spread. This is, in a way, to give us a 'baseline' or a test for the 'reality' of news media: would the 'event' covered have happened if the news media were not there to record it?

Thus, I argue that no matter the Real causal 'structures' behind democracy and politics (see §2.II.v, §2.II.vi), the important thing to be critical of is if *that* statement or *that* action is one that exists not simply *for* media coverage, but *within* the media itself. As I argue elsewhere (Hearns-Branaman 2012, forthcoming), modern events like the Egyptian protests in the spring of 2011, as well as an increasing number of protests elsewhere, do not simply depend heavily on media coverage to spread their message, but are structured in such a way as to get media coverage. The pressure the Egyptian protesters occupying Tahrir Square put to force a change in their government was only partially based on the physical occupation of the public space; it was the sustained, media-centric aspects of the event that were conveyed around the world. Without the cameras there to broadcast it the protests would have taken an entirely different shape and had a different, probably far more violent outcome.

The implications of Boorstin's pseudo-event concept were picked up upon and expanded to a greater extent by Baudrillard. Furthermore, he added a broad historical perspective to those of McLuhan and Boorstin, introduced a productive poststructuralist vocabulary, and offered a strikingly original epistemological critique of the effects of mass media on our understanding of and perception of Reality.

2.V.iii – Hyperrealism: 'Models Without Origin'

> [Baudrillard] suggest[s] that what we think of as reality is a reflection of language and other signs [...] he does not simply problematize the relation between language and the world or signifier and signified. He argues that representation of any sort may become impossible as the line between the representation and the real slowly collapses (Mirchandani 2005: 94).

In this section I will explore how Baudrillard uses McLuhan and Boorstin to create his own unique Hyperrealist epistemology. His basic thesis is that, due to the implosion of the medium and the message, and due to much of media being based upon self-referential pseudo-events internal to the media, what we consider to be 'Real' has now changed. His epistemological work on MitM leads him to conclude that "It is by the technological support that each 'message' is in the first place transitive towards another 'message,' and not towards a human reality" (Baudrillard 1967: 42).

Baudrillard gives a historical illustration of this, inspired by that of Benjamin (1936). Baudrillard defines three era, or 'orders,' of simulacra, which he ties to "the successive mutations of the law of value since the Renaissance" (Baudrillard 1976: 50). Before the Renaissance we had the 'obligatory sign': In societies based on ceremony and rank "signs are not arbitrary" and their "circulation is restricted" as they are "protected by a prohibition which ensures their total clarity and confers an unequivocal status on each" (ibid).

"The arbitrariness of the sign begins when [...] the signifier starts to refer to a disenchanted universe of the signified, the common denominator of the real world, towards which no-one any longer has the least obligation" (ibid). Post-Renaissance signs are 'emancipated signs,' correlated to the emancipation of class and the rise of democratic ideals (ibid: 50-51). Thus in the period from the Renaissance to the Industrial revolution we have "overt competition at the level of signs of distinction" in the form of fashion, something that cannot exist pre-Renaissance due to the tight control on signification. Instead of the production of signs being based on reciprocal social obligations, tradition and class, they are now proliferate based on "demand" (ibid: 51).

Baudrillard refers to this period as that of the 'counterfeit' not because pre-Renaissance signs are changed, but because emancipated signs, being "non-discriminatory," "relieved of every constraint" and "universally available," have also become free of "reference to the real" and to "nature" (ibid: 51). Thus, the emancipated sign must simulate the 'obligations' of traditional signs and "giv[e] the appearance that it is bound to the world" (ibid: 51), or else they will hold no resonance with people. Again, Baudrillard draws parallels between the adventures of

the sign with that of class and labour: "just as the 'free' worker is only free to produce equivalents, the 'free and emancipated' sign is only free to produce equivalent signifieds" (ibid: 51).[19]

The next order of simulacra, corresponding to Benjamin's age of mechanical reproduction (Benjamin 1936), arises during the Industrial Revolution, featuring "signs with no caste tradition, that will never have known restriction on their status, and which will never have to be *counterfeits*, since from the outset they will be *products* on a gigantic scale" (Baudrillard 1976: 55). Mass production of objects solves the problems caused by their counterfeiting. Instead of the relationship between objects being based on the original versus the counterfeit (i.e. real grapes vs. stucco grapes), the relationship becomes that of "equivalence and indifference" as objects become "indistinct simulacra of one another" (ibid). As mentioned, this analysis draws from Benjamin (1936), who Baudrillard says "shows that reproduction absorbs the process of production, changes its goals, and alters the status of the product and the producer" (Baudrillard 1976: 55). In this order of simulacra, objects are

> *conceived according to their very reproducibility*, their diffraction from a generative core called a 'model' [...] There is no more counterfeiting of an original [...] and no more pure series [...]; there are models from which all forms proceed according to modulated differences. (ibid: 56)

Thus, "At the end of this process of reproducibility, the real is not only that which can be reproduced, but *that which is always already reproduced*: the hyperreal" (ibid: 73). Baudrillard's definition of the 'real' is "that of which it is possible to provide and equivalent reproduction" (ibid), thus, "To dissimulate is to feign not to have what one has" and therefore "feigning or dissimulating leaves the reality principle intact: the difference is always clear, it is only masked" (Baudrillard 1978: 5).

What does this mean for epistemology of the news media in relation to the above discussion of Realism, Pragmatism and the Fourth Estate? Realist conceptions of the truth rely on the premise that you can prove something wrong or right, that evidence can be provided to prove the speaker's comment was wrong and therefore was lying. Instead, in a Hyperreal conception, "To simulate is to feign to have what one hasn't," and thus "simulation threatens the difference between 'true' and 'false,' between 'real' and 'imaginary'" (ibid). The Realist actions of journalists function to restore the 'reality principle' by creating simulations of 'reality' *instead of*

---

[19] Baudrillard's prime example for this is the use of stucco in architecture during the Renaissance, in which stucco was used "in the *imitation of nature*", "embrac[ing] all forms, imitate[ing] all materials," and becoming "a generally equivalent for all the other" signs (Baudrillard 1976: 51-52).

functioning to verify and distribute 'true' information, and thus their role as the Fourth Estate is largely undermined.

We also return to the antagonism between Realism and Pragmatism: news media needs to present the 'truth,' but also needs to give 'both' sides, thus it 'simulates' truth by presenting two (or more) *unverified* and *unverifiable* statements. Many news media events are, thus, "*produced as artifacts from the technical manipulation of the medium and its coded elements* […] It is this generalized *substitution of the code for the reference* that defines mass media consumption" (Baudrillard 1970: 92). 'Reality' has now become simply models of reality. Simulation "is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality" (Baudrillard 1978c: 2). As he says,

> The real is produced from miniaturised units, from matrices, memory banks and command models – and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is a hyperreal, the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere. (ibid: 3)

News events become a simulation of an event "in the sense that they are inscribed in advance in the decoding and orchestration rituals of the media" and "function as a set of signs dedicated exclusively to their recurrence as signs, and no longer to their 'real' goal at all" (Baudrillard 1978a: 42). The presence of the two 'competing truth claims' acts only to simulate that one or the other *can possibly* be true and that we are rational beings who can make that determination, both which are inherent in the 'decoding and orchestration rituals' of news media. Furthermore, he adds:

> Facts no longer have any trajectory of their own, they rise at the intersection of the models; a single fact may even be engendered by all the models at once. This anticipation, this precession, this short-circuit, this confusion of the fact with its model [...] is what each time allows for all the possible interpretations, even the most contradictory – all are true, in the sense that their truth is exchangeable, in the image of the models from which they process, in a generalized cycle (ibid: 32).

I argue that this conception of 'truth' as extending from models-as-truth within the media deeply problematizes the Fourth Estate idea that access to more information will allow us to make better choices for our life, for much of that information has no reflection to real life, but instead to signs of real life. Baudrillard does believe there is/was truth out there; we just cannot access it anymore because our modern epistemology is, in fact, Hyperreal. Just as advertising and consumerism does not depend on truth to sell its goods, "[m]ass communication is beyond truth and

falsehood […] All the great humanistic criteria of value, all those of a civilization of moral, aesthetic, practical judgment, fade away on our system of images and signs" (Baudrillard 1975: 72).

So what is the actual function of news media then? "All media and the official news service only exist to maintain the illusion of actuality – of the reality of the stakes, of the objectivity of the facts" (Baudrillard 1978a: 71). This is also expressed by Žižek: "one should not forget to include in the content of an act of communication the act itself, since the meaning of each act of communication is also to reflexively assert that it is an act of communication" (Žižek 2006: 21). Thus, the 'stakes' are not purely political-economic in nature but *epistemological*; not that we have to take a side in a political-economic struggle, but that the struggle itself it what is important, for if it is belief in this struggle that maintains the system (see §1.1.iv). Thus, while some would view a news story about, for example, one political party criticizing another as a 'elite transaction' irrelevant to the larger populace and democracy in general and only reflecting these party's differing political-economic bases and not any fundamental policy differences (see §1.I.iii), Baudrillard's perspective would view it as simply reinforcing that this discourse, no matter what its base, exists to simulate multi-party democracy and a possible left-right binary. The purpose of news reports about movements of abstract units of currency around the world, the rise and fall of stock markets and other financial news is not to inform people what *exactly* is going on, but to reinforce *that* they are important. Thus, we can argue that the Fourth Estate does not function to *inform* people of 'facts' but to maintain the simulation that those facts (and not other ones) are 'real' and central to our lives.

This construction of a Hyperrealist epistemology in this manner is, I argue, highly compatible with the existing Antirealist literature on journalism and bias discussed in §2.IV which lacks a strong epistemological basis. The next section will show how many Antirealist theories could better be expressed in a Hyperrealist mode and help support Baudrillard's thesis.

2.V.iv – From Antirealist to Hyperrealist

Baudrillard's conceptualization of the epistemology of the news media brings a strong theoretical framework in which to better conceptualize media epistemology. The writings of Lippmann (an apparent early Hyperrealist), Hall (see §2.IV.ii), Molotch & Lester, and Tuchman (see §2.IV.iii) will now be explored to highlight their links to Hyperrealism and to argue that their ideas are fully compatible and highly supportive of the Hyperrealist epistemology proposed above.

The effects of the separation of Sr/Sd from reality and the consequences for public use of reason were discussed by Walter Lippmann over 90 years ago, although using different terminology. He argued that to understand the news people have to employ "a shorthand of names and signs [i.e. signification]" to make sense of complicated situations because we "cannot carry the whole baggage in every phrase through every step" (1922: 131). However, if we forget that we have "substituted and simplified" we begin "to talk about names regardless of objects," and thus have "no way of knowing when the name [i.e. signifier] divorced from its first thing [i.e. referent] is carrying on a misalliance with another thing" (ibid), thus causing, we could say, Hyperreality. While Lippmann's theory lacks the post-structuralist language and strong theoretical background of Baudrillard, their point is the same; The world is too complex to be mediated, and the codes that media creates in order to *enable* any mediation end up being mostly self-referential and, instead, destroy communication and meaning. Thus, journalism is inherently incapable of performing its function in a democracy, and this is only exacerbated by the growth of national and now international mass media.

The concepts of codes, encoding and decoding are used by both Hall (i.e., 1980) and Baudrillard, at the same time chronologically and from the same structuralist background, but academically separate from each other. Baudrillard draws parallels between the French word for editing a film, *montage*, and its literal opposite, *démontage*,[20] with, respectively, encode and decode (Baudrillard 1976: 63). That is to say, the media producer edits/encodes a movie, TV show or whatnot, and the audience *un*edits/decodes it. Baudrillard believes that the editing/encoding of the message "demand[s] that" the audience unedits/decodes the message "in accordance with the same process," and thus "[e]very reading of a message is thus nothing more than a perpetual test of the code" (ibid).

Like Hall's conclusions, this is not to say that there is only *one* single way to unedit/decode a media or other type of message. But unlike Hall, Baudrillard contends that, in fact, certain "stereotypes or analytic models" are "trigger[ed]" (ibid) by the decoding process, out of control of the decoder and instead constrained by our Hyperrealist language. In other words, the encoding process does not tell us *what* to decode the message as; it is that both the encoding and decoding processes draw from the *same model of codes*, codes which are dedicated to their recurrence

---

[20] Translated into English in the 1993 *Symbolic Exchange and Death* translation (but not the 1983 *Simulations* one) as "dismantle", which seems to run counter to Baudrillard's intended metaphor

Molotch & Lester's (1974) typology of news stories is also interesting to examine in contrast with Boorsin's idea of 'pesudo-events'. They define in four types of events (ibid):

1. Events that are planed and promoted by same actors should be considered as 'routine,'

2. an event planned by one and promoted by another is a 'scandal,'

3. a completely unplanned event is an 'accident,' and

4. an unplanned event accidentally promoted by another is 'serendipity'.

Thus, an event such as a press conference or a speech by a politician is 'routine,' release of incriminating documents a 'scandal,' an airplane crash or hurricane is an 'accident,' and a reporter happening to be at a restaurant and noticing a politician having a romantic dinner with a woman *not* his wife would be 'serendipity.' The theoretical basis for their argument is the universalist view that across all societies and throughout all time there is some agent working to "mak[e] available to citizens a range of occurrences from which to construct a sense of public time" (ibid: 103), and thus leaves out the effects of media technology, effects that are, to Boorstin and Baudrillard, intrinsic to understanding mass media.

If we compare this categorization with that of Boorstin and Baudrillard, we get interesting results. We need to ask why press conferences, events quite often created not to react to an event but to create an event, and entirely with the media in mind, are given 'routine' status by Molotch & Lester. This differs greatly from news such as stock market reports or, as in early newspapers, arrivals of ships and cargo prices as explored by Boorstin. The latter actually have a more direct referent, the real movement of objects, unlike press conferences or politician's speeches.

Baudrillard (1976) asks us to consider if an event is truly 'real,' would it have happened without any media being present to broadcast or record it? Trade would continue with or without newspapers (although perhaps not as efficiently), lightning would still strike, airplanes would still crash. But political speeches, structured debates, even many protests, are all events that would cease to exist if the media wasn't there to record it. The fact that many pseudo-events have become 'routine' and *Realist*ic content for news media shows how deep into the logic of Hyperrealism much news has actually become.

Similar to Tuchman's concept of news media as being composed largely of a self-validating 'web of facticity' (Tuchman 1978), Baudrillard states that "the media frame and cut sample receivers by means of beamed messages which are in fact a network of selected questions [...] the media localise and structure not real, autonomous groups, but samples, modelled socially and mentally by a barrage of

messages" (Baudrillard 1976: 64). That a 'fact' or 'idea' is more valid because it is also contained in other media discourse simply means that such a web of facticity is comprised of 'models' of reality, which are mutually-constituting 'facts'. Journalists cannot target externally verifiable 'facts' due not only to the structural limitations of their work, but the construction of the coding system they use, i.e. the inherent legitimacy of certain government and businesses sources.

We can thus see, as I have argued, that the preceding Antirealist theories are better served supporting a Hyperrealist epistemology. Lippmann was worried about the ability of news media, relying on simplified codes to process and distribute information, to properly function in a democracy. Like Hall, Baudrillard views the role of codes and the decoding/encoding process as the key to unravelling the Antirealist project. The reliance on a very limited number of codes, ones that are largely self-contained within the logic of the media, causes a decrease in the quality of information to the point where any meaning that does not reference the media itself is incompatible. As codes that are purely self-referential and have not relationship to reality are untenable for an information system, they thus need to simulate a correspondence to Reality and give the signs of Reality.

Thus, as Molotch & Lester put it, 'routine' events for the news media are, as Boorstin puts it, pseudo-events that have no extra-media existence because, as Tuchman puts it, their facts are mutually self-validating. Together this presents a strong Hyperrealist critique of the epistemology of a highly self-referential news media based upon Pragmatist discussions of Hyperreal 'truths' dressed in Realist clothing.

2.VI – Discussion: Out of What is News Constructed?

Schudson, in trying to reconcile Realist journalistic ideals with Antirealist social constructivism, agrees with the majority of media researchers that "news *is* socially constructed," but maintains, as Critical Realists do, that it is not made out of thin air, "it is constructed out of Something [sic]" (Schudson: 2008: 88). But what exactly is that 'Something'?

Realist perspectives, including the normative standards of journalism itself, purport that news is constructed by journalists out of reality. The most developed modern form, Critical Realism, wants to show that while the news story itself is written by journalists it is still emerges from actually-existing social structures. A tree falling in the woods is 'true' because there are such things as trees, soil, lightning, etc, ('generative mechanisms') which would exist outside of human experience. Human activities, such as a political speech, also are caused by material

social structures and, while the news story itself is 'socially constructed,' it is the social structures that underlie and ground it.

Pragmatism also offers an open and democratic solution to finding meaning in social life. Instead of our ideas being based off of dogmatic, unchanging ideologies, we should have a fair discussion of ideas and be open to change based on our new experiences. The philosophical question about a tree falling in the woods is irrelevant, unless we need to consider it in order to make our lives better (such as an outbreak of a disease threatening our lumber supply). Political speeches, on the other hand, are part of this free debate, their underlying reality also irrelevant because truth is contingent on social factors, and the effects of the speech tempered by various other speeches that are given.

I argued that the Realist and Pragmatist modes, despite of, or perhaps due to, their inherent antagonisms and contradictions, form the twin pillars upon which journalistic norms in liberal democracies such as the USA and UK are based on. Journalists do and, as I will argue, are *epistemologically obligated* to move between each position depending on the context, as this provides ample 'wiggle room' to maintain stability and dexterously dodge Antirealist arguments.

The Antirealist perspectives, such as Social Constructionism, argue, in part, that what is true differs from society to society, and is largely based on our language. Media is viewed as being part of this system, not reflecting reality but, instead, constructing our view of reality from the routines and practices of journalists. Structuralism, on the other hand, largely removes any concept of reality from the discussion, instead focusing on analysing the play of signs. We thus talk about what exactly 'tree' means, what denotations/connotations does the phrase 'a tree falls in the woods' have for different audiences, do all cultures construct the idea of 'tree' in the same way? Political speeches are also analysed for their ideological content, how the 'naturalize' certain ways of viewing the world, how journalists do or do not replicate such naturalization and what economic or organizational factors influence it. This is a necessary critique, but it is epistemologically insufficient as it brackets out discussions of any Reality, and thus misses out on a chance to explore the fact that the actual exiting Real elements in the news media are phantoms of Reality, that is, Hyperreal.

Hyperrealism, the poststructuralist Baudrillardian perspective, however, forces us to consider that the 'Something' from which journalists and the public get the information they need to construct the news are largely self-referring signifiers, bits of information that only signify other bits of information and have become too highly abstracted from real life. Thus, even if we could establish that a (Critical) Realist's tree fell, our interpretations of such an event is too heavily influenced by

previous mediations of such events and thus instead express codes and models which function to simulate Reality. Political speeches, as they would not exist without the media's presence, are viewed as pseudo-events are prepared in advance for their consumption by the news media, thus journalists construct the news out of Sr/Sd, which then give rise to more self-reflecting Sd/Sr. For Baudrillard, news media is 'beyond true and false,' and any Realism that we think is out there is, in fact, Hyperreal, forced to be more real than real in order reinject Reality into an otherwise Antirealist world.

In §5, I will explore these four epistemological concepts by examining the discursive strategies journalists use to answer ten questions. In comparing answers to questions A2 and A3, I will explore the way journalists talk about a Realist (§2.II) and an Antirealist (§2.IV) proposition about the nature of news media content to 'reality' (see §5.I). §5.II will section compare questions A4 and A5, the Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas concept in general (§2.III.i, §2.III.ii) with the journalists' perceptions of the audiences habits of news consumption, showing more fully a contrast between the journalists concepts of Pragmatism and their construction of the audience as possessing Antirealist needs. §5.III will then explore examples of biased and unbiased news stories volunteered by the journalists (B1, B2), to further examine the ways in which journalists talk about Realism (§2.II) and Antirealism (§2.IV).

From §5.IV to §5.VII, the aspects that journalists consider to be good and bad of three common journalistic normative techniques of Realist and Pragmatist nature will be explored, showing in more intricate detail the ways in which journalists balance talk about Realism, Pragmatism and Antirealism. These derive from Tuchman (1972) for whom these three techniques, using Realist direct quotations (C1), writing in the inverted pyramid structure (C2) and using the Pragmatic 'he said, she said' style (C3), while being Pragmatic or Realist on the surface, function more to hide their Antirealist nature. Lastly in §5.VIII the ways in which journalists talk about the relationship of politician's statements to the truth (E4) will be examined to get another perspective on how journalists contrast Realism (§2.II) and Antirealism (§2.IV).

I will then conclude (§5.IX) by bringing together the insights of the above theoretical discussion with the results of the interview analysis. I find empirical evidence of the above noted antagonism between Realism and Pragmatism, as journalists move between those contradictory epistemologies depending on the questions asked. Their strategic use of Antirealism to brand the medium of news, audiences and politicians, and their positioning of themselves as Realist 'fixers' of such Antirealist inclinations will also be explored. In the end, I will extend the

Hyperrealist critique to show how Antirealist critiques of Realism and Pragmatism only help reinforce them, and that it is only by a Hyperrealist critique of the 'Realities' in our news media that we can make progress in our critique of the epistemologies of the Fourth Estate.

3 – JOURNALISTIC PROFESSIONALISM AND IDEOLOGY

3.I – Introduction

This chapter will examine different concepts of ideology in relation to the Fourth Estate. An explication of different theories of professional ideology (§3.I.i) and the normative conception of ideology held in the journalistic field (§3.I.ii) will start this chapter. It will then move onto an exploration of four different theories of ideological impact in journalism.

§3.II will examine ideology in journalism as occurring at the personal and/or organizational level, that is, breaches of journalistic objectivity occur due to the individual journalist's ideology or that their ideology matches that of the organization for which they work. This is usually positioned as being a 'liberal' bias, although the idea of a 'conservative' bias will also be examined. This position usually ends with the proscription that, since the ideal of objectivity has not been reached, efforts should be made to reform journalism at a personal or organizational level, or by criticizing journalists who break objectivity. I argue that this position is insufficient to explain journalistic professional behaviour and, in fact, shows a tendency towards idealization and fetisihistic disavowal as discussed in §3.V. It also distracts from discussion of the effects of indirect power controls and constraints of professionalization, both points which will be discussed in §3.IV.

A common research goal, as Schudson explains, is to explore either "the extent to which the press in liberal societies is adversarial […] system-attacking or system-denigrating, cynical about government, [etc]" or the opposite, "the conservative, system maintaining character of news" (Schudson 2005a: 174). This will be dealt with by examining chaos and control theories.

§3.III will explore the idea that journalists are, in fact, sufficiently autonomous, and this can be shown by the chaotic nature of current mediascape which precludes control from the centers of power (§3.III.i, see McNair 2003, etc) and the adversarial relationship between media and the government (§3.III.ii). The argument is that this chaos and abundant adversarialism proves that real control over the news media is impossible. I argue that this concept is insufficient as well, due to the generally anecdotal nature of its supporting evidence, the potential negative side effects of too much chaos, and its faith in journalistic ideals to protect from, not to cause, control.

In §3.IV, in opposition to chaos, we have that of ideological control. First we have the idea that true journalistic autonomy is impossible because of the inherent power-supporting nature of language (§3.IV). This will be followed with a discussion of direct versus indirect ideological control in news media. I will argue that, due to historical reasons (§3.IV.ii), journalists are ideologically controlled by their professional norms and the structure of news media gives them the illusion of 'autonomy,' but it is in fact constrained and delimited, and operates through professional norms (§3.IV.iii), self censorship and professional socialization (§3.IV.iv).

§3.V will apply the work of Žižek (via Lacan & Sloterdijk) and his concept of 'fetishistic disavowal' to help explain journalistic professional norms. This will argue that journalists' desire to be reach the 'ideals' of journalistic professionalism can co-exist with admitting its impossibility, a state which is ideological in nature. This can be seen by the *idealization* of normative positions of journalism (as will be highlighted in §3.I.i, §3.II.iii, §3.III.iii, and § 3.IV.v), as well as later in the results of the interviews (§6.V to §6.VII). I contend that such fetishistic disavowal is a large part of the ideological structure of journalism.

In §3.VI I conclude that the concept of professional ideology as indirect control, resulting from professionally socialization and self censorship, need to be combined with the idea of professional ideology as fetishistic disavowal, allowing criticism of the dominant professional ideology to occur without threatening it, in order for the professional ideology of journalists to be stable. This, thus, contributes to the stability of the power structures of the Fourth Estate, allowing certain journalists to occasionally be critical of the government in a structured way, and providing them with the discursive space to vent frustrations with the system, thus allowing them to continue to work within it.

The terminology and theoretical frames developed in this chapter will also be used in §6 to help analyse the interview data, looking at how journalists talk about power in the news media and other topics. In §6.VIII the theoretical discussion and analysis of interviews will be brought together to further elaborate upon how journalistic professionalism functions via both indirect control and fetishistic disavowal of ideals.

3.I.i – Ideology and Professionalism

This section will not attempt to give yet another definition of ideology to the already extensive list. It will look instead at several already existing definitions not from the assumption that some are right and some are wrong, but that they all aim to explain different things. This framework is taken from Eagleton (1991), who, after a

discussion of general theories of ideology, gives six definitions, each with a different sharpness of focus (ibid: 28-30). That is to say, some explain larger societal-level ideological formations, while others move their focus to more personal formations. The three most applicable to journalistic professionalism are outlined below.

Firstly is a group/class-based view of ideology, in which we can say that "ideology turns on ideas and beliefs (whether true or false) which symbolize the conditions and life-experiences of a specific, socially significant group or class," as "a kind of collective symbolic self-expression" (ibid: 29). For my present study, this would be the 'collective symbolic self-expression' of journalists as described in journalistic normativity. This is explored in the §3.II, that personal ideological issues interfere with the larger 'collective symbolic self-expression' of the journalistic field, and thus need to be corrected. It is also inherent in the critique in §3.IV, that of ideology as control, as it is not only the present 'conditions and life experiences' of journalists that forms their professional ideology, but also a historically-contingent movement by owners of news media organizations (see §3.IV.ii).

Another is that ideology "attends to the *promotion* and *legitimation* of the interests of such social groups in the face of opposing interests" which and can be said to be "political" in nature (ibid: 29). For this, it is a "discursive field in which self-promoting social powers conflict and collide over questions central to the reproduction of social power as a whole" and features "a suasive or rhetorical rather than veridical [truthful] kind of speech" concerned "with the production of certain useful effects for political purposes" (ibid). In this level, we can see news media content itself, formed by the 'conflicts' between 'opposing interests' (journalists, editors, politicians, spokespeople, PR firms, etc) that are definitely of a 'discursive' nature. This concept is included in the discussion of language and control (§3.IV.i) and chaos (§3.III) as an argument against the ability of this type of ideology to function.

His last definition is the most macro-ideological of the three, in that it regards "false or deceptive beliefs" as important, but views them "as arising not from the interests of a dominant class but from the material structure of society as a whole," as in Marx's fetishism of commodities (ibid: 30). Examining this ideological formation is slightly out of the scope of this thesis, but references back to it will be made when appropriate.

These concepts of ideology are in contrast to the hierarchical model of Shoemaker & Reese (1996), who give different 'rings' of influence over media content, the outermost ring being the only one viewed as 'ideological,' as it is "a societal-level phenomenon" (ibid: 222) which "subsumes all the others" (ibid: 223). This unfortunately removes any notion of specific ideological formations operating

at other levels of influence ('extramedial,' 'organization,' 'media routines' and 'individual' levels). I will argue that a person's individual preferences formed by their personal experiences is ideological, just in a different scope compared to the equally ideological norms and standards of conduct for journalists or other professional groups. This begins by first outlining the basic characteristics of journalistic professional norms.

3.I.ii – Normative Conceptions of Journalistic Ideology

The normative conceptions of journalistic ideology were developed in the nineteenth century, and, it is said within the journalistic field, to fulfill their role as part of the Fourth Estate. In the USA and UK alike, this occurred though the efforts of journalists and news organizations themselves, and also of J. S. Mill and other Utilitarians. The latter not only "provide[d] the press with an ideology" but also had contacts "in the press which enabled them to advance their principles" by providing "the most complete political theory [...] concerning the proper relationship between press, public and government" (Boyce 1978: 22). In this, the journalist had to become "an educator of the masses" as well as "the representative of the people," all under "the prism of a common responsibility towards the public" (Tumber & Prentoulis 2005: 62).

This is part of the narrative of journalistic development, the transformation from the disreputable yellow press that 'comforts the comfortable' and 'afflicts the afflicted' to one that 'comforts the afflicted' and 'afflicts the comfortable,' to paraphrase turn-of-the-century investigative journalist Finley Peter Dunne. However, as Žižek notes, such narratives "emerg[e] in order to resolve some fundamental antagonism by rearranging [the] terms into a temporal succession" (Žižek 1997: 11). The narrative thus become that, as "trained professionals," journalists henceforth "learn[ed] to sublimate their own values" so that the audience "could trust what they read and not worry about who owned or worked on the newspaper" (McChesney 2004: 64). The capitalist-base and thus inherent bias of the news media was not *hidden*; it was simply *historicised* and *narrativised* into a pervious aberration that had since been resolved by journalistic professionalism

Such professionalization of journalists operates under the assumption that any "observer who tries to be objective, who recognizes personal and environmental influences and limitations and tries to transcend them, can describe reality with reasonable accuracy" and will be "more accurat[e] than one who allows a personal agenda to influence strategic decisions" (Ryan 2001: 7), and this follows for journalists as well. This has high support from journalists, with 91% responding to a survey that it is "very important" that "a journalist try to be as objective as possible" (Patterson 1998: 21). Indictments of journalists and news organizations as being

unobjective are not part of a systemic or structural problem; this only means that "too many journalists refuse to practice objectivity" (Ryan 2001: 16).

Former journalists Bill Kovach, now chairman for the Committee of Concerned Journalists, and Tom Rosentiel, current director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism, in their brief overview of the history of truth and accuracy in the press (Kovach & Rosentiel 2007: 38-39), give examples of news media owners' and journalists' "promise[s] of being truthful and accurate" and "endeavour[s] to get at the truth" (ibid: 38). They also cite numerous questionable or potentially disingenuous promises, such as that "the Lords of the Yellow Press sought to assure readers that they could believe what they read," and Pulitzer's *New York World* establishing a Bureau of Accuracy and Fair Play in 1913 for a similar task (ibid: 39). No examples of the press actually being truthful, empirically demonstrated or even anecdotal, were given, just their promises to try to reach that goal. As mentioned in §2.II.ii, Kovach & Rosentiel state that "journalistic truth as a process – or as a continuing journey toward understanding" (ibid: 43-44).

The above conceptions by Kovach & Rosentiel and Ryan, typical of the normative idea of journalistic professionalism, are highly contradictory: if it is a 'continuing journey' then you can never really 'arrive' at a destination, but if you can never reach the destination then why go on a journey in the first place? Such contradictions are clear indications that the ideology at work is not simply that of journalists being duped into believing that their professional ideas *are* achievable, they know very well it is not achievable but they still act as if it is achievable. This *idealization*, I argue, is an indication of Žižek's concept of fetishistic disavowal which will be further discussed in §3.V.iii.

In the following section I will look at the perspective that the main issue is with journalists' own personal biases, a charge that goes against the 'development' of professionalism over the last century.

3.II – Personal and/or Organizational Ideological Bias

> Presenters, reporters and correspondents are the public face and voice of the BBC - they can have a significant impact on perceptions of whether due impartiality has been achieved. Our audiences should not be able to tell from BBC output the personal prejudices of our journalists or news and current affairs presenters [...] They may provide professional judgements, rooted in evidence, but may not express personal views in BBC output [...] (BBC 2011: §4.4.13)

> We avoid active involvement in any partisan causes [...] that could compromise or seem to compromise our ability to report and edit fairly. (*Washington Post* 2011: np)

As can be seen from the extract from BBC's standards, the 'personal prejudices' and 'views' of journalists is often a source of concern. The *Washington Post* takes a similar line in their avoidance of 'conflict of interest.' These standards form part of larger "discussions of journalism and the press" which are "centered not on institutional control and government policies" but instead focus on "evaluating journalists' conduct" (McChesney 2004: 65).

For Shoemaker & Reese (1996), these personal ideological biases would be viewed at the 'individual' or 'organizational' levels. This perspective represents a certain view on bias in the media, that the "most important potential obstacles to the presentation of such a balanced and accurate account of the world are the political prejudices or social attitudes of communicators, who allow their values or selective perception to bias their reporting" (Hackett 1984: 233). Entman refers to this as "decision-making bias," in other words "the influence of journalists belief systems on the texts they produce" (Entman 2010: 393), where belief system could be viewed as a type of ideology, that is, one's personal ideological system, influenced by or corresponding to the ideological system of a specific organization.

Due to their respective political contexts, this discussion is different in the USA and UK. All broadcasters in the UK are expected to have political 'impartiality,' and the BBC's standards are reflected in those of Sky, Channel 4, ITV and other broadcasters. The national print media in the UK, however, are not expected to perform in the same way, with political bias, partisan or not, being their defining characteristic. In the USA, however, there are no governmental regulations about 'impartiality' for print, broadcast or online media, and it is up to the organizations themselves to determine what political 'bias' they might have. US newspapers and broadcasters might have politically partisan commentators, but overt partisanship for the 'straight' news reporters is held as being unprofessional.

Ryan believes both scientists and journalists share the same notion of objectivity, that is, "the collection and dissemination of information that describes reality *as accurately as possible*" (Ryan 2001: 3, my emphasis). The weakness of Ryan's approach is to assert that the list of positive attributes that contribute to good journalism/science[21] do *not* consist of personal characteristics and are thus not ideological, while all the negative ones *are* personal. Therefore exploring the inappropriate personal characteristics of journalists takes precedence over institutional or systemic conditions in which journalists work (ibid).

---

[21] For example: accuracy, completeness, precision, clarity, scepticism, "receptivity to new evidence and alternative explanations," fairness, impartiality, disinterestedness, imagination, creativity, logical consistency, communality and verification (Ryan 2001: 4).

In this section I will argue that this type discussion is neither fruitful nor informative in better describing the ideological formations contained within news media. The use of fuzzy concepts such as 'general audience' or 'citizens,' as well as the inevitable lack of an agreed baseline for what 'liberal' means, where the 'middle' exactly is, and how the characteristics of journalists can and or why they should replicate that of the 'general population,' show instead a process of *idealizing* unreachable goals. As I will argue in §3.V.iii and §3.V.iv, this idealization can be explained by the concept of fetishistic disavowal in which admittedly unreachable ideals positively structure journalistic professional behaviour.

Furthermore, such a discussion on (direct) individual performance tends to bracket out discussion of the (indirect) systemic controls on journalists and news media and, importantly, views professionalism as the fix to, and not cause of, disruptive ideological influences (as will be discussed in §3.IV). It does, however, briefly touch on the socialization process of journalism, an idea which will be picked up upon again in §3.IV.iv.

3.II.i – Liberal Ideological Bias

The exact genesis of the argument that the American media has a liberal bias is unclear, but it is generally attributed to Watergate and the Nixon Administration's efforts to discredit the press (Schudson 1993, Blumenthal 2007, FAIR 1998), while others believe it is a product of more long-term trends in journalism, such as the progressive movement of the late nineteenth century. As mentioned above, while there is no legal mandate for impartiality in US news media, many broadcast, print and online organizations do take that on as their self-defined role. Thus a far greater range or organizations, from the *New York Times* to CNN are open for attack. As Schudson puts it, conservatives charge journalists with being part of the "Liberal elite" and as "politically correct," "almost uniformly secular," "feminists" and "pro-choice advocates," aspects which are contrary to the majority of the US population (Schudson 2005b: 218). In the UK, the debate about 'liberal' bias mostly surrounds the BBC, for to say the *Guardian* or *Independent* is liberal is simply to point out the obvious, but to do so for the BBC is a charge that it is breaking its mandate.

For the USA I will critically examine two academic studies (Lichter, Rothman & Lichter 1990, Kuypers 2002) and the writings of journalist Bernard Goldberg (1996, 2003, 2008) to evaluate the argument for a 'liberal bias.' As academic studies about a 'liberal' bias in the UK media are rare,[22] we will instead rely on journalistic

---

22 Research about BBC's biases, largely conducted via content analysis, tend to focus more on how balanced the BBC is towards labour disputes and social issues (i.e. Glasgow University Media Group 1976, 1980), or the BBC's orientation to Israel (Philo & Berry 2004, 2011).

writings about it (Sullivan 2002, Martin 2007) and the BBC's report on its impartiality (BBC Trust 2007).

A baseline approach to discovering 'liberal bias' in the media is often used, yet, as I will argue, such baselines are too abstract or too ill-defined. This 'baseline' approach is also implicitly taken by Weaver *et al* (2007) who contrast charts of journalists' political leanings and party identification with charts of those for the US adult population (ibid: 17, 20), and point out trends in journalists' responses "ran counter to those for the general public" (ibid: 19) without clearly saying *why* this is the baseline or *how* it can be 'corrected.'

Kuypers (2002) bases his study on the agenda-setting function of news media as defined by Gamson (1989), which means that "the mass media shape not only what the public 'perceives' as 'political reality' but also how political elites understand what voters and opinion leaders are thinking about" (Kuypers 2002: 5). The press can frame an issue according to the needs of "the readers," or of "the press," or "to accurately impart the meaning of those speaking or writing upon that issue [i.e. the source]," the last one deemed to be closest to what a "socially responsible press" requires (ibid: 12-13). Kuypers acknowledges that such frames are inherent in providing context, but his main concern comes "when the media places its partisan context over that of the people or government" because then "the potential for public manipulation increases" (ibid: 9). For Kuypers, then, the baseline is the needs of the readers and the congruence of the article to the information source's ideas. Deviating from that will show the impact of personal journalistic ideological bias.

Kuypers finds the press' ideology as being "idealized norms of left-wing ideology" or "liberal bias" (ibid: 202). For example, he found that in the 'liberal' media "not affirming homosexuality is considered prejudice, and by extension, intolerance," thus "conflat[ing] tolerance with acceptance and approval" (ibid: 208). The stories he examined framed comments and people who believe that homosexuality is a sin as being prejudiced and intolerant, thus showing their 'liberal bias' because 'liberals' do not just tolerate but approve of or accept such "lifestyle[s]" (ibid: 209). Thus, a characteristic such as 'toleration of the gay lifestyle' is his baseline, and anything above tolerance, 'acceptance' and 'approval,' indicate liberal-ness and bias, yet he does not elaborate upon why this specifically is the baseline.

Lichter, Rothman & Lichter (1990) put their baseline at the 'general public' or 'public opinion.' For instance, in their analysis of coverage of inter-city school bussing, they found that the "media coverage [...] cannot be explained as either a mirror of reality or a reflection of public opinion" (ibid: 252). Their "impression is

that they [journalists] attempted to act as responsible citizens in helping their country adapt to reforms that were, in their view, necessary and long overdue" and therefore "their coverage may reflect not mass opinion but the enlightened opinion of liberal intellectuals in universities, think tanks, and federal courtrooms" (ibid). After several more case studies and examination of survey data, they conclude:

> They [journalists] differ most from the general public [...] on the divisive social issues that have emerged since the 1960s – abortion, gay rights, affirmative action, et cetera. Many are alienated from the 'system' and quite critical of America's world role. They would like to strip traditional powerbrokers of their influence and empower black leaders, consumer groups, intellectuals and [...] the media. (ibid: 294)

That is to say, the statistical evidence of the opinions of the 'general public' and 'mass opinion' did not match the journalists' own responses to surveys or the content they produced. They do not, however, explain *why* it should or *how* it can.

They do conclude, however, that "pure journalistic objectivity is unattainable, since even the conscious effort to be objective takes place within a mental picture of the world already conditioned, to some degree, by one's beliefs about it" (ibid: 296). Despite this admission of the 'unattainable' goal of objectivity, they *still* use idealized baselines such as 'general public' throughout their study. They support increasing political diversity in the newsroom, making the public aware of the liberal-elite nature of journalists, and pushing journalists to make their reporting *more* objective, even though the ideal of objectivity cannot be reached.

The baseline for Goldberg is the public, but he does so by comparing the public's opinions to his own, making his argument inherently ironic and less cohesive than the ones given above. He blames the liberal-based journalistic culture itself for giving journalists the impression that their liberal opinions are "middle of the road" (Goldberg 2003: 29-31), when, in fact, they are not. In explaining his own political views and biases (ibid: 55-57), he says that such "views these days are fairly mainstream in our country. But not in America's newsrooms" (ibid: 57). This, when compared to his earlier assertion that "media elites" are these who "think they're middle of the road [...] while everyone else [i.e. conservatives] is on the fringe" (ibid: 32), shows how his argument is trapped in an relativistic mode where each side tries to delineate the middle of the political spectrum, which is, of course, where they themselves are located. It also shows the contradiction inherent in his argument; one's position as being the 'unbiased' is always relative, especially when trying to knock your opponents 'center' to the left or right and follows the general pattern evoked in the liberal-bias debate.

For the UK, a similar baseline is defined. For instance, in describing how he knows certain news stories carried on the BBC are biased, Sullivan claims it is because the views in the story "certainly aren't part of Middle England's view of the world" (Sullivan 2002: np). A *Daily Telegraph* story on BBC's liberal bias (Martin 2007) relies on a quote from BBC presenter Andrew Marr, using *his* baseline. Marr stated that any "innate liberal bias" at the BBC was due to "an abnormally large proportion of younger people, of people in ethnic minorities and almost certainly of gay people compared with the population at large" (quoted in BBC Trust 2007: 66).

Thus we have several baselines at play: 'the readers,' 'the sources,' 'the general public,' 'public opinion,' 'mass opinion,' 'the middle of the road,' 'Middle England' and 'the population at large.' Yet where exactly this 'middle' is never well-defended, and specific discussions of *why* journalist should (or even *how* they can) 'represent' the diverse opinions of tens or hundreds of millions of people is avoided. Instead, an admittedly unreachable ideal is expressed.

There is some statistical evidence for a 'liberal bias,' (at least in the USA), a typical finding is that of Weaver *et al* (2007), that 9% of US journalists reported their "political leaning" to be "pretty far to the left" and 31.1% "a little far to the left," with only 20.4% "a little far to the right" and 4.5% "pretty far to the right," with the other third stating a centrist position (ibid: 17). Examining the data in such a way, without comparing it to the 'general population,' avoids the problems created by including a 'baseline,' as these definitions are self-reported. Still, as I argue further in §4.III.i, such surveys may reflect more the image that journalists collectively want to present to scholars than their *actual* political leanings. Weaver *et al*'s tracing of the rise and fall of journalists reporting being 'liberal' might have more to do with the acceptability of admitting such a bias under the different political circumstances when the survey was taken rather than drastic demographic changes in journalistic employment or ideology.

However, the lack of a consistent or well defended baseline from the above studies and reports also problematizes the evidence they attempt to use to support the 'liberal bias' thesis. For example, Kuypers attempts to show the liberal bias in American news media by looking at how several issues in the 1990s were framed by journalists. He finds that that "those political actors who articulated political points of view outside of the acceptable band of press politics were presented as being on the wrong side" (Kuypers 2002: 198). But again, the reasons for why the press *should* directly reflect the political elite or how a baseline for the general population can be established is not sufficiently explained.

For Goldberg, the evidence he gave his original controversial editorial is the loaded language used in the report on the flat tax ('scheme,' 'elixir,' 'wacky'), that

one of the main sources was not identified as coming from a *liberal* think tank, the generally dismissive tone of the report (Goldberg 1996: np), and that no voices supporting the flat tax were heard (Goldberg 2003: 22). The rest of the evidence from his two books (Goldberg 2003, 2008) is highly anecdotal, small things he noticed in the newsrooms, personal comments made, and other things that such 'insiders' would observe.

For Sullivan, watching the BBC "is an eye-opener" due to, amongst other things, "the unreflective Third-Worldism, the facile assumption that old-style statist policies on the environment are correct [...] the benevolent multiculturalism, the equation of the European Union with the future," which, according to him, "all reflect an effortless left-liberal viewpoint" (Sullivan 2002: np). Again, as his baseline is an undefined 'Middle England.' His evidence in the US is that "[v]irtually no Republicans work" at National Public Radio and the *New York Times* (ibid), implying again the ideal that the journalistic workforce need be proportional to political affiliation.

Implicit in many of these writings is the useful notion of socialization. For example, Goldberg notes that liberal bias in news media "comes naturally," and does not need to be directly planned while the reporters are "sit[ting] around in dark corners" (Goldberg 1996: np), taking the position that liberal bias is systemic in most mainstream news media. The slant can often be not personal but organizational, and that such liberalism is arrived at due to the socialization process of journalism in that conservatives are filtered out of the profession, like Goldberg himself. This is implicit in the other studies, for how else can liberals achieve dominance in the newsroom if not through filtering out and socializing their peers? This will be brought up again in §3.IV.iv.

Thus, we can see similar characteristics in the liberal bias argument: journalists are supposed to reflect the range of opinion of the general public and perhaps also government and business leaders within the stories themselves as well as in the larger distribution of journalists within a news organization. When this does not happen, the journalists or the news media organization is violating the objectivity norm of journalism. This is not due to any *systematic* problems, but due simply to their personal liberal ideological preferences, caused by their education, their social status, the fact they live in urban centers and spend their time in the 'liberal' ideological bubble of the newsroom. I argue that, in this way, the above studies draw our attention away from the structures in which journalists operate by focusing too much on individual aberrations from professionalism. This will be explored further in §3.IV.iii where I argue that professionalism *itself* is ideological and thus should form the target of our critique.

Furthermore, I argue the baseline approach for establishing what is and what is not 'liberal' is untenable and unconstructive for looking at ideological formations in news media production. As shown, especially with Bernard Goldberg, it is a person's own personal bias which determines that baseline, not any pre-existing social reality, and no matter what 'baseline' one establishes it can be argued against. This approach also indicates an idealization of journalistic norms that are unachievable, a clear indication of ideology as fetishistic disavowal at work, the implications of which will be discussed more in §3.V.iv.

Before we move on, however, we must also examine the nature of critiques of the opposite kind, that journalists have a *conservative* bias, to see if similar concepts are at work.

3.II.ii – Conservative Ideological Bias

Arguments that the press is too 'conservative' are far fewer than that they are liberal. However, as Entman notes, there is a different standard for 'conservative' and 'liberal' media, for "the adjective 'conservative' is usually applied to media organizations that proudly identify themselves as right-wing beacons rather than – like the *New York Times, Washington Post* and the rest – proclaiming adherence to objectivity norms" (Entman 2010: 390). There is some statistical evidence of a 'conservative' bias as well, but it is far from conclusive. A survey of US journalists by FAIR found that on "select issues from corporate power and trade to Social Security and Medicare to health care and taxes, journalists are actually more conservative than the general public" (FAIR 1998: np), and Solomon notes that "the Republican presidential candidate has received most of the daily newspaper endorsements in 16 out of 18 elections" since the 1930s (Solomon 2002: np).

One recent argument is by Hazen (2011), who shows recent trends in a rising 'conservative' bias. Hazen's evidence is the rise of disbelief in certain 'truths,' his examples are that of climate change and President Obama's birthplace.[23] He also cites the high ratings of Fox News,[24] their main audience (males between 30 and 49), the high levels of trust given to Fox News in polls, conservative's dominance in talk radio and syndicated newspaper columns, "Rupert Murdoch's empire," "the reach of giant personalities" such as Fox News' Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity, "the talk radio stars" such as Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, and the purchase of NBC by Comcast, all together showing an "overwhelming conservative media advantage"

---

[23] Hazen's data is that 57% believe in climate change in 2011 as opposed to 77% in 2006, and that a majority of potential Republican voters, up from 44% in 2009, now question or do not believe that Obama was born in the USA and is thus if he is actually eligible to be US President.

[24] Twice as much as CNN and five times as much as MSNBC.

(ibid). This is in contrast to the "modest" progressive media, with the "presence of a handful of strong, progressive political voices" and the (apparent) mainstreaming and de-politicization of the formerly 'progressive' *Huffington Post* website, failure of progressive talk radio, the departure of influential progressive such as Keith Olbermann from MSNBC and Bill Moyers from PBS, and the lack of funding for progressive media outlets online (ibid). However, Hazen's analysis is also obviously politically motivated, as evidenced by his language selection: Fox News and talk radio are part of an 'overwhelming empire' with 'giant personalities' and 'stars,' while progressive media is 'modest' and simply has a 'handful' of 'strong voices.'

The personal bias argument is even used, rhetorically at least, in regards to the BBC. Hasan (2009), in order to argue against notions of a liberal bias in the BBC, gives many illustrations of how it could also be considered 'conservative': BBC presenter Andrew Neil espoused Hayek-style free market ideas, BBC personality and documentary producer Michael Portillo was once Conservative Party Defence Secretary, and current BBC political editor Nick Robinson was formerly chair of the youth-wing of the Conservative Party (ibid). Hasan is not actually arguing that this presence gives the BBC a conservative bias, but that similar examples of BBC employees with a 'liberal' background are given to show a 'liberal' bias, but it does not work the other way around. He concludes that the BBC is, in fact, "Establishmentarian," being for "power and privilege, tradition and orthodoxy," and that insinuations of being 'liberal' are "a calculated and cynical move by the right to cow the corporation into submission" (ibid: np), similar to the arguments about the US liberal bias given by Hazen.

We can thus see that these arguments for a 'conservative' bias are done not to 'prove' an inherent conservative bias in the same way the authors in the above section (§3.II.i) did. They instead are used to argue how bias is inevitable, yet at the same time are framed in the same way as 'liberal bias' argument is and thus replicate their tendencies for fetishistic disavowal.

3.II.iii – Discussion: Personal and/or Organizational Ideological Bias

> Some people rightly fear right-wing media bias; some claim there is a left-wing equivalent. The real threat to journalism, and thus to democracy, is its blinding lack of thought, of effort, of imagination. (Olbermann: 2010)

The above attempts to indicate how do identify biased, non-objective journalists and news media organizations is usually for one purpose, the restoration of professionalism. As Ryan points out, after doing so we must take action "to force journalists to 'behave'" which "could go far toward improving a journalism that has lost its way" in that it "too often privileges dominant groups," "is unfair and lazy, "is too reliant on official sources," and "does not command much respect" (Ryan 2001:

18). That is to say, it is the individual and personal ideology of journalists, in that they are not professional, that causes dominant groups and official sources to gain hegemony and unfair reports to exist, thus endangering the respectability of journalism.

However, several surveys show a more mixed picture of journalistic ideology. For example, the self-reported political orientations of US journalists were found to be "mostly centrist," while non-centrists are slightly right for economic issues and slightly left for social issues (FAIR 1998: np),[25] and report their own position is either center or to the right than ones that say they are to the left (Weaver *et al* 2007: 17). Gans (1979) found that journalists have a mix of 'liberal' and 'conservative' values.[26]

Sociological studies, such as Schlesinger (1978), also tend to find less a systematic 'liberal' bias of the personnel of the BBC than the impossibility of 'neutrality' by such media organizations due to the constraints of the news media system in general. A BBC Trust report found *some* instances where the BBC was more 'liberal' than the audience, but in the end says "new structures" for impartiality are not needed, only "better awareness" (BBC Trust 2007: 77). George W. Bush Administration Press Secretary Scott McClellan (McClellan 2008: 156) gives his own opinion on the matter:

> Everything I've seen as a White House press secretary and longtime observer of the political scene and the media suggests that any liberal bias actually has minimal impact on the way the American public is informed. We in the Bush administration had no difficulty in getting our messages out. If anything, the national press corps was probably too deferential to the White House.

From their own literature review about liberal bias in the media, Shoemaker & Reese conclude that "some communicator's attitudes, values, and beliefs affect some content at least some of the time, but such a weak assertion is practically worthless" (Shoemaker & Reese 1996: 91). Patterson had a similar conclusion about US media in comparison to Germany, Sweden and Italy, "Only the British and U.S. broadcast media were perceived by respondents [journalists] to have no discernible partisan tendency" (Patterson 1998: 19). He also found that "journalists' partisan beliefs

---

[25] The self-reported political orientations of journalists are "mostly centrist [57% for social and 64% for economic issues]," and those who are not centrist "are more likely to identify with the 'right' when it comes to economic issues [19% right vs. 11% left] and to identify with the 'left' when it comes to social issues [30% left vs. 9% right]" (FAIR 1998: np).

[26] Specifically, that they generally want to support the system (i.e. through laws), improve society, serve the public, while being ethnocentric (i.e. supporting US values above others) and supporting individualism (Gans 1979).

affect their news decisions, but "the hues of journalists partisanship tend to shade the news rather than coloring it deeply" (*ibid*), and that political partisanship "is a measureable but not robust influence on news decisions" (Donsbach & Patterson 1996: 445). The research found that reporters indicated the United States' "major news organizations are concentrated in the middle of the political spectrum," with only a 1.1 range between the two extremes, the *Washington Post* and *Time* magazine (Patterson 1998: 19). This is striking in comparison to other countries, such as the UK where the difference between the two most extreme newspapers, the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Telegraph,* was 3.6 (ibid). However, this again seems to reflect more the reporting by the journalists of their perceived differences between publications than their 'actual' orientation. Thus we should say not that the US newspapers are less partisan than in the UK, but that it is more acceptable, common or even habitual for journalists in the US to label newspapers as being in the middle than it is in the UK.

Other research (Weaver *et al* 1998, Deuze 2002) has found that, at least in Western countries, certain characteristics are common among all journalists. For instance, Deuze (2002) found, in comparing five countries (Netherlands, Germany, UK, Australia, and the USA), that journalists generally come from a middle-class background, have a college education, come from the dominant cultural-ethnic group of that society and feature a 'glass ceiling' for women (ibid).

Similar quotes, anecdotes and studies could be given back and forth, arguing journalists' personal ideology has a strong or a minimal impact on their product. This is how the discussion has been going on for a very long time and how it will, apparently, continue to go on. As Solomon points out, "what passes for liberal-conservative debate in news media is usually a series of disputes over how to fine-tune the status quo" with "the myth of 'the liberal media' serv[ing] as a smokescreen for realities of corporate media" (Solomon 2002: np). Bennett instead wants to consider that "the most serious biases in the news occur not when journalists abandon their professional standards, but when they cling most responsibly to them" (Bennett 2005: 180-181). As Eagleton (1991: 221) says,

> The rationalist view of ideologies as conscious, well-articulated systems of belief is clearly inadequate: it misses the affective, unconscious, mythical or symbolic dimensions of ideology; the way it constitutes the subject's lived, apparently spontaneous relations to a power-structure and comes to provide an invisible colour of daily life itself.

Therefore, I argue that by focusing on the (lack of) cohesive personal ideological systems of news media professionals, we miss the 'invisible colour' of the day-to-day experience of being a journalist, the effects of internalizing journalistic ideological norms, the process of socialisation that journalists go

through, the indirect and subtle ways that power is distributed in modern hierarchical organizations. These processes will be given greater attention in §3.IV.

The argument for liberal bias in the USA and the UK generally provides an idealized baseline, that of the 'general public,' 'the audience,' 'Middle Britain,' their own point-of-view (in the case of Bernard Goldberg), etc, then gives evidence to show how journalists' opinions are not the same as the baseline. As I will argue in §3.V (specifically in §3.V.iv), this idealization of unreachable professional goals is more indicative of fetishistic disavowal than an under- or ill-defined baseline.

The above debate has inspired interview question B6, asking journalists what they themselves think about a liberal bias, as will be examined in §6.VI. I find similar discourses operating, that of, for example, examining the personal characteristics of journalists as to imply an *ideal* journalist, or expressing an *ideal* for distribution of political biases in a national media system, which I argue can be explained by the fetishistic disavowal thesis.

However, before we deal with the idea of indirect control (§3.IV) and fetishistic disavowal (§3.V), we need to examine another dominant idea, that the control of journalists and of society is impossible due to mass media technology-based chaos and the actual existing adversarial relationship between journalists and politicians.

3.III – Chaos and Adversarialism

This section will outline McNair's 'chaos' hypothesis (i.e., McNair 2003, 2005a), arguing that the increase in technology and public distrust of politicians has loosened the elites' 'control' over the news media and caused, instead, 'chaos' (§3.III.i). Discussion will then turn to evidence often given to support this thesis, that of the adversarial relationship between the news media and the government (§3.III.ii). Chaos and adversarialism are important to look at, for they offer evidence of how the news media functions properly as the Fourth Estate. If there is a sufficient lack of control over journalists and information by politicians and the government, they can better check on the government's power and actions. Critically examining the presence of adversarialism is important as well, for the exact extent and nature of these power relations (the watchdog, lapdog, attack-dog and elite transaction concepts discussed in §1.I.ii and 1.I.iii) tell us more about what their purpose is and the ideological formations that are in play.

I will argue (§3.III.iii) that these concepts lack sufficient evidence to support their theses. The notion of 'chaos' relies too much on being a contrast to ideology as *direct* control, whereas (as will be argued in §3.IV) *indirect* control of journalism

through socialization and professionalism is a more legitimate ideological formation. The evidence for a constant adversarial relationship between news media and government, as is needed in the Fourth Estate concept of 'checks and balances,' is also lacking, indicating instead a flexible and non-totalitarian system that is not incompatible with the notion of indirect control.

3.III.i – The Chaos of the Modern Mediascape

McNair's chaos thesis can be seen as a modern variation on the longer tradition in cultural studies of focusing on "autonomy" and the "many contradictory elements" of news media in which "the ruling ideas struggle to domesticate subversive ideas and retain their privileges status" (Shoemaker & Reese 1996: 230), a struggle which, for McNair, the news media is winning. It is also contrary to the work of, for instance, Horkheimer & Adorno, who start their 'Culture industry' essay with the assertion that the homogeneity of culture disproves any notions of "cultural chaos" that came about with the decline of religion and the rise of "technical and social differentiation and specialization" after the Enlightenment (Horkheimer & Adorno 1947: 94).

McNair takes up the pro-'chaos' argument again, which is, apparently, stronger than in Horkheimer & Adorno's time due to even more technological and social changes. McNair (2003: 549) asserts there is

> an information environment dominated by unpredictability and instability rather than control and order, in which no elite group, of whatever ideological position, and however firmly anchored in the corridors of power, is insulated from the journalists' probings.

This is caused by the "greatly increased [...] speed, volume and reach of global information flow" which has "erod[ed] official capacity to control that information," as well as the "collapse of social deference towards elites," "the competitive pressures on media" and expansion of "the culture market" (ibid: 550). Ranney echoes this, stating that that "the glare of television's attention has helped significantly to weaken the ability of presidents and congressmen [sic] to govern" (Ranney 1983: 154-155). McNair believes that media now promote "chaos," "dissent and intellectual diversity" instead of the "dominant ideology or hegemony," and gives the examples of John Pilger, Michael Moore and Chomsky as dissidents who can "find a place in the commercial mainstream" (McNair 2003: 551). As Ryan says "one must assume that journalists are not particularly bright if their goal is to

obscure media power; otherwise why would they air and publish editorials or commentaries – or 'Doonesbury,'[27] for that matter?" (Ryan 2001: 11).

There is other support for this thesis. For example, Zachary (2006: np) believes that

> In the good old days, a pack of journalists could enter into a secret pact. All reported the same essential facts, drawing on the same people and coming to the same conclusion. The uniformity [of] reports benefited journalists by taking the risk out of their jobs. No one looked bad.

He believes, however, that the "internet demolished the journalism herd" and there is now a greater plurality of information and sources (ibid). Similarly, Lawrence (2000) shows that when news stories originate from random events, rather than from within intuitions, there is a greater number of voices present, as well as more critical views on what has happened. This leads Schudson (2005: 183) to conclude that accidental events, such as the Rodney King beating or Abu Ghraib photo scandal, problematizes the view that 'officials dominate the news,' for it is now more event-driven, and thus more diverse and more critical.

Examples of journalistic rebellion against government influence are also ample. Hallin (1986) notes that during the Vietnam War, criticism of the government did exist, however in a muted form. For instance, in many inverted pyramid-style[28] stories, the lead was the government's authoritative views, but more and more information undermining that authority and challenging the government's perspective was introduced later into the article. He gives a specific example where a story "led with the statement least revealing of the actual course of the policy debate, and moved on, as coverage trailed off into the back pages, to information that progressively undermined the lead – and moved closer to the truth" (ibid: 78). The complexity of modern events, the increase in the sources journalists have for data, the ability to reach targeted audiences more easily, these have all let to the breakdown of control. An additional piece of evidence McNair gives to show cracks in the 'control paradigm' is the lack of critical reporting in the 1970s and 1980s of US and UK military operations, especially in contrast to their "obsessive interest in Soviet dissidents" and anti-USSR activities, with the "commonplace" discussions of the "legitimacy" of post-1990s military actions (such as in former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc) (McNair 2003: 549).

---

[27] A long-running satirical political cartoon that lampoons and comments on the political process in the USA.

[28] Where information is presented in a hierarchy, the more important and immediate at the top, less important at the bottom.

However, something he does not note is that, despite the presence of arguments for and against wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (and we can say in 2011 Libya, Côte d'Iviore, and Yemen, as well as Israel's offensive in the Gaza strip the winter of 2008-9, and as many others), the wars continued, not hinging at all on public opinion or support for the wars but on inter-elite consensus. It could be argued that access to information has not made resistance easier because things are more chaotic, but that our efforts are now more futile: before the 1990s public knowledge and protests about military actions could actually stop them, now they cannot. Yet an *outwardly* adversarial relationship between governments and journalists does exist, thus we should explore this aspect to see if it can lend support to the Chaos thesis.

3.III.ii – Adversarial Relationship with Government

Arguments asserting the *actual* existing autonomy of journalism from the political field are not very common. For example, Mann (2008: np) advises that

> Reporters and editors who cover Washington should go to work prepared for a fight. Ditch the nice-guy stuff. Embrace the notion that you will often the bearers of bad news. Sometimes your questions should make people hate your guts. Which is why it's probably not a good idea to go to Dick Cheney's Christmas party – or Barak Obama's, for that matter.

As can be seen by the above quote, 'should' is a common indicator that the following statement is more instructive and proscriptive of the author's ideal than a description of the current state. For Mann to say, 'journalists *do* go to work prepared for a fight and *do* ask questions which make people hate their guts' would be an overstatement.

The adversarial relationship between politicians and news media outlets is often given as evidence that journalism is sufficiently autonomous from political spheres of interest and thus is a sufficient Fourth Estate. Lester (1992: 46) points out that many institutions in the USA, such as

> schools and universities, popular culture industries, think tanks […] and government itself […] teach that the press and news media generally are our check on the abuses of power, assuring a continuing adversarial relationship between the governed and the governors and between the 'little guy' […] and big business.

Bennett summarises the normative role thusly: "The professional journalists assumes *the role of a politically neutral adversary*" which "assur[es] detachment and balance in their reporting" and is "an important counterpoint to becoming too close to their sources" (Bennett 2005: 184; after Tebbel 1974, Johnstone, Slawski & Bowman 1976, Tuchman 1978, Schudson 1978). This is not a recent development

either: "One has no difficulty finding numerous alarmist discourses […] at the end of the nineteenth century […] or later […] which places journalists in the position of victims, or […] media excesses" (Champagne 2005: 49). There is, indeed, a long history of this conflict, implying that the journalistic and political fields are necessarily locked in an internal struggle, politicians for control of journalists, and journalists for autonomy from the government.

For example, (Shanker 2008: np) attempts to show the ups and downs in the relationship between the military and news media in regards to their coverage of the war in Iraq, citing a frequent lack of mutual trust. The military's apparent distain for the media can be shown by a comment from General Sanchez, who criticized the coverage, saying, "the death knell of your ethics has been enabled by your parent organizations who have chosen to align themselves with political agendas" and that the media are "perpetuating the corrosive partisan politics that is […] killing our service members who are at war" (quoted in ibid). He is perhaps referring to scandals such as Abu Ghraib in 2004, where torture of Iraqis was exposed by the *New Yorker* (see Hirsch 2004), first online where the photos spread like wildfire and then weeks later, delayed by request of the military, on the CBS show *60 Minutes II*. This is in stark contrast to the military program run to "imbed" some reporters with the troops in the field, leading not only to spectacular live footage of the invasion for the first several days, but also allowing both sides to "shared tents, meals and risks," leading them to realize "that perhaps their differences were not irreconcilable after all" (Shanker 2008: np). But for Shanker, this clearly shows the "anguished relationship between the military and the news media" (ibid), and thus concludes that autonomy wins out in the end as long as journalists and their bosses are strong-willed enough.

The focus in the UK also seems to be about war-time coverage. "Throughout its history the BBC has been in conflict with governments of all colours. These tensions are particularly acute at times of war" (Bennett 2005: 331). Murdock & Golding give the recent example of the "British governments' anxiety to control communications [which] reached an apogee in 2004 following a ferocious row with the BBC over the Corporation's [critical] coverage of the Iraq war" (Murdock & Golding 2005: 71). Examples where the media came "into conflict with the British state, or with the government of the day, mostly post-WWII" are often given to show that media is sufficiently autonomous (McNair 2009: 54). Recently the BBC news director, Helen Boaden, proudly said, "In each decade, from its inception to the present day, the BBC bears the scars of its entanglements with those in power" (Boaden 2011). Moore writes that in the Tony Blair administration, they "d[id] not trust the media to communicate its policies fairly," quoting one politician who called

the news media "pernicious and even dangerous" (Moore 2007: 34). Blair himself even famously called the news media "feral beast[s]" (Blair 2007: np). To give evidence that the BBC was not affected in the long-term by the Hutton Report,[29] Bennett cites some programs critical of the government on the "hard-hitting" BBC show *Panorama*, despite "bitter criticism" from the government about their reporting on the Iraq war (Bennett 2005: 338). These anecdotes paint a picture of a sufficiently critical press that, despite the obstacles that come across it, *can* eventually win out in the end.

Sometimes adversarialism can have different roots. Former BBC Director General Greg Dyke said that the job of the BBC "is to reflect the concerns and anxieties of the country and the public. Politicians should not be concerned by tough questioning, if their decision to go to war is the right one they have nothing to fear from scrutiny" (quoted in ibid: 331). Bennett postulates that Dyke "had more reason than most of his predecessors to be quite so unequivocal" because of his connections to the (then) in government Labour Party (ibid). Thus, such a tough adversarial stance was potentially taken to allay fears that a pro-Labour BBC Director General would make BBC become pro-Labour, simply parallel to the long-term interest of the BBC to be neutral. It can also be viewed not very constructive for society and political discourse. As *Guardian* columnist Polly Toynbee (2003: np) puts it,

> Journalism of left and right converges in an anarchic zone of vitriol where elected politicians are always contemptible, their policies not just wrong but their motives all self-interest. Intense circulation wars have created a vicious press pack which ultimately might make the country ungovernable.

Be that as it may, this idea of an adversarial relationship is still quite strong and structures the journalistic power relationship with government.

3.III.iii – Discussion: Chaos and Adversarialism

As UK media watchdog Media Lens notes, however, lists of 'dissidents,' such as given above by McNair, are not simple examples but *exhaustive* in that they begin and end with the small group of John Pilger, Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Robert Fiske, and a handful of others, very few of whom are full-time correspondents for major news media companies (Edwards & Cromwell 2006, 2009). As will be discussed in §3.IV.iv, this is arguably part of the socialization and professionalization process of journalism; those that rock the boat by problematizing their news organization's relationship with advertisers and sources of information such as the government will not last long in their job.

---

[29] Which criticized the BBC for an inadequately-sourced story about Prime Minister Blair's office 'sexing up' an intelligence report on Iraq's purported 'weapons of mass destruction'

Furthermore, others have argued that such chaos is a double edged sword, that it not only hampers governmental power but also causes information overload, making it more difficult for people to judge credible and non-credible sources. For instance, Schiller believes that control mechanism is still strong, and that "human being are not equipped to deal with a pervasive disinformational system [...] that assaults the senses through all cultural forms and channels" (Schiller 1989: 156). Diversity of content and the appearance of more choice only lead to more diverse ways to control information and thus influence people; as Heilbroner puts it, "the cacophony of ten thousand books, magazines and television impressions [...] is in the end a recipe for confusion rather than enlightenment" (Heilbroner 1985: 140).

There is also no consistent pattern of adversarial relationships with governmental officials. Shoemaker & Vos note that in the lead up to the War on Iraq, despite the diversity of news sources, news media "underplayed information that questioned the government's legitimacy" for the attack (Shoemaker & Vos 2009: 2). They then contrast that with examples where "different information is selected and different messages are produced," such as Watergate and coverage of the civil rights and women's rights movements of the mid-twentieth century (ibid). The evidence presented of such adversarialism is often anecdotal and can always be countered by anecdotal or more systematically collected example of the news media's subservience to the government.

The "media do have a degree of relative autonomy, which allows them to challenge specific people and practices" (Shoemaker & Reese 1996: 233), the key word here being *specific*, not *all*. An ideal Fourth Estate watchdog would need to establish criteria for coverage based on their audience's needs and their own professional judgment, not the political whims of the ruling class. The case for a sufficient adversarial relationship has not been made, and the evidence points towards a more selective adversarialism, that it is strong only during events where the political elites are in disagreement (Bennett 1990, Herman & Chomsky 1988, see also §1.I.iii). Others take a very strong stance against this:

> It is important not to exaggerate the extent to which American journalism
> has become [...] more adversarial toward political authority [...] The relation
> between the news media and political power is still tight and symbolic; and
> it seems to me that the news media are still very much the junior partner.
> (Hallin 1992: 18)

Schudson is sceptical of absolute autonomy itself. He concludes that journalism should not be "as self-enclosed and separated from outside pressures as mathematics or poetry" and journalists should be "a set of energetic and thoughtful communicators who try to keep a society attuned to itself" (Schudson 2005b: 220). He is also supportive of journalists' focus on the actions of politics, asking, "Why

should a democracy trust in the intellectual currents autonomously ruling journalists at a particular moment rather than trusting to the dynamic of forces that is pushing or pulling politicians?" (ibid: 221). In other words, absolute autonomy is neither feasible nor desirable because journalists need to have responsibility to someone other than the journalistic field and its norms and standards. There inevitably needs to be a *balance* in power between journalists and politicians because of their co-dependent relationship, and thus dominance can never be fully attributed to either side (Blumler & Gurevitch 1995).

The weakness of the chaos thesis is its tendency to have an 'either/or' position: either there *is* or there *needs to be* 100% control, or there is chaos. This is also due to the vagueness of the Fourth Estate concept: how much autonomy is enough to be a true independent check? Simply providing anecdotal evidence of adversarialism, as McNair and the others do, or only giving examples during war-time is not sufficient to show a truly chaotic condition, nor does the existing chaos release media from being part of an elite system-maintaining structure, thus allowing it to be a sufficient Fourth Estate. Ideological control cannot be viewed as either absolute or non-existent, and most of the Marxist conceptions of ideology do not attempt to do so, as will be elaborated upon in the next section.

3.IV – Control: Language, Socialization and Self-Censorship

This section will examine linguistic and political-economic theories of media control, what Shoemaker & Reese (1996) term the 'ideological level' of media influences. However, for this section professional norms of conduct will also be included. While being at Shoemaker & Reese's 'media routines' level, I argue they are better placed with these other macro ideological formations.

This discussion is, as McNair notes, about the "study journalism with a paradigm of *control*: the control, through journalism, of subordinate groups by dominant groups" (McNair 2003: 547). As author Upton Sinclair put it, "journalism is one of the devices whereby industrial autocracy keeps its control over political democracy" (Sinclair 1928: 222). A more nuanced summary is given by McNair (2009: 48):

> The essence of the economic approach is that the journalism produced by these organizations is inflected in such a way as to serve the interests of that minority [ownership] – to reproduce their ideas, values, and ways of seeing the world as part of the process by which society is able to reproduce itself.

Schudson believes it is a "fundamental question" to ask "how autonomous journalism is and, to the extent that it fails to be autonomous, whether it fails in the direction of subservience to the market or subservience to the state" (Schudson

2005b: 214). It is, however, out of the scope of the present study, and the range of subjects under consideration, to examine the extent to which journalism and news media are a social ideological control mechanism in general. Instead, I will focus on the control *of* journalists, not the control *through* journalists, as part of that larger ideological formation, while still keeping the latter in mind.

> As Chomsky (1982: 14) notes,
>
>> The general subservience of the media to the state propaganda system does not result from direct government order, threats or coercion, centralized decisions, and other devices characteristic of totalitarian states, but from a complex interplay of more subtle factors.

This is a clear indication of support for control as being indirect. Amongst these 'more subtle factors,' the ones with the most power to explain journalistic ideological professionalism are language (§3.IV.i), professional norms (§3.IV.iii) and professional socialization and self-censorship (§3.IV.iv). I will then use this theoretical framework to examine several ideas proposed to help 'restore' the proper function to the Fourth Estate, arguing they falter for focusing too much on professionalization as the cure and not the disease (§3.IV.v).

I conclude (see §3.IV.vi, §3.VI) that this concept of indirect control is *necessary* but not *sufficient* to understand the ideological formations of the Fourth Estate. Socialization and professionalization do filter out undesirables and select people with certain characteristics to be journalists, yet there is no evidence that working journalists are a heterogeneous heard, perpetually self-censoring and unable to critically examine their job and their position in society. These shortcomings, I will argue in §3.V, can be explained by Žižek's concept of fetishistic disavowal: criticisms of the limits and constraints of journalism and critical self-reflection are fine as long as the journalists keep doing their job and are thus a necessary part of the non-authoritarian ideological formations of the Fourth Estate. In §3.VI, the connections between these two concepts will be more fully explored.

First, however, the potential of language as a universally limiting formation will be examined.

3.IV.i – Language as Control

In this section I will examine linguistic theories of control, focusing on Foucault (1977, 1980), Fowler (Fowler 1991, Fowler & Kress 1979), and Žižek (2009), who view language itself as being what causes a degree of ideological control. For Foucault, "power is not something confined to armies and parliaments: it is, rather, a persuasive, intangible network of force which weaves itself into our slightest gestures and most intimate utterances" (Eagleton 1991: 7). Foucault calls

this 'discourse' and argues that it is through discourse and not direct violence that control is exercised (Foucault 1977, 1980). This Foucaultian notion of discourse is developed more fully in regards to the news media by Fowler, who notes that "the Press is an example of a process found in *all* discourse, the structured mediation of the world," thus he views news media as not "especially biased" but 'biased' in a more universal fashion (Fowler 1991: 120). A similar version of this comes from structuralists, such as influenced by Lacan and Althusser, who "would argue that the linguistic structure of journalism 'positions' the audience in a subordinate position *vis-à-vis* the dominant class of capitalism" (McNair 2009: 24).

> Fowler & Kress (1979: 185) state that
>
> interpretative meanings are not created uniquely for the occasion; the systematic use of these linguistic structures is connected with the text's place in the socio-economic system, and hence they exist in advance of the production of the text and our reception of it

Language is thus the "'organized selections' from among these meanings" and consists of "responses to our practical theories of the nature of the communicative events in which we participate" (ibid: 185-186). Because "we have been socialized into holding these theories" this causes "our judgements are largely automatic" and "unconscious for most members of the speech community" (ibid: 185-186). When applying this to journalism specifically, Fowler (1991: 24) clarifies the implications of such a position:

> I do not wish to present the newspaper industry as *deliberately and cynically* working in this way in order to disseminate official ideology for commercial gain; to mystify the actions and the motive of government and industry; and to discredit opponents and silence the majority. Though these are indeed the goals and effects of the media, they need not be consciously formulated and strategically planned, because their implementation takes place *automatically*.

Therefore, if we can say that "ideology sometimes involves distortion and mystification, it is less because of something inherent in ideological language than because of something inherent in the social structure to which that language belongs" (Eagleton 1991: 28). Thus, such a position concludes that a focus on revealing the power-structures inherent in language or discourse will be able to let us better identify how these are replicated in our lived experiences. The end is not to 'fix' language so that it better reflects real divisions, or reflects power relations in a more 'healthy' way according to one's perspective, but instead to recognise this process as a basic facet of news media. We will also inevitably be able to detect 'bias' in news media because we all come from different positions and have different takes on the proper way to describe and proscribe power relations in

society. As Karppinen notes, theorists such as Foucault see that the deliberative emphasis on communicative reason leads inevitably to a support for the *status quo* of exclusions and inequalities" because it privileges only *one* style of communication, that is the "rational, democratically legitimate norm" (Karppinen 2008: 32).

From this point of view it is also possible to criticize supporters of free speech and Pragmatic approaches to democracy, as discussed in §2.III.i, and argue that the Marketplace of Ideas is itself highly ideological. For example, Rorty believes that we have "a duty to talk to each other, to converse about our views of the world" and "to use persuasion rather than force" (Rorty 1991: 67). What he fails to consider is the 'persuasive' methods used by humans inevitably involve ideologically-loaded language and thus reproduce already-existing power relations. As Foucault puts it, "We must conceive of discourse as a violence that we do to things, or, at all events, as a practice we impose upon them" (Foucault 1972: 229). Following this sentiment, Žižek argues that "Language simplifies the designated thing, reducing it to a single feature. It dismembers the thing, destroying its organic unity [and] inserts the thing into a field of meaning which is ultimately external to it" (Žižek 2009: 52). Thus, Žižek argues that at its most basic level language is *inherently* violent and, contra Fowler's (1991) neutral view of media, this violence is exacerbated by the media and its power-replicating and power-reinforcing nature. The subjective violence that occurs, such as direct violence or conflict caused by an identifiable agent, is more easily mediated than the objective, or indirect, violence (such as famines and poverty) caused by the system (Žižek 2009). News media functions this way as well, generally ignoring the hard to mediate systemic problems caused by capitalism and globalization, instead focusing on individual instances of violence and corruption which are symptoms of the underlying system, not the causes of problems.

Thus, while we may view language as "the very medium of non-violence, of mutual recognition," such as Rorty does, we need to remember that it "involves unconditional violence" (Žižek 2009: 55). This view is highly critical of one of the important assumptions underlying post-Enlightenment thought, that the movement from constraint under authoritarianism to the freedom of democracy is inherently positive. The point is that it is *only* by contrast with (direct) violent, non-linguistic 'force' of authoritarianism that the (indirect) persuasive talk and conversations of democracy seem neutral and non-ideological. Thus, we can argue from the System Maintenance perspective (see §1.I.iv) that a news report on a politician who is forced to resign due to corruption or a sex scandal is a *violent* act, for it reinforces structural inequalities in society by taking for granted the ethical or moral codes they violated, and distracts from the larger systemic corruption that underpins capitalist

systems, thus restoring the system of systemic violence that, indirectly, oppresses people.

It is important to keep in mind Foucault's and Fowler's views of language as reproducing ideology and Žižek's problematization of the non-violent nature of language. However, I would argue that language is *not* a neutral medium, and in the hands of news media the existing problems are only expanded upon, causing excessive personalization, the ignoring of hard-to-mediate systemic violence, and the reduplication of existing power structures on a larger scale. The language of professional journalists is one that replicates and reinforces the already-existing power relations. Language also plays a central role in discussions of ideology, especially about socialization and the 'control' afforded by status quo-reinforcing 'neutral' or 'objective' language of journalism, all points which will be considered below in §3.IV.iii. However, I argue that ideology does not begin and end with language, and observation of *how* language works *through* social interactions is also necessary to consider, as will be done in the Methodology chapter (see especially §4.III.iii and §4.V.i).

The next section will examine the critical political-economic theories of the origins of journalistic professionalism as an important addition to the above discussion.

3.IV.ii – Critical Histories of Journalism

As Zelizer points out, the first histories of journalism, as they were made mostly internal to the profession itself "with the aim of legitimating journalism as a field of inquiry" (Zelizer 2004: 84), helped deepen "the collective identity of journalists and journalism" (ibid: 85). This was until critical strains of journalism history in the USA and UK grew after the 1970s, including the work of James Curran (Curran 1977, 2002; Curran & Seaton 1985, 2003, 2010, etc), Boyce (1978), Conboy (2004), Murdock & Golding (1979), Tuchman (1978), Gleason (1990), and Levy (1960, 1985) amongst many others. Their basic tenet is that notions of journalistic objectivity and of news media as *the* Fourth Estate grew up out of the economic needs of the developing bourgeois press and not so much out of the desire of nineteenth-century progressive journalists to make the world a better place by enhancing democracy and public communication, as many of the pre-1970s self-written histories state.

This is all part of the larger political-economic transformations that were happening in the UK and the USA in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a bourgeoisie public sphere grew on a capitalist economic basis. As Calhoun notes, during that time institutionalized privacy principles were strengthened, mainly to

benefit the "free control of productive property" necessary for capitalism, and along with this civil society needed to be "understood as neutral regarding power and domination" in order for such free market capitalism to be "seen as a natural order" (Calhoun 1992: 16). News media fit very well into these changes, as it was a fast, efficient way for communication within a widely geographically dispersed bourgeois public sphere to take place (see Habermas 1962). Thus "journalism was able through this status as the Fourth Estate to provide an important rhetorical bridge between the interests of the newspapers and those of the newly enfranchised British middle classes" (Conboy 2004: 109), and certainly in the USA as well.

Printing in the late eighteenth century was not highly capitalised and had an unstable economic basis, and printers were little more than hired guns for those who wanted to print their opinion and share with others, mostly of the already-literate upper class and growing bourgeois class (Paisley 2001, Levy 1985). This changed with the increase in technology and literacy, as well as the increased urbanization that occurred during the industrial revolution and lead to the rise of the mass-market or penny press, aimed at a broader, non-elite audience, in both the USA and UK (Schudson 1978, Curran & Seaton 2010). The mass-market press is of a different character then previous printing endeavours, as it need to attract the widest range of audience to sell to advertisers by offering a low cover price, necessitating the character of its contents necessarily to become less opinion- and more fact-based. This "development away from publishing opinion towards reporting news" in the nineteenth century "affected the responsible press even more strongly" than the popular press because early political reporters "were noted not for accuracy but for personal and literary style" (Elliott 1978: 179). Furthermore, press supported by political parties and social movements were not able to compete with the mass-market advertiser-supported press, leading to the eventual decline of activist press, especially the Socialist press, who could not attract sufficient advertising to keep the cover price down (Curran & Seaton 2010). Peterson (1981) notes that as technology for printing and distribution increased, news media could cover wider geographic areas, but also needed to appeal to the wider area's audience as well, leading to standardization of both the product and the professionals via professional norms and internal migration.

Thus we can see that "Journalistic notions of what is and is not news [i.e. news values] have been forged in the workshops of a commercial press serving historically particular needs and interests" (Murdock & Golding 1979: 217). They argue that routinization of news production procedures, creating of news values and the style of news ("terse shorthand references to shared understandings") are all determined from, or in reaction to, the economic situation faced by newspapers at

that time (ibid: 216-218) and are still present now (Tuchman 1972, 1978) This "led to a shift in the aspirations of the [journalistic] profession" (Conboy 2004: 125). As all occupations engage in what Anderson calls "the professional project," journalism also "attempt[ed] to acquire and maintain a legitimate jurisdiction over discursively and epistemologically constructed varieties of expertise" (Anderson 2008: 258).

In other words, in order to carve out a professional space for journalism, and pushed by owners and managers, the journalistic field needed to define what their job was as defend it to other fields, including the public and the political field. Hence we have the formation of notions of journalistic normativity such as objectivity and adversarialism. As Murphy argues, 'inaccurate,' 'bias,' and 'factual reporting' are "constructs which have meaning in journalistic and political milieux as justifications for, and descriptions of, practices which enable journalists to be seen by themselves and by others to by playing their game according to their rules" (Murphy 1978: 171). Thus, Bennett (2005: 185) argues that the creation of professional norms

> had more to do with the somewhat haphazard course of the developing news business than with the rational or determined pursuit of truth. In short, practices were dictated more by historical, technological, or businesses circumstances than by rational human design. The resulting reporting practices later became rationalized as good and even noble things.

It is not the 'progressive' ideology of the nineteenth century journalists that is the most influential ideological characteristic of journalism professionalism (as Schudson [1978] argues), but the pro-bourgeois, pro-capitalist nature of news media itself.

This critical historical perspective brings up major issues when considering control, for it is only an unrestrained press with full autonomy, that is, the *ideal* Fourth Estate, which presents an actual challenge to vested power interests. Yet at the same time issues of control and autonomy are still central to discussions about journalism and news media.

3.IV.iii – Professional Norms as Ideological Control

> By invoking eighteenth-century concepts (such as its model of free speech) and applying ninetieth-century distinctions (such as public and private rights) to twentieth-century phenomena, news limits knowledge. News obfuscates social reality instead of revealing it. It confirms the legitimacy of the state by hiding the state's intimate involvement with, and support of, corporate capitalism. (Tuchman 1978: 210)

While Shoemaker & Reese (1996) view 'ideology' as a macro-structure under which all other are subsumed, in this section I intend to highlight how their 'media routines' level is highly ideological, even more so than their 'extramedia' and

'organizational' levels. The role of ideology in this formation is that professional norms of conduct for journalists are themselves the way that journalists are ideologically controlled in a democratic-capitalist bourgeois political-economic system, one that cannot use direct or violent force to achieve control.

The question is, then, to what extent is this 'control' present, and how does it occur? Curran notes several "countervailing influences" that prevent us from simply saying "corporate-controlled serve business corporations," private media businesses are also influenced by "audience interest," maintaining "public legitimacy" and "the professional concerns of their staff" (Curran 2000: 125). There are examples of direct control and interference, especially during times of war. In the Iraq War, as Blumenthal (2007: np) relates,

> Bush administration officials […] complained to the chief executive officers of major media corporations […] and the pressure fell down the chain of command like an anvil. Nearly every correspondent, producer, and commentator on every broadcast and cable network outlet was keenly aware of such interventions and adjusted accordingly.

Similarly, Herman & Peterson (2009) see 'structural lunacy' in the US media system as the cause for why enemies of the political-military industrial complex inevitably also become enemies of the news media. They view the 2009 media discourse on Iran as part of a "great tradition" of journalists and editors "reliably following the official party line" as they have become "spiritually 'embedded' in the military and corporate system (ibid: np).

However, as mentioned in §3.III, such examples of direct control are few and far between, and war-time situations, with the inevitable rise in nationalism and crippling problems of logistics for news organizations, are far apart from the political war-like atmosphere of Westminster and of the DC Beltway. Thus, I argue it is more helpful to think of control by ownership or by the government not as direct, heavy-handed, but as occurring in more indirect ways. The move from feudal to capitalist regimes is a move from continuous, direct control over political, judicial, cultural and economic fields by the elites, to a more indirect, autonomous, automatically-run system caused by the apparent split between political and economic controls, so that bourgeois state appears "supremely disinterested" (Eagleton 1991: 196; also Heilbroner 1985). As Foucault (1980: 146-165, also 1977) notes, control in autocracies is direct, yet also highly inefficient and difficult to exercise on large populations. After the revolutions of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries,[30] "justice," and therefore power, became "not so much to punish wrongdoers as to prevent even the possibility of wrongdoing, by immersing

---

[30] His example being, of course, the French Revolution.

people in a field of total visibility where the opinion, observation and discourse of others would restrain them from harmful acts" (Foucault 1980: 153). This is not just at a macro-social level, for Foucault this flows to other aspects of society as well. We could also say that 'the opinions, observations and discourse' of a professional's peers would influence them during and after the socialization process and help keep the cohesiveness of a professional field.

The news media also part of Althusser's (1970) concept of 'ideological state apparatuses' (ISA), differentiated from 'repressive state apparatuses' because they do not exact their control via violence. Ideology for Althusser is thus something inherently not-repressive, indirect, and social because direct and repressive control mechanisms are incompatible with democracy. An ISA "teaches 'know-how,' but in forms which ensure *subjugation to the ruling ideology* or the mastery of its 'practice'" (ibid: 89). Adding to the above observations by Foucault and the discussion in §3.IV.i, we get a hard-line view that news media and language are part of a system that helps reproduce the 'ruling ideology.'

There is, however, no agreement of just exactly how controlled journalism and journalists need to be in order to label is as a 'controlled' system. As discussed in §3.III, this can often be seen as *absolute* control. As Chomsky puts it, "the pretended objectivity and neutrality of social and political commentary, or simply news reporting, masks presuppositions and ideological principles that should be challenged" (Chomsky 1988: 392). Similarly put, "Objectivity asks us to think of the media not as an independent influence on American life, but only the transparent transmitter of already-existing information" (Friedman 1998: 326). Ryan says that critiques such as Chomsky's and Friedman's "must assume that journalists are not particularly bright if their goal is to obscure media power; otherwise why would they air and publish editorials or commentaries?" (Ryan 2001: 11).

However, Ryan is misrepresenting their position and conceptualization of ideology. It is not *journalists* who actively want to 'obscure' power through the media, it is the *normative notions of professionalism*, especially 'objectivity,' that does so. Ryan's assertion is the same as asserting that someone who buys clothing made in sweatshops does so because they actively want children in Third World countries to be exploited, instead of the fact that they might just be thrifty or poor and can only afford such clothing, or that only sweat-shop produced attire is available. This, however, does not mean that frugal shoppers are unaware of sweatshops and exploitative working conditions, nor that the solution is more education for the shoppers to become aware of it. Journalists must have some idea of the ideological formations in which they are situated, and, as I argue in §3.V, this

acknowledging of the limits of professional ideals while still being able to perform one's job is illustrative of concept of fetishistic disavowal.

Objectivity, and the apparent neutrality of news media masks and obscures the power relations that go on behind the scenes by naturalizing it, and this acts through professionalism itself and not when professionalism is abandoned (Bennett 2005: 180-181, Hackett 1984: 249). Similarly, as Jensen notes, "Journalists' claims to be outside politics and ideology simply mean that they will be trapped within conventional politics and captured by the dominant ideology" (Jensen 2008: np). This does not necessarily mean the direct censoring of content, but to be able to include any content, however, as noted above by Fowler (1991), necessarily filtered *through* our language. Thus, "the media do not screen out deviant ideas but rather portray them in a way calculated to underscore their deviance" (Shoemaker & Reese 1996: 225), in other words, media (and language) does not tell us *what* topics to think about, but *how* to think about it. This is not to say that certain topics are not censored, but that the 'what' is not determinant, it is the 'how.'[31]

For example, as Tuchman finds, one "assumption is that the holder of a legitimated status speaks for the government" while "others must demonstrate their relationship to a more amorphous entity – the public" (Tuchman 1978: 92). This causes "media newsworkers [to] identify contemporary formal conventions with professionalism – knowing how to tell a story with a minimum of supervisory guidance" and "following the dictates of their organization's style" (ibid: 105, 106). The consequence is that news media

> evenhandedly gathers comments from Republicans and Democrats as the embodiment of political processes and so affirms the legitimacy of those processes. The symbolic 'man [or woman] on the street' contributes his or her opinion as a representation of others, not as a representative of others. Representativeness is thought to rest in either legitimated institutions or amassed quantities of supporters. (ibid: 212)

Thus we can productively view control as not being direct and absolute, but as being indirect and delineated. As Hallin argues, by the mid-twentieth century, it was not only "no longer possible for a party or politician to control a news medium as an official organ," it was also "no longer necessary [...] to do so" (Hallin 1986: 70).

Bennett's indexing hypothesis (i.e. Bennett 1990; Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston 2006) shows that if there are disagreements in the political class, these are generally reproduced in the media. For Curran, the danger is that such public arguments "can give the appearance of liberal theory 'working'" in that news media

---

[31] This important distinction between the *what* and the *how* of language is picked up upon again when discussion Critical Discourse Anaylsis in §4.V.i.

"can indeed be galvanized into watchdog activity, public debate and representing the resulting 'public opinion'" (Curran 2000: 134). This has a historical basis, as Conboy points out in regard to the British press, "Clashes with the political elite of the country were routinely used by newspapers as self-publicity to demonstrate their independence from government control and their duty to provide the best information for the people" (Conboy 2004: 110). We thus need to elaborate further how such indirect control works by looking at self-censorship and journalistic professional socialization.

3.IV.iv – Self-Censorship and Professional Socialization

Self-censorship and professional socialization are important parts of this view of 'control theory,' and directly contradicts the totalitarian slant the critics give it. A good summary of this come from an exchange between Noam Chomsky and a journalist, the latter who stated that he is not controlled because he does not receive instruction from anyone on what to report. Chomsky replied:

> That's true. Nobody's telling [him] what to write […] But he wouldn't have that column unless he already *knew* what to write. That's the point. If he didn't already know it he never would have gotten to that point. Once you've internalized all the values and understand what you're supposed to say and that comes naturally to you, you don't need any pressure. You're now safe. (quoted in Rai 1995: 44)

This is certainly not a controversial view of the effects of professional norms, to say that self-censorship "occurs at [the journalists'] level on the basis of learned and understood limits of subject matter, tone, balance and the like" (Herman & Chomsky 1979: 78). As noted in §3.III.iii, this is why lists of journalist who are consistently questioning government and corporate power are quite small; those with voices of *that* critical tone, as opposed to being critical of those who government and corporate interests are critical of, will not last long in the journalistic profession.

In a similar mode, but with the opposite conclusion, Bernard Goldberg's above cited editorial exposing liberal bias in US media concludes that such a bias "comes naturally" and does not need to be directly planned while the reporters are "sit[ting] around in dark corners" because it is systemic in the socialization process of journalists (Goldberg 1996: np). All professionals learn the limits of their craft, the rules of the trade, and if they cannot follow the rules or master the tools then that means they cannot be part of the profession, that is the purpose of professionalization, whether it is journalists, doctors or teachers. Professions, in the Anglo-American tradition, were made distinct because of "their training and identity as particular, corporately-organized occupations to which specialized knowledge,

ethicality and importance in society were imputed, and for which privilege was claimed" (Freidson 1983: 25).

As Shoemaker & Resse (1996: 170) note, this happens through a process of socialization and filtering out of people unsuitable for the job:

> Because they strive to be taken seriously, reporters are vulnerable to pressure to conform. If they start saying things that diverge from the common wisdom, they are noticed. Editors may doubt their credibility and wonder if they can be trusted – it's safer to hew to the common wisdom. ()

This occurs despite the fact that "news departments maybe be organizationally buffered from the larger firm," due to the fact that the "hiring and promotion practices" are a form of "indirect" control by the ownership (ibid: 173). Thus, any "rewards for quickly learning and following policy are from co-workers and employers within the media organization – not from the audience" (ibid: 92). This is an important distinction, as we will see from the subsequent analysis of the interviews (see §6.I to §6.IV), the direct socializing influence of the co-workers is rarely, if ever, brought up, while the indirect influence of owners is played down, and the indirect influence of audiences played up.

When considering the reasons why US journalist in the 1980s would consider themselves to have more independence and less interference from editors, Hallin rejects the idea that this is because they now had "more or less complete autonomy" (1992: 15). He argues instead that journalists had simply "internalized the constraints of professionalism" and were "also far less politicized than their predecessors" (ibid). In the previous era, before the 1960's journalists "felt they had overcome all the basic contradictions that historically have troubled the practice of journalism" in "solid and stable" ways (ibid: 14). Thus, an experienced journalist, working through the 1940s and 1950s, when interviewed in the 1960s, could defend establishment journalism with a "sense of wholeness and seamlessness" and with "the absence of a sense of doubt or contradiction" (ibid).

Thus, I argue that control of journalists is not effected through autocratic mandates but, instead, through professional norms. Those such as Hackett (1984) and Bennett (2005) are right to posit professionalism as the way journalists are indirectly controlled, but, following Althusser (i.e. "the 'rules of good behaviour" inculcated by ISAs on their subjects [Althusser 1970: 89]), I argue that such that professional norms are, in fact, highly *ideological* and thus need to be treated at the same ideological level as other ideological formations, such as language. The contrast between former systems of *direct* control and the current trend for *indirect* control is highly functional in ideology, language *and* journalistic professionalism. The indirect nature of this control does not validate the Fourth Estate role of

journalism; instead it highly problematizes it and opens up an avenue for exploration which will be elaborated upon in the next two sections.

3.IV.v – Restoratives to Control

As can be seen from the discussion above, there is a great deal of well-informed research on how the process of indirect control occurs in the journalistic field. As these 'problems' are also well understood, several options have been offered to correct the subservience to power caused by professional journalistic norms. For example, while Walter Lippmann's earlier works held faith that professional norms for journalists would help them perform their democratic function and avoid being tools of censorship or propaganda, by *Liberty and the News* (Lippmann 1920) he had come to the conclusion that for-profit media would never be able to foster sufficient levels of journalistic professionalism (Crick 2009: 485).

This slant against for-profit media is strong, especially in the USA. For example, Nichols & McChesney (Nichols & McChesney 2009, McChesney & Nichols 2010) advocate returning to a system of government subsidies for news media, to allow them to hire greater staff and have more time to research stories. "If we are going to address the crisis in journalism, we have to come up with solutions that provide us with hard-hitting reporting that monitors people in power" (Nichols & McChesney 2009: np).

Another example is the online-based news organization *ProPublica*, set up with grants from various philanthropic groups, who write stories on their own, collaborate with other news organizations and 'donate' their investigative stories to news outlets who so desire. This is because "Today's investigative reporters lack resources: Time and budget constraints are curbing the ability of journalists not specifically designated 'investigative' to do this kind of reporting in addition to their regular beats" (*ProPublica* 2011: np).[32]

A similar solution, but not specific to the USA, is offered by Karppinen, what he terms as Radical Pluralism (after Mouffe [i.e., Mouffe 2000]), which is "a call for attention to institutional restructuring and macro-political concerns that also pertain to the political economy of the media" (Karppinen 2008: 39). In his formulation, we need to find "key tools" to help "creat[e] a plurality of power structures that are open to democratic contestation and that resist the hegemonic tendencies of the market," his examples being "Public service broadcasting or support for alternative media structures" (ibid).

---

32 Form propublica.org/about, accessed June 2, 2011.

Journalist Nick Davies similarly laments the lack of resources dedicated to newspaper journalism in the UK. He argues (Davies 2008) that the drop in revenue has led to a decrease in the number of journalists employed, thus inhibiting their ability to get information from a more diverse range of sources. They thus have an over-reliance on public relations handouts and re-writing reports from news agencies when writing their own stories. He thus terms this process as 'churnalism,' that journalists churn out stories without sufficient care (ibid).

For *ProPublica,* Nichols & McChesney, Davies, and (less so) for Karppinen, the lack of sufficient resources is the major constraint on journalism, not the professional norms themselves. However, as has been shown above, this does nothing to resolve the control that is exercised indirectly through journalistic professionalism. In fact, organizations such as *ProPublica*, despite its very critical and award-winning stories, replicate journalistic professional norms even without a having a for-profit basis. As their website notes, "We strive to be fair. We give people and institutions that our reporting casts in an unfavorable light an opportunity to respond and make sincere and serious efforts to provide that opportunity before we publish" (*ProPublica* 2011: np).

Furthermore, most of the editors and journalists were previously employed by for-profit companies, the high-ranking editors themselves coming from elite newspapers such as the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*. Non-profit or public service broadcasters such as BBC and ITV in the UK have not shown less deference to official sources (see Philo & Berry 2004, 2011) or lower (or higher) levels of professionalism than their for-profit counterparts, for they all have to adhere to the same set of professional norms. This *idealization* of professional norms, as I argue below in §3.V and discussed above in §3.II.ii, is better explained as part of the ideology fetishisitic disavowal, for such norms are still characterized as something to be 'striven' for than something that can actually be achieved.

3.IV.vi – Discussion: Indirect Control

I argue that there is, in fact, no 'solution' to the indirect control over journalists under the current ideological system, that of professional socialization, internalization of norms and self-censorship, for this is how professionalism works in the news media in democracies. The ideology-dependent language we all use has a clear system-maintaining character, featuring large influence by elites, and this is only amplified by the mass mediated nature of modern journalism. The origins of journalistic professionalism as a means to increase credibility, and thus profits, of turn-of-the-century newspapers in the USA and the UK has lead to those norms becoming standard across the industry, no finessing of the commercial-base will shake the hegemony of professionalism.

We should also not let the *direct* versus *indirect* nature of control distract us, especially when comparing with media in non-democracies. "The factual barriers which totalitarian democracy erects against the efficacy of qualitative dissent are weak and pleasant enough compared with the practices of a dictatorship" (Marcuse 1969: 99), yet 'weak' controls over journalists and the 'pleasantries' associated (i.e. job security, bonuses, acclaim by peers and superiors) functions only to hide the inherently ideological nature of journalistic professionalism. The differences between different modes of control must not be exaggerated.

To better understand the contrast between indirect and direct controls, four different interpretations of this argument will be put to the interviewees (see §6). In §6.I the ways in which journalist talk about the range of opinion in relation to the audience and ownership (question B3) will be examined. §6.II will then introduce the idea that the range of opinion is, instead, related to that of society and that 'marginal' opinions are excluded (question B4). For question B5, discussed in §6.III, following the indexing hypothesis of Bennett (i.e., Bennett 1990; Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston 2006), the notion that the opinions in news media reflect the opinions of elites is introduced. Lastly, in §6.IV, the ways in which the journalists respond to a probe to D3 concerning government interference in journalism will be explored. In this way the discourses of control as used by journalists themselves can be further elaborated, explicitly in relationship to the audience, ownership, society and politicians.

I find (see §6.VIII) that the *indirect* controls on journalists by 'markets,' society and the audience is highlighted by the respondents, while any *indirect* controls of ownership and government is ignored or naturalized. Ownership and elite influence is talked about as being *direct* and, thus, as 'never' happening. As I will argue, this relates strongly to the above hypothesis of indirect control.

The question remains, however, does this system effectively filter out *all* news media professionals who could *possibly* dissent? Or just those more likely to? Does it even need to? Counter to claims by Althusser that ISAs such as news media simply "ensure *subjection to the ruling ideology*" (Althusser 1970: 89), we can see self-criticism and criticism of the news industry occurring, as well as critiques of journalistic professionalism itself. Thus, the indirect control described above cannot be all that is needed to maintain the system. In the next section I will examine a potential corrective to this, that is, looking at ideology as fetishistic disavowal, allowing dissent to occur while not affecting the over-all stability of professionalism and, in fact, reinforcing it, and operating through professional ideals.

3.V – Fetishistic Disavowal as Ideology

In the preceding sections I have demonstrated how many of the perspectives on the ideology of the press hold up an ideal that the journalistic field should adhere to, identify instances when that ideal was not reached, and proscribe possible ways for that idea to be reached. This is clear with the personal and/or organizational ideological bias argument (§3.II). If a journalist or news media organization is too liberal (or conservative) and thus not representing an *ideal* of the 'general population' or an *idealized* range of opinion in society, the corrective would be to force journalists to behave and become some kind of *idealized* journalist able to remove all of their personality and install professionalism in its place.

Furthermore, in §3.IV, we saw how the economic base of the news media was often given as the reason for why it can be used as a tool of ideological control. This is, again, not a totalitarian model of control, but that of a delineated control and self-censorship. The advice is, for instance, to add more of a publicly-funded element to it, to have better procedures to enforce journalistic objectivity, or to allow journalists respond to their audience's real needs and, thus, help them fulfill their role as the Fourth Estate (see §3.IV.v). At the same time, it is rare for these *ideals* to portend to be a sort of ultimate fix to the 'problems' of journalists and the journalistic field.

These processes of idealization observed in §3.II and §3.IV.v, I contend, are indicative of the functioning of ideology, that is of the *ideal* as a motivating structure for journalists' professionalism. In this professionalism is held as the ultimate achievement for journalists to reach, yet at the same time it is a desire that can never be fulfilled. An important component of this is a knowledge and, perhaps, articulation that the ideal *cannot* be reached, but that the journalists still behave *as if* the ideal *can* be reached.

In a critique of many of the above-cited political-economic approaches to control (see §3.IV) by Schudson, he states that they lack sufficient explanatory power because they are "entirely inconsistent with what most journalists in democratic societies commonly believe they are doing" (Schudson 2005: 177). Thus, for Schudson the key to success for an ideology is its 'consistency' with what people 'believe' their actions can and will do. Below I will argue the opposite; it is this *in*consistency between beliefs and actions that is the key to ideology because such gaps *serve* as a motivating factor for journalists.

This theory will first be developed in §3.V.i by examining its roots in Jacques Lacan's concepts of the Real[33] and the Symbolic, and the corresponding *object petit*

---

33 'Real,' as a psychoanalytical concept defined in this section, must not be confused with the epistemological 'Real(ism)' as discussed in §2 and especially §2.II.

a and 'big Other.' The contribution of Peter Sloterdijk's conception of ideology as cynicism will then be introduced in §3.V.ii. §3.V.iii will then elaborate upon Zizek's definition and explore how others have applied his concept. I will conclude by providing additional evidence from the journalistic field to support my thesis of journalist professional ideals as fetishistic disavowal (§3.V.iv).

3.V.i – Lacan, the Symbolic Order and the 'big Other'

To understand the Lacanian roots of Žižek's concept of ideology as fetishistic disavowal, it is important to understand the concepts of the Real and the Symbolic, two of the three concepts, along with the Imaginary, that form the basis for Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. The Real is the "entire complex of contingent circumstances" that affect our lives, such as accidents and aptitudes and the Symbolic is part of "the rules one has to follow" in order to play a game, perform a job, or function in society (Žižek 2006: 8-9).[34]

Lacan traces the origin of the Real in 'trauma,' that is, "a *psychical* event" which "arises from the confrontation between an external stimulus and the subject's inability to understand and master these excitations," becomes an "inassimilable memory," and implies "a certain blockage or fixation in the latter process of signification" (Homer 2005: 83-84). For Lacan these events occur in childhood, before one is able to construct a Symbolic order (language) to try to makes sense of events. The Real is "something that is repressed and functions unconsciously, intruding into our symbolic reality in the form of need" (ibid: 82-83), need that originally was physical (i.e. hunger) but becomes more abstract as our Symbolic order increases in complexity with the increase in complexity of input.

This notion of need is very important, for it provides a kind of motivation for us in that it forms our desires. To better conceptualise this notion of desire, Lacan labels it as the *object petit a*: "the constant sense we have, as subjects, that something is lacking or missing from our lives [...] the void or abyss at the core of our being that we constantly try to fill out," "whatever object momentarily comes to fill that gap in our symbolic reality," *and* "the lack around which the symbolic order is structured" (ibid: 87-88). Žižek notes that there is a 'radical intersubjectivity' to desire, for "The original object of desire is not directly 'What do I want?', but 'What do *others* want from me? What do they see in me? What am I to others?'" (Žižek 1997: 9). 'Fantasy' is thus "an attempt to provide an answer to 'What does society want from me?'" (ibid) instead of some purely objective, internal desire. This is

---

[34] Also, the Imaginary is the way in which things are arbitrarily or habitually "shaped and characterized by their names" (Žižek: 2006: 8-9). However, the Imaginary will not be discussed in this section in order to focus on the more relevant Symbolic and Real.

because we learn others exist before we learn that we ourselves exist, thus the Real is founded on a necessary externalization of our identity.

The symbolic is the human attempt to make understanding of the world, that is, through language, because for Lacan the unconscious is structured like a language. Lacan believes that "once symbols have appeared, everything will be ordered, or structured, in accordance with those symbols and the laws of the symbolic, *including* the unconscious and human subjectivity" as the unconscious "is the language that speaks through us" (Homer 2005: 44). Just as the Real has the *objet petit a,* they symbolic has the 'big Other'. As "the unconscious as the discourse of the other," the big Other is "language, the symbolic order" and "can never be fully assimilated to the subject" (ibid) as it is "the locus of speech and, potentially, the locus of truth" (Lacan 1977: 129).

The 'big Other' is "the ground of [the subject's] whole existence, the point of reference that provides the ultimate horizon of meaning […] yet the only thing that really exists are these individuals and their activity," thus the big Other "exists only in so far as subjects *act as if it exists*" (Žižek 2006: 10). The big Other is inassimilable, unconscious, exists only within our symbolic order, and is integral to language and human activities and social concepts that extend from language, such as identity. It is not something that can be excised or neutralized, only something that can be analyzed.

In short, the Real is the foundational basis for our desires, and the Symbolic is our perpetually unsuccessful attempt via language to come to terms the Real by unendingly seeking those desires. It is not to *repress* or *hide* the Real, but to use the gap between the Real and the Symbolic as motivation. In terms of journalism, we can say that journalists are motivated by journalistic professionalism (the big Other) to pursue and desire journalistic ideals (the *petit object a*) despite the fact that *neither* is achievable. As Lacan (1977: 89) says:

> It is the discourse of my father, for instance, insofar as my father made mistakes which I am condemned to reproduce [because] I am obliged to pick up again the discourse he bequeathed to me, not simply because I am his son, but because one can't stop the chain of discourse, and it is precisely my duty to transmit it in its aberrant form to someone else.

Are journalists not 'condemned to reproduce' the 'mistakes' of their predecessors by reproducing their professional norms? Are they not caught in a 'chain of discourse' about the proper way to be a journalist and obliged to 'transmit' it to their juniors through socialization in the workplace? The 'radical intersubjectivity' of journalistic professionalism, that is the need of journalists to define themselves based on what

they think others (mainly society but also their owners, managers and elder journalists) want them to be, forms their ideals.

3.V.ii – Sloterdijk and Cynicism

Sloterdijk introduces the idea of ideology as cynicism, or as he terms it, "enlightened false consciousness," in that consciousness "has learnt its lessons in enlightenment, but it has not, and probably was not able to, put them into practice" (Sloterdijk 1987: 5). This is an interesting adaptation of Marxist concepts of ideology, especially for the 'postmodern' era, and, I argue, fits well into a discussion of journalistic ideology. Like many other fields, journalism's norms were given birth to during the Enlightenment, and journalists have ever since tried to 'put them into practice,' and yet, as I argued in the conclusion to the indirect control section (§3.IV.vi), truly 'enlightened' journalists must still realize the impossibility of many of their norms, otherwise it would imply that even highly educated professionals are susceptible to brainwashing.

For Sloterdijk, however, it is not the successful or unsuccessful application of enlightenment ideals that is important, it is the fact that cynics can readily acknowledge that it is actually impossible to put them into practice.

> [Cynics] know what they are doing, but they do it because, in the short run, the force of circumstances and the instinct for self-preservation are speaking the same language, and they are telling them that it has to be so. (ibid)

Sloterdijk thus offers a productive correction to the concept of 'false consciousnesses.' It is not that people need to be fooled and duped to be controlled ideologically. In fact, this would be increasingly difficult due to the increase in literacy, access to books, mass media and, now, the internet.

This is, again, consistent with what we observed in §3.VI, that journalistic norms and standards do not simply 'fool' the journalists into believing they can be objective, fair, and balanced. As inherently educated, highly literate and sceptical people, journalists objectively know the limits inherent in their job, but this does not stop them from still trying to perform it and, occasionally, 'cynically' complain about those limits.

3.V.iii – Žižek's Fetishistic Disavowal

For his concept of fetishistic disavowal as ideology, Žižek modifies the description of ideology as 'false consciousness' ('they do not know it, but they are doing it'), adding Sloterdijk's above formulation and Lacan's concepts of the Real and the Symbolic to come up with his own concept: "they know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it" (Žižek 1989: 24-25). That is to say, knowing the futility or bad side effects of one's action does not preclude one from still doing

it. In fact, this knowledge is the origin of and basis for many of our actions, and informing people of the consequences of their actions will not stop them from doing it. People's actions are not structured by a lack of knowledge about the world or by a false impression of it, but by the gap between the Real and the Symbolic, between traumatic inassimilable experiences in the past that cannot be explained by our present discourses.

In creating this concept, Žižek is helpfully combining Lacan's and Sloterdijk's ideas and extending them out of their original range. Lacan's ideas, being based in psychoanalysis, were derived to provide a better understanding of the way a person's mind and unconscious work, from specific and personal experiences in childhood, only some of which are universal (i.e. not everyone breast feeds). Yet Lacan was also notorious in the psychoanalytical field for extending psychoanalytic terms to talk about topics such as literature and theatre. Žižek follows in this in most of his work, extending this concept of fetishistic disavowal to cinema, politics and any other suitable topic. Similarly, for Sloterdijk 'enlightened false consciousness' is something used by one group, cynics. Yet, as we saw, Žižek extends this to explain larger societal formations of ideology, arguing that ideology in general operates in such a 'cynical' fashion.

This concept of fetishistic disavowal has been used successfully to explan several fields related to that of the Fourth Estate and journalism. As Bloom (2008: np) argues, fetishistic disavowal helps explain the Hobbesian basis for the 'social contract' behind democracy and capitalism. This involves a balance between allowing people to have dissenting opinions, which is necessary under democracy, as long as they still obey the overarching social order, which is needed for capitalism. A capitalist society as such needs "cynical conformists," that is, people who can be cynical towards the system while still ultimately conforming to it (ibid). As Žižek says, "we must obey [the law] not because it is just, good or even beneficial, but simply *because it is the law*" (Žižek 1989: 38). Thus, Bloom argues, we obey the system "not out of belief, or a rational acceptance of its mandates, but out of a duty and fidelity to the need for order as such" (Bloom 2008: np). This need for order is momentarily satisfied but resolution is perpetually delayed by the Symbolic and the big Other.

As mentioned in §1.II.ii, Fleming & Spicer (2003) show how fetishistic disavowal can explain employee resistance in the workplace. They note that a lot of the literature on management has been "preoccup[ied] with surfacing unobtrusive control systems" that help control workers (ibid: 158), similar to the above discussion of indirect control and journalistic professionalism (see §3.IV). They then

point to a study by du Gay & Salaman (1992) as a better model to follow. Du Gay & Salaman (1992: 630) use fetishistic disavowal to explain their findings, that

> even if people do not take enterprise seriously, even if they keep a certain cynical distance from its claims, they are still reproducing it though their involvement in the everyday practices within which enterprise is inscribed.

Another example they cite is the work of Burawoy (1979), who examined resistance practices of factory workers, that of playing games. Fleming & Spicer interpret Burawoy's conclusions as being of fetishistic disavowal, that "because workers gained a sense of freedom and relief from the intolerable boredom by participating in the games, they consented to being exploited by [the company's] managerial elite" (Fleming & Spicer 2003: 162).[35] Thus, in their own study they find that "cultural power may work through dis-identification (rather than simply through identification) and subjectivity may be radically 'external' (rather than something 'inside' us)" (ibid). This is not to say that *all* instances of resistance cannot but lead to conformity; I point towards this type of 'cynical' resistance that is dominant and integral to certain professional fields including, as I will argue, journalism.

What Žižek, Bloom, Fleming & Spicer and the others say about their subjects is, I argue, applicable to that of the journalistic field. Journalists are free to dispute and discuss the benefits and drawback of their professionalism as long as they continue to chase after its unreachable *ideals*. This will be explored more in the next section (§3.V.iv), as well as in analysis of the ways in which journalists answered three interview questions that indicate idealization in §6V, §6.VI and §6.VII.

3.V.iv – Fetishistic Disavowal and Journalistic Professional Ideology

Following Žižek, Lacan and Sloterdijk, we could thus formulate the proposition that the journalistic field itself has a 'traumatic kernel,' its Real and very intimate relationship with exploitative capitalism and the control of information, while being in the name of popular democracy and the free flow of information (see §2.II.iii, §3.IV.ii) that created journalistic professionalism. The Symbolic was thus the emergence of the 'language' of journalistic professional *ideals* such as objectivity (see §2.II.ii, §3.IV.iii) and adversarialism (see §3.III.ii). This is an unending discourse because they can never be met: *journalistic professionalism can never be achieved by journalistic ideals.* Furthermore, journalists do not need to believe that their professional norms *are* correct or that they *actually* produce their

---

35 This is strikingly similar to Horkheimer & Adorno's formulation that "Entertainment is the prolongation of work under late capitalism. It is sought by those who want to escape the mechanized labour process so that they can cope with it again" (Horkheimer & Adorno 1947: 109). While they were talking about entertainment external to work, we can see the extension of the same process internal to the workplace similar to Fleming & Spicer.

desired result, they just need to behave as if they do. If they do not *internalize* the norms then they will be delegated menial tasks or lose their position and no longer be journalists, and if they are not able to then *externalize* their criticisms of the norms they would not be able to continue to operate in such a totalitarian system.

Arguably, this cannot be said for other professions.[36] Surgeons cannot tell their patients 'I will try to save your life, but I probably won't be able to.' Depending on the case they simply state what the odds of success are or affirm that the surgery *will* succeed, despite the odds. Construction workers will attempt to do their work to the ideal standards required by their profession and the law. But then medicine does not rest on the assumption that it *should* cure everyone, and construction workers *can* reach their ideal. Yet journalism does rest on the assumption journalists *will* be professional and not only *can* reach the unreachable ideals but that the actual reaching of such ideals is the basis of their legitimacy.

As mentioned previously (§3.II.iii, §3.III.iii, §3.IV.vi), much previous research about journalistic professionalism tacitly points at fetishistic disavowal, as do many of those exposing professional norms. As Tuchman points out,

> Because of the diverse pressures to which the newsman is subject, he feels that he must be able to protect himself, to state, 'I am an objective professional.' He must be able to develop strategies which enable him to state, 'This story is objective, impersonal, detached' (Tuchman 1972: 675).

The important word here is *state*, not *believe in* or *actualize* objectivity, but state so to others, defend the journalistic field from other fields (audience, citizen, government, media watchdogs, etc). This can be seen overtly in many statements by journalists and journalism researchers. Former journalist Zachary says, "Veteran journalists know that the objectivity ethos is the 'big lie' of their profession" (Zachary 2006: np), yet they still behave as if objectivity exists and talk about it publicly. Media critic Eric Alterman notes a similar contradiction: "In private conversation, reporters and editors concede that objectivity is an ideal, an unreachable horizon, but journalists belong to a remarkably thin-skinned fraternity, and few of them will publicly admit to betraying in print even a trace of bias" (Alterman 2008: np).

This type of fetishisitc disavowal can be seen directly in many of the normative standards discussed in §3.I.ii. Ryan says "An observer who tries to be objective [...] can describe reality with *reasonable* accuracy" (Ryan 2001: 7, emphasis mine), but, of course, not total accuracy. 91% of journalists responding to

---

36 That being said, as I will argue in §7.II, it would be interesting to see in future research the extent to which such fetishisitic disavowal can explain different professional ideologies.

a survey responded that it is "very important" that "a journalist *try* to be as objective as possible" (Patterson 1998: 21, emphasis mine). Kovach and Rosentiel give examples of news media owners' and journalists' "*promise[s]* of being truthful and accurate" and "*endeavour[s]* to get at the truth" (Kovach & Rosentiel 2007: 38, emphasis mine), not of their success for being true. The idealization of a baseline for journalistic practice, as identified in §3.II by my critique of Kuypers (2002), Lichter, Rothman & Lichter (1990), and Goldberg (1996, 2003 2008), also points to this, implying the existence of an ideal journalist through calling out journalists or news organizations with inappropriately representational biases and demanding they obey unrealizable professional norms.

Journalists do not need to believe in what they are doing to do it. This is similarly noted by Bennett & Serrin, who say that journalistic professional norms "often seem to put the journalistic commitment to balance and objectivity against the values of advocacy or probity" and the result is "confusing debates that seem impossible to resolve or make much sense of" (Bennett & Serrin 2007: 334). As Eagleton says, "The 'truth' of [bourgeois] ideology […] lies in neither the revelation nor the concealment alone, but in the contradictory unity they compose" (Eagleton 1991: 209). This 'contradiction' and 'inconsistency' is not something that needs to be resolved, it is irresolvable and is, in fact, the basis of how the whole system operates.

Considering the Fourth Estate directly, we can now criticize statements by those such as Schultz (1998: 119), who concludes that

> Ideals can be the bridge between practical reality and rhetorical possibilities. The Fourth Estate ideal is valuable to journalists, editors and producers for at least two reasons – as a goal of model behaviour to be striven for, and as a legitimising rationalisation for established practices, especially when confronted by criticism.

What Schultz does not consider is that the ideals can never 'bridge' reality and rhetoric. They are unassimilable elements, the result of the traumatic meeting of, in journalism's case, progressivism dedicated to making the world a better place, and capitalism, dedicated to an unending cycle with no goal other than to increase profit, such a cycle being highly ambivalent to the world being 'better.' Objectivity may be 'striven for' or desired, but one can never reach it. It is, however, certainly a 'legitimising rationalization' in defence of the journalistic field from other fields, an alibi for journalistic practice and the endless pursuit of the ideal.

3.VI – Discussion: Both Disavowal and Indirect Control

We therefore have four possible conceptions of ideology to use when examining journalistic professionalism. Journalistic professional norms can be violated by the personal conduct of journalists or a specific news media organization by being too 'liberal' or, less often, too 'conservative' (§3.II). The solution is thus to reform the ideology of individuals (or potentially their organizations) to be more in line with perfectly sufficient professional norms of objectivity. Here the importance of ideology rests within individuals, and more systemic notions of ideology are ignored. I argued that this is a very dangerous position to take, for attacks of 'bias' at such personal levels are almost always politically motivated and distract us from the above systematic characteristics of modern mass media that have a massive influence on news media production despite of any input that individuals may have. It also shows high levels of idealization of unreachable professional norms, and the criticism of journalism as not 'representing' such vague constructs as the 'general population' or 'Middle England,' and thus can be considered as fetishistic disavowal.

Secondly we explored the notion of cultural chaos (§3.III), that any ideological control that elites may (once) have had has been removed due to the influence of new social and technological structures. This is evidenced by the actually existent adversarial relationship between journalists and government officials. I argued that evidence of this is scant at best, mostly anecdotal in nature, and too focused on non-representative war-time conflicts between news media and government. Furthermore, any chaos that does exist would have a more detrimental impact on the news media professionals and audience, making it more time-consuming to filter through the plethora of information and sources currently available. This perspective also focuses on *overt* acts and not the harder to observe systematic constraints.

The chaos paradigm is easily countered by control theories (§3.IV), that control is exercised by *indirect* means, through the ideological professional norms and the professional socialization process. Language is an important medium of this, as it naturally helps sustain unequal power relations, and this function is only increased in mass mediated communication. I argued that, while the origins of this may have been political and economically motivated, political-economic means of correction are now largely irrelevant. However, professionalism as control alone is not sufficient to explain the ideological formations within the news media.

I thus turned to ideology as fetishistic disavowal as a complement to control theories. In it journalists are not viewed as either controlled or chaotic, but operating under (potentially) more universal psychological processes. Journalists are

motivated by a desire to reach unreachable goals, that is journalistic professional norms, created by the symbolic order of the journalistic field due to the 'traumatic kernel' of the 'childhood' of journalism. Thus, journalists not only chase after unrealisable ideals, they also can (and do) admit that such an ideal is unrealizable without causing any crippling cognitive dissonance. This is, in fact, more productive and more stable than the indirect control system described above: Journalists can bring up professional norms of objectivity (§3.I.ii) and adversarialism (§3.III.ii), give examples of when it did and did not work, cite it as their motivating factor and, fully rationally, state that such an ideal is impossible to reach.

Thus, I argue that the best way to further explore these ideological concepts and see to what extent, if any, they are replicated in journalistic discourse. In §6 the responses to seven interview questions relating to the above topics. B3, B4 and B5 elicit response from the journalist concerning the range of opinion we can find in the news media will be examined. The focus of B3 is on the influence of the audience and ownership (§6.I), while B4 moves on to the influence of society (§6.II) and B5 with the influence of political and economic elites (§6.III). D3 similarly asks about government interference in the work of journalists (§6.IV). The answers to these questions better illuminates the ways in which journalists talk about the power of different fields that affect them.

This is followed by three more questions of a more disparate nature, but that all relate back to the discussion of ideology as fetishistic disavowal. A2 asked if news is a mirror of reality (§6.V), while §6.VI will look at answers to B6 which asked about a 'liberal bias' in the news media (as discussed above in §3.II.i). Lastly, question E2, as explored in §6.VII, presents the journalists with a very critical interpretation of their relationship with politicians. The answers to these questions show a tendency to *idealize* aspects of their job and field that are unreachable and, to an extent, admit that these idealizations are unreachable which, I argue, further shows the presence in journalistic professional ideology of fetishistic disavowal.

4 – Methodology

In the preceding theoretical discussions I have gathered together the dominant perspectives on the epistemology and professional ideology of the Fourth Estate by journalists, academics and philosophers. This has allowed me to not only examine how this discussion is framed in the literature, but, as my analysis has shown, opened up new paths of exploration via the theories of Baudrillard and Žižek. This section will explore the most appropriate ways in which to gather data to further investigate the role of journalism as the Fourth Estate in relation to epistemology and professional ideology, to *observe* as well as to *complement* the findings of §2 and §3 through sociological research methods.

Speaking generally, Philo (2007) argues that an analysis that attempts to examine journalistic practice needs to address three parts to have sufficient explanatory power: reception, content and production. The utility of each of these for this thesis will be examined in §4.I and §4.II, starting with audience reception (§4.I.i) and content analysis (§4.I.ii). Analysis of media production (§4.II), that is of direct interaction with and observation of news media professionals via methods such as ethnography, focus groups, surveys, and interviews, will then be reviewed. I will conclude that in-depth one-on-one interviews, due to their directness and the comparability of results, are the most appropriate method for this project, especially in furthering the findings of the ethnographic and content analysis research cited in §2 (especially §2.IV.iii) and §3 (especially §3.IV.i and §3.IV.iv). After consideration of several epistemological theories of social science research (§4.III.i and §4.III.ii), an integrated approach appropriate for my project will be determined (§4.III.iii) and elaborated upon (§4.III.iv).

In §4.IV, discussion will move on to how appropriate interview subjects were determined (§4.IV.i, §4.IV.ii) and recruited (§4.IV.iii) and the manner in which the interviews were conducted (§4.IV.iv). Lastly, the style of analysis, critical discourse analysis, will be explained (§4.V.i), focusing on systematization of the analysis (§4.V.ii) and elaboration upon the coding process (§4.V.iii).

4.I – Data Gathering: Audience and Content

4.1.i – Audience Reception Research

This approach, which tests or asks questions of an audience in response to media texts, in focus groups or with surveys, is typical of many large-scale media research projects. Audience reception studies are important to see "how we work

with language" (Alvesson 2002: 107), to "investigate the social uses of the media" (Stokes 2003: 131), and to examine the extents to which ideology flows and the ways that audiences negotiate (or not) with media content. However, for this project it is not the audience's conceptions of truth and power that are the most important to examine as the audience is not part of the Fourth Estate. This would be an interesting addition to future research (see §7.II), however, yet it might be better to start with the talk of the producers themselves.

4.1.ii – Content Analysis

Another major mode of data gathering to look at ideology in news media comes from content or textual analysis. This usually consists in identifying and collecting a delineated set of texts, in the case of news media studies most likely print/online articles or video news reports, and looking for themes or tendencies contained within (Wimmer & Dominik 2006: 150-152; Stokes 2003: 56-57; Berger 1991: 92-93). This could be the frequency of certain words or phrases, and often in a comparative mode, i.e. content from 'right-wing' and 'left-wing' newspapers. The basic assumption of this is, as Berger notes, "an investigation of messages and communication gives insights into the people who receive these messages" (Berger 1991: 92). A major strength comes from the tendency for the analysis to be systematic in that "all material within a chosen sample must be submitted to the same set of categories" without excluding any material because it does not fit the theses of the researcher (Deacon *et al* 1999: 132-133). As discussed above (see §3.IV.i), content analysis such as by Fowler (1991) has shown the way in which power structures are replicated and reinforced within the discourse of news text, an important insight into the ideology of news media.

Some argue that examining a set of media texts in isolation cannot give sufficient context to explain journalistic behaviour and ideology. A better understanding of larger social processes of journalism requires the sociological analysis of the professional ideology of journalists which needs to be put in the context of wider systems of ideology and social relations (Philo 2007: 181-184, Golding & Murdoch 1979: 207, 220). Indeed, initially two sets of texts were gathered from both UK and US news media outlets via Lexis-Nexis to complement the interviews. However, after initial analysis of the news stories proceeded it was found that this did not provide any additional depth to the discussions about professional ideology and epistemology, especially compared to the more fruitful interview data that was concurrently gathered. It was determined that the interview data alone could supply sufficient data for the present analysis as long as the scope was limited to looking at the discourses journalists use talk about these issues and not now they write about them. Content analysis will be considered for future

research (see §7.II), as it would provide an interesting way to compare, for instance, the journalists discussion of using Realist and Pragmatist methods with how they actually use them.

The strengths of the systematization of content analysis, as noted by Deacon *et al* above, will be considered in the discussion about analysis of interview data (§4.V.ii). Furthermore, content analysis findings relating to power, language, and ideology in the media discourse (i.e. from Fowler 1991) form the basis of several interview questions, specifically discussed in §6.II and §6.III.

4.II – Data Gathering: Media Production and Producers

> We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life process
> we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of
> this life-process. (Marx 1845: 8)

The major benefit of including face-to-face research with media producers is that it "offers the chance to change the direction of a whole inquiry to accommodate new insights, comments made by participants, prompts or patter that turn out to work well" (Knight 2002: 50). As the goal of the project is the examination of the discourses that underpin the Fourth Estate, a process that takes place mainly within the journalistic field, I argue that focus needs to be given to journalists themselves. This is important because, as Fairclough notes, "institutions construct their ideological and discoursal subjects" in that "they impose ideological and discoursal constraints upon them as a condition for qualifying them as subjects" (Fairclough 1995b: 39). For our case this refers to the institution of the Fourth Estate constructing journalists as such subjects, and thus the best way to examine journalists' discourses, the 'ideological reflexes and echoes' of journalists' 'life-processes' (see Marx 1845: 8), needs to be found.

Four major methods of media production analysis that deal directly with media producers will now be explored, starting with ethnographic research (§4.II.i), focus groups (§4.II.ii) and quantitative surveys (§4.II.iii), before moving on to a discussion of interviews in §4.III. This also raises two issues, 1) the effects of the presence of the researcher not relevant for content and textual analysis, dealt with throughout this section and in more detail in §4.III.i to §4.III.iii, and 2) the comparability of data, as will be discussed in §4.V (specifically §4.V.ii).

4.II.i – Ethnography of News Media Production

In the anthropologically-derived ethnographic research method, the researcher goes into the field (i.e. the newsroom) to observe news media producers as they perform their day-to-day tasks. Methods such as media ethnography and participant

observation allow the researcher to immerse themselves in another culture, see it from the perspective of the 'natives' (Wimmer & Dominick 2006: 140-141), understand media routines by actively participating in them (Stokes 2003: 120), gather data by first-hand observation and not only via the views of media professionals (Stokes 2003: 121, Domingo 2003: np), and allows us to form closer relationships with media producers in order to potentially get a "sincere insiders point of view" (Domingo 2003: np). Ethnography has been used illuminate the effects of the different spatial configurations of news rooms as well as observing verbal and non-verbal interaction between journalists (see Bechmann 2011: 18-20, Quandt 2008). Ethnography of journalism production has been done by those such as Tuchman (1972, 1978) and Schlesinger (1978), providing an important insight into the inner workings of news media organizations in the USA and UK, especially concerning the relationship between journalists' daily rituals and their mission to deliver the most factual news. This research has been so productive that Cottle (2007: 1-2) argues that their findings need to be considered when interfacing with, for example, political economic and 'postmodern' theory.

However, ethnographic research is very time-consuming and the close relationships the researcher may form with the subjects may colour the subsequent analysis (Domingo 2003: np). Also, due to its generally un-systematic nature researchers run the risk of "taking an anecdote as a rule," and the presence of the researcher in the newsroom environment may change the behaviour of the participants observed (ibid). Interviews with the participants being observed are also often used and those interviews tends to be more unstructured as the questions under consideration need to be flexible and react to the concurrent observations of the researcher. This can lead to problems of comparability of interview data, a topic that will be discussed in more detail in §4.III.iv.

Ethnographic work has the same structural limitations as interviews in regards to the trade off between quality/depth and quantity/breadth. There is a continuum between quality and quantity, ranging from higher-quality data which can be obtained from a small number of sites or a greater quantity of data from a larger number of sites at the loss of some depth. However, as discussed in §4.II, if what is needed is the discourse of the journalists, and since issues of space and non-verbal interaction in the newsroom are not in question for this project, then interviews would be a more efficient and systematic way to gather data than through, for example, multi-site ethnography. Taking the advice of Cottle (2007), the findings of previous ethnographic work, specifically the strategic rituals observed by Tuchman (1972, 1978, as discussed in §2.IV.iii) are considered highly relevant to this study

and form the basis of several interview topics and questions, specifically §5.IV through §5.VII.

4.II.ii – Focus Groups with News Media Producers

Another method would be focus groups of active professional journalists in which discussion about their roles could take place. This is "a good way of researching the responses, ideas and opinions of people in greater depth than a survey," however as it is also a "more textured" environment, and there are many "problems of reliability and validity as a consequence" (Stokes 2003: 148). In other words, it would involve a greater complexity of interaction between the different journalists and the researcher than with focus groups of naturally occurring groups or random people selected from off the street. Also, the presence of their colleagues while discussing their personal views of their profession could cause them to double think their answers in such a way that unravelling to whom their answers are addressed would be harder to do. As will be examined in §4.V, it is difficult enough to interpret one-on-one interactions let alone more complex group interactions. This would also be hard to arrange logistically due to the constantly changing work schedules and varying location of journalists.

4.II.iii – Quantitative Surveys of News Media Producers

Structured surveys of news media producers are also a standard research method, with extensive studies being done by Weaver (i.e. Weaver *et al* 2007; Weaver & Wilhoit 1986), Johnstone, Slawski & Bowman (1973, 1976), Shultz (1998), Patterson (Patterson 1998; Donsbach & Patterson 2004), and Lichter, Rothman & Lichter (1990), amongst many others. The benefits are that surveys occur in "realistic settings" and not laboratories, have reasonable costs, can be conducted in many ways (such as online or over the phone), gather a large amount of data, and are not restricted by geography (Wimmer & Cominick 2006: 179-180). These are reasons why surveys of news media professionals, as cited above, are often conducted and largely influential. Such quantitative research is valuable to show general trends and statistics over large populations, and was used in the preceding theoretical discussions with the appropriate reservations.

However, the major limitation to this is the closed nature of questions in such surveys. While a larger number of participants can be gathered and many questions asked, in order to do so the questions tend to be closed, for instance, asking a question and allowing five possible responses (i.e., 'on a scale from 1 to 5,' or 'very left wing, slightly left, center, slightly right, or very right wing'). While this makes systematic quantitative analysis much easier, it does not allow the respondents to have much influence on the framing of the answer or to respond outside of the range

selected by the researchers, and it does not allow room for the respondent to interrogate the validity of the question.[37] Many of the above-cited studies *do* include some experimental activities (such as Patterson 1998 and Lichter, Rothman & Lichter 1990) or a few open-ended questions, but the main thrust of the data is necessarily gathered through closed questions and quantifiable answers.

We thus need to consider the benefits of this method, such as having a standard interview schedule (see §4.III.iv) allowing systematic comparability, as with content analysis, (see §4.V.ii), with the flexibility afforded by having open-ended questions (see §4.IV.iv), at the cost of reducing the number of journalists that can be included in the study.

4.III – In-Depth Interviews with News Media Producers

The strengths of in-depth interviews come from their ability to directly gather the speech of the subjects. "Statements are an important element of the production and reproduction of the somewhat idealized picture of (one's own)" profession, and are, indeed, part of the "socialization process" where new workers not only internalize a "set of ideas and values" but also learn how "to talk and act in the correct way" and to express "these ideas and values with sophistication" (Alvesson 2002: 85, also Fairclough 1995b). Furthermore, Holloway & Jefferson (2000) note that in the interview setting the subject acts as a 'defended subject' in that the interview causes them protect themselves against anxieties brought about by the interviewer's questions. In other words, interviews cannot reveal the inner thoughts of the subject, or at least there is no way to explore the relationship between the statements given and the 'thoughts' of the subject. They can, however, show the 'correct' ways in which journalists as subjects of the institution of journalism (see Fairclough 1995b) present themselves to outsiders as part of the larger discourses to which they are subject.

The weakness of the interview approach lies in the *directness* of the approach itself. It is important to remember that "face-to-face inquiries force researchers to think about the role and effect of the researcher to a much greater degree" (Knight 2002: 50), especially compared to telephone or internet surveys. These implications will be explored by examining realist, positivist, (§4.III.i), romanticist and localist (§4.III.ii) views on interviewing, focusing on their conceptions of the role of the journalist and the types of knowledge that can be gained from an interview. §4.III.iii will, via Alvesson (2002), propose to move beyond those paradigms to an integrated

---

[37] For instance, when asking about a 'liberal bias' in the media, only giving a 1-5 scale will not allow for responses like 'Even if there is a liberal bias, I don't think it has any effect because I think management is more influential.'

approach and, in §4.III.iv, more fully consider the presence of the researcher into the design of the questions.

4.III.i – Realist and Positivist Modes

Realist modes of examining language view it as mirroring reality and works by "treat[ing] discourse as a relatively unambiguous pathway to actions, beliefs, or actual events" (Potter & Wetherell 1987: 34; see also §2.II.i). This is largely consistent with 'positivist' modes of inquiry, such as quantitative surveys, and generally frowns upon more 'subjective' or qualitative methods. This comes from the origins of "the 'science' of society" which "was predicated on a mimetic process embedded in the ['hard' science] empiricist project" which "thus shackled it to observables at the level of events" (Archer 1998: 189). The focus would then be on ways to minimize interference during the subject/research interaction by "imitat[ing] quantitative ideals" and thus getting the most 'scientific' responses possible (Alvesson 2002: 108).

For example, if a survey of 100 journalists, conducted in a sufficiently clinical setting shows that a majority assert they think or believe X, the realist or positivist conclusion could be that because a majority of journalists think X that will change their behaviour and thus X is important in its own right. While such modes would take consistent series of statements to "mean that events did happen as described," or that people really think as they responded, Potter & Wetherell instead believe such consistency could indicate the same "function" of language, that "two people may put their discourse together in the same way because they are doing the same thing with it" (Potter & Wetherell 1987: 34).

If we apply Potter & Wetherell's critique to Weaver *et al* (2007) we can see more fully the limits of their positivistic interpretation. For example, in their large-scale survey of US journalists they found that "there is not a monolithic political mindset" in journalism and thus attempt to alleviate concerns that "the political views of individual journalists influence their news coverage" (ibid: 241). If, instead, we examine the statement of X as an action that has a purpose and investigate why that would be so, we get a greater understanding of the functions that a journalist stating X to a researcher performs. This interpretation of Weaver *et al*'s data would show that journalists would not admit more extreme political views to a researcher as they actively want to present their profession as being more neutral, thus causing their results to find 84.6% (1971), 92.1% (1982/3), 82.7% (1992) and 84.8% (2002) of US journalists putting themselves in the 'middle' or 'a little to the left/right' of the political spectrum (ibid: 17). As mentioned above in §2.II.ii and §3.II.iii, these 'changes' may reflect less the actual political inclination

of journalists themselves than external changes that would influence how they would like to represent themselves while answering such questions.

4.III.ii – Romanticist and Localist Modes

Because of the limitations to these types of quantitative interviews, there has been a move from quantitative realist and positivist modes to more qualitative romantic and localist schools of interviewing. The romanticist method aims to have more personal interviews settings, creating 'rapport,' 'trust,' 'empathy' and/or 'sympathy' between the researcher and subject to resolve the limitations of interviews, qualities the positivists would want to overcome (Alvesson 2002: 108-109, Knight 2002: 55).

A extreme reaction to the preceding methods is that of the localist branch, which views interviews as only being able to show "how people behave in the interview situation," and thus all findings should be limited to that micro-context (Alvesson 2002: 110). This method "exclude[s] too many interesting research themes" (ibid: 117), and is inappropriate for investigating anything beyond interpersonal communication and power relations during an interview. However, the localist insight that the interview does not just change but structures the interviewee's behaviour because the interviews take place in an inherently unnatural setting is important and will be taken into consideration in the following section.

4.III.iii – Beyond Romanticism and Localism: Integration

In the end, both romanticist and localist methods tend to "camouflage the situation" inherent in an interview (Alvesson 2002: 119), ironically similar to the Realist-positivistic position they were trying to fix. I agree with Alvesson, and argue that the interview situation itself needs to be embraced and taken into account when framing the interview questions and discussion in general, and cannot be cancelled or bracketed out by any method. We need to think about "how dominant Discourses and conventions for expression can lead to script-following," and how we need to find ways to introduce "interventions in which familiar, institutionalized ways of talking about things are discouraged" (Alvesson 2002: 118). This includes giving "[d]ifferent keywords for different discourses can be used to elicit responses that could potentially be inherent to that specific discourse," as well as consciously changing positions for the questions within the same interview, "thus investigating how different kinds of assumptions or framed contexts for interviews affect the accounts produced" (ibid: 119).

This must be taken into account when considering questions to ask during the interviews. Questions must not be phrased to assume that the response will be some sort of truth, but instead to interrogate inconsistencies within the topics to be

discussed themselves. Acknowledging that the other half of the interview will consist of a young PhD researcher with a North American accent who is not a journalist[38] is also important, as the responses could be aimed at defending the journalistic field against a young scholar. The interviewer must create a suitable "'repertoire' of roles" and of "scripted responses" and probes (Berg 2007: 123). This will be done by asking questions about the same topic but in slightly different ways, using different 'keywords' and/or presenting the interviewee with arguments given from different fields (in our case journalists, politicians, scholars and philosophers). This can open up discussions about the terms used to discuss journalism, allowing comparison, as well as permitting us to view their responses as given, in part, to define journalism *to* or, perhaps, defend it *from* these different fields. In this way, the position of the interviewer and the context of the interview situation are *integrated* into the interview itself.

4.III.iv – The Form of the Interviews: Standardization and Structure

We must also attend to the more practical matters of the form of the interview itself, its standardization and structure, and, again, how that relates to the knowledge created and the role of the interviewee. To start with, Berg (2007: 93) constructs a continuum of formality for interviews, ranging from standardized to unstandardized with semistandardized in the middle.

Unstandarized (or unstructured or lightly-structured) interviews are best for when the researcher "do[es] not know in advance what all the necessary questions are" and when "not all subjects will necessarily find equal meaning in like-worded questions," that is if they "possess different vocabularies" (ibid: 94). In the case of my study this form is not appropriate, as the major topics for the questions have already been determined in §2 and §3, and the vast majority of interview subjects are journalists with at least some experience and have a common professional vocabulary to discuss their job role.

On the other end of the spectrum is standardized or structured interviews, in which "interviewers are required to ask subjects to respond to each question, exactly worded" (ibid: 92), where "the wording of each question is equally meaningful to every subject" (ibid: 93). This is appropriate to this study because of its systematic nature, allowing a more nuanced analysis to emerge from the presence of a diversity of answers to the same question (as will be discussed in §4.V.ii). This can be done in either large-scale surveys or with smaller groups which have, as noted above, a common vocabulary. However, a strict quantitative version of standardized

---

[38] We could also say that, for example, pretending that I am a journalist (or if I had actually been a journalist) would not 'fix' any problem and create the 'proper' context for the interview, it would simply provide *another* context.

interviews method, consisting of precise script that needs to be followed exactly, could be problematic for the maximization of diversity of input from the interviewees, and could allow what the researcher *assumes* is the 'common vocabulary' to box in the journalists' responses (Knight 2002: 51). This type of quantitative research would thus cause the journalists' "only mode of appearance [to be] that of the survey" administered, with no actually human referent as the object but only that of the pre-inscribed sociological model (Baudrillard 1978c: 20) as the interviewee's answers can only "reflect the researcher's theory of what matters" (Knight 2002: 51). As noted in §1.II.iii, such a strict quantitative nature would be highly incompatible with the spirit and the epistemologies of the major theoretical contributors to the project.

Combining elements from both forms are semi-standardized or semi-structured interviews. Like standardized, they feature "questions which are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order," but in which the interviewer "[is] permitted (in fact, expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions" (Berg 2007: 95). This also requires interviewees to possess a similar vocabulary to talk about their jobs, but give room to adjust the questions based on "and awareness that individuals understand the world in varying ways" (ibid). Due to the time required to administer personal one-on-one interviews between the research and the interviewee, as well as the time for transcription and qualitative, non-statistical analysis, only a limited number of subjects can be recruited by this method. This also places a greater demand on skilful analysis than generalizability.

A danger of being less-standardized is that open-ended questions "tend to get incomplete responses," necessitating the interviewer to probe for sufficient information and thus causing different interviews to evolve in different directions, thus making analysis more complicated (Knight 2002: 53, 63). These probing questions are, however, necessary for this form as they can be used to elicit more information about whatever the respondent has answered to a standardized question, for answers that are either too short (i.e. 'yes/no' or 'sometimes'), incomplete, or need elaboration or clarification (Berg 2007: 101-102; King & Horrocks 2010: 40-41, 53-55). However, it is possible to create a list of *standard probes* for the different standardized questions. This answers Knight's above concern; semi-structured interviews need room to explore different ideas, but cannot get out of control or the data created will be much more difficult to analyse.

The interview schedule will, therefore, be standard for all interviewees to ensure their answers can be more directly and systematically compared. It will also

be semi-structured, including standardized probes for some questions, and using unscripted probing very sparingly.

4.IV – Interview Subjects & Interview Schedule

This section will discuss the specific types of journalists that should be interviewed (§4.IV.i) and the types of organizations they should be from (§4.IV.ii). The specifics of the recruitment process will then be described (§4.IV.iii) before outlining the interview schedule and the interview procedure (§4.IV.iv).

4.IV.i – Job Position and Employment

Following Patterson & Donsbach's (1996: 456) definition of a journalist, the process will aim at recruiting individuals "who mak[e] decisions that affect news content directly." Thus, the type of journalists I attempted to recruit were all currently employed London and Washington DC-based political editors, correspondents, analysts or bloggers.[39] The focus on political journalist is because their job puts them at the closest with the government, thus their experience in this regard is quite valuable.[40] Lists of all[41] currently employed political-related news media professionals from the above positions were made from the news organization's websites and online databases.

Not all needed to be, at the time of the interviews, employed as political correspondents. For instance, Andrea Mitchell (AM) is currently the Chief Foreign Correspondent for NBC and a host on MSNBC, but was previously NBC's White House Correspondent for the Reagan Administration, and Michael White (MW) is now a Westminster-based assistant editor for the *Guardian*, having previously been their Political Editor and Washington DC Correspondent. The only one not currently employed by a news media organization was Bill Schneider, formerly a political analyst and producer for CNN, who had retired and at the time of the interview was a fellow at an NGO.[42]

---

[39] Political commentators and opinion-writers were not included, only those whose primary job involved 'straight' news.

[40] Sports or entertainment reporters certainly do have opinions about the truth and power, yet they are not considered a part of the Fourth Estate as much as political and investigative journalists are.

[41] 'All' as in as many as I could gather by the search, and without arbitrarily removing any names.

[42] He was contacted because his name was still listed as a political analyst on CNN.com despite his retirement, and it did not seem prudent to turn down an offer to be interviewed from an experienced political analyst simply because of this fact.

4.IV.ii – News Organizations

As stated, the focus of this thesis will be more on interpretation of the interviews than having a large sample, however attention still needs to be paid to which types of journalists will be recruited so that a wide range of interview subjects can be recruited. This will follows Charmaz's guideline of "sampling aimed toward theory construction" and "not for population representativeness" (Charmaz 2006: 506). The aim will not be to have an even distribution of journalists, as this scale of interview projects cannot enlist sufficient subjects to be statistically representative. Instead, the focus will be to get a wide range of interview subjects, thus I will start by examining three major ways in which we categorize the institutions in which news media professionals work: political slant, medium and profit motive.

News organizations are generally defined as being either centrist or right/left-wing, the distinctions of which will be reluctantly followed. This is not to imply that these differences actually exist or matter, it is, instead, to interrogate if and to what extent these purported differences have an effect. Yet, this is problematic because journalists can easily move from one organization to another or work for multiple ones at the same time.[43] Yet, having a diversity of interviewees from a wide range of political slants can at least give a broader, if not 'representative,' range of input. The second was by the almost antiquated category of medium, either print or broadcast/cable, while keeping in mind that all the institutions covered also have linked online versions that the print/broadcast journalists contribute to. As for profit motive, the vast majority of mainstream news organizations are profit-making enterprises, excluding only the license-fee supported BBC in the UK and donation-supported PBS in the USA. Furthermore, since the media institutions in the USA and UK do not always have exact equivalents, direct comparisons cannot always be made.[44]

I thus initially decided to try to contact political journalists from 'liberal' broadcaster MSNBC, 'conservative' broadcaster Fox News, and 'neutral' newspapers *Washington Post* and *New York Times* in the USA, and license-fee-supported broadcaster BBC News, for-profit broadcaster Sky News, 'liberal' newspaper *Guardian* and 'conservative' newspaper *Daily Telegraph* in the UK.

---

[43] It is difficult to have someone who, for example, has worked at a 'centrist' organization for 3 years 'represent' that organization when they worked at a 'left-wing' one for 20 years before that.

[44] For instance, PBS and BBC are both public service broadcasters (PSB), but the scale of the BBC news operations dwarfs that of the decentralized PBS, and their source of funding is widely different. Also, all broadcasters in the UK, unlike the USA, have a major public-service remit, thus even Sky News, owned by for-profit News Corp., can be considered a PSB.

However, as will be shown below, the realities of the research situation can never fully meet the ideals set forth here.

4.IV.iii – Recruitment Process

Ethical approval was achieved on April 13, 2010 from the AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee of the University of Leeds. A standard email explaining the nature of my research project, including a link to my university profile (see Appendix II), what their participation would require and the ethical aspects involved, and follow-up email were used for all potential interview subjects. [45] This was edited slightly to update the time, my location and my travel schedule, and, in the case of Steve Scully, for the context of the recruitment (but still with the three key elements mentioned above). These emails can be found in Appendix I.[46]

British participants were recruited first, starting in late June, 2010. Positive responses were received from journalists at BBC News, Sky News and the *Guardian*, however no positive responses were received from the *Daily Telegraph*. The search was expanded for other 'right-wing' newspapers, the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, however only one[47] from those organizations were interested in assisting me. A similar pattern was encountered when journalists in the USA were contacted, starting in July, 2010. *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and MSNBC/NBC News journalists responded quickly, however a second broadcast news media organization could not be found. Fox News, CNN and the Washington DC-based PBS show *NewsHour*, required any interview requests, be it academic or otherwise, to go through their Press Relations Offices. The respective officials were contacted, but eventually all informed me that they were not able to assist. The search was, again, expanded to NPR journalists, which again turned up fruitless. However, one former CNN Political Analyst, Bill Schneider, was able to be reached via his university email address, and, through my main supervisor Chris Paterson, C-Span political editor Steve Scully was contacted as well.

---

[45] E-mail addresses were either gathered directly from the organizations website or from trial-and-error, sending the standard email to a potential interviewee as a 'test' until the correct formula for email could be found. For example, in trying to contact John Smith at the BBC I would email j.smith@bbc.co.uk, johnsmith@bbc.co.uk and other permutations until a response was received, or at least until the emails stopped bouncing back due to being undeliverable.

[46] For contact with Press Relations officers a standard and similarly worded e-mail was used. If the email and follow-up email were not responded to, a phone call was placed. However, this did not assist in the recruitment of any candidate and all the ones eventually interviewed were contacted directly and via email.

[47] One journalist from the *Times* (TIM1, who wished to be anonymous), however, did reply, but the interview was cut short after 7min because they were, apparently, called away to other business. Interesting results were gathered, even in the short time, and will still be included in the analysis.

In the end, twenty participants were recruited and interviewed. A list of the general statistics of the (non-anonymous) journalists is given in Appendix IV. For reasons of concision, the interviewees are referred to by their initials (AM for Andrea Mitchell) or, for the anonymous sources, by their news organization: BBC1 and BBC2 are from BBC News, SKY1 is from Sky News, TIM1 is from the *Times*. Due to confidentially, no other information can be given about the anonymous sources other than that they meet the standards set in §4.IV.i.

4.IV.iv – Interview Schedule Structure & Procedure

In this section I will explain the structure of the interview schedule and the procedure to give better context to the way in which the data was collected and transcribed. This is not to claim these methods made the interview situation 'neutral' and thus 'objective,' but to show how the interview schedule was given in as standard a way as possible, thus ensuring the data was collected in comparable contexts.

The interview schedule (see Appendix IV) was divided into sections, the first (A, B, C) dealing with issues of bias and objectivity, while the second (D, E) dealt with the media-government relationship. However, questions within each section did speak across the other categories and these preliminary distinctions were not necessarily kept for the analysis.[48] Not all questions were asked to all candidates, depending on the time they had available some questions were dropped. This is laid out more explicitly in Appendix V.

Of the twenty interviews conducted, four took place over the phone (three British and one American journalist.) Of the sixteen done face-to-face, ten were in a cafe or cafeteria, while the other six were in private offices. As per ethical requirement, face-to-face participants were given a participant consent form (see Appendix VI) to fill out and sign, while for phone interviews consent was achieved orally. The difference between phone and face-to-face interviews was minimal, as was the difference between interviews in offices and cafes. The vast majority of subjects were found to be fully focused on the interview, except for TIM1 who was interrupted and could not resume the interview. The length of interviews ranged from 9 minutes (TIM1) to 94 minutes (SC), with an average of around 45 minutes, only three (TIM1, BBC1, BBC2) being under 30 minutes.

In total 890 minutes (14 hours and 50 minutes) of interviews were recorded. This was transcribed by the author verbatim, producing transcripts of a total of 101,801 words. This transcription is not of strict linguistic style as needed by

---

[48] For instance, analysis of A2 alone showed was more related to notions of ideology, and when compared to A3 shed more light on epistemological concerns.

linguistic analysis. It was verbatim in the sense that all the 'um's, 'ah's, 'sort of's, and 'you know's were transcribed, as were instances where the subject paused speaking. In the excerpts cited in the following analysis sections, short pauses of under two seconds are indicated simply with ellipses '…' while longer ones are marked '[x sec pause]'. Other actions, such as laughter, are marked '[laughter]'. Stress on certain words, caused by a raise in intonation by the speaker, the elongation of the word or physical actions, such as tapping on the table or pointing, are indicated with *italics*. The only punctuation added was commas and periods, with periods only used when it is clear that they have stopped one thought or sentence and have moved on to another.

This transcription style is to give an easily readable approximation of the way they spoke to facilitate my analysis and provide accurate quotes in the analysis. The exact wording they used and any mistakes in grammar they made were kept, as was the general pace of their speech. Pieces excised from the citations in the analysis section are indicated by '[…]' and are only used in order to remove information irrelevant for its quotation or to remove overly extended periods of 'um'ing and 'ah'ing.

4.V – Approaches to Analysis

In this section I will explain how the analysis of the interviews was conducted. I start by viewing the results of these interviews as both texts (i.e. the actual words spoken by them and transcribed by me) and as discourse (i.e. the underlying ideologically-loaded content of their answers). I thus adapted existing textual and (critical) discourse analytic methods to come up with my own concept, that of 'discursive strategies' (§4.V.i). Special attention will also be paid to the concept of systematization (§4.V.ii), and finally to the procedure for coding the interview responses (§4.V.iii).

4.V.i – Critical Discourse Analysis

A major method for interrogating the meaning carried in texts, largely of the Antirealist tradition (see §2.IV) is that of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This originates from discourse analysis as developed by the linguist Voloshinov, in which "A discursive formation can be seen as a set of rules which determine what can and must be said from a certain position within social life" (Eagleton 1991: 195). As Voloshinov (1929: np) puts it,

> Every sign […] is a construct between socially organised persons in the process of their interaction. Therefore, the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organisation of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction.

This goes against the isolationist synchronic approach to linguistics by de Saussure and his school, instead urging that the larger social formations surrounding and conditioning discourse to be of utmost importance.

The analysis of discourse, as understood by Foucault, "does not reveal the universality of a meaning, but brings to light the action of imposed rarity, with a fundamental power of affirmation [...] certainly not any continuous outpouring of meaning" (Foucault 1972: 234). The work of his followers, Fairclough (i.e., 1995a, 1995b) and van Dijk (i.e., 1988), are prime examples of the application of this, in which they quantitatively analyse a text or set of texts in order to reveal *how* ideology is implicitly contained within the language of the text and less so about the text's explicit 'meaning.' CDA examines texts by focusing on "ideologically potent categories and classifications" as well as "alternative or competing categories which are absent" (Fairclough 1995a: 24). It "aims to describe the conditions of meaning in a text, not any particular meaning(s); it is concerned with how a text means, not what it means" (Coward & Ellis 1977: 41).

CDA, being Antirealist in nature, is in opposition to positivistic or Realist "[c]onventional conceptions of social reality [which] privileges the idea that language *represents* reality" (as discussed above in §4.III.i), and thus tends to believe that we should focus on examining "what language use actually accomplishes," why a certain word is invoked and what it achieves, not whether or not it truly represents something in 'reality' (Alvesson 2002: 67).

> Discourse analysis can show [ideological] processes at work in the realm of natural language by pointing to attempts to close meaning down, to fix it in relation to a given position, to make certain conventions self-evidently correct, to do creative repair work when something becomes problematic, and to make the subject positions of discourse transparently obvious, without any viable alternatives. Discourse analysis is at its best when it turns these ideological strategies inside out. (Deacon *et al* 1999: 154)

CDA can be related to analyses as done by Baudrillard. For example, he argues 'real life' news events, such as "hold-ups, hijacks and the like" have become "simulation hold-ups, in the sense that they are inscribed in advance in the decoding and orchestration rituals of the media" and in which "they function as a set of signs dedicated exclusively to their recurrence as signs, and no longer to their 'real' goal at all" (Baudrillard 1978a: 42). In other words, we cannot judge a report of a 'hijacking' or a 'terrorist' attack as being accurate or not by the usage of that terminology. Instead, we need to look at *how* a sign like 'hijack' or 'terrorism' is used, whether or not it represents some political-economic interests or 'common sense,' culturally relative, self-reflexive stereotypes that work to evoke basic emotions more than to accurately describe a situation.

This is, of course, not to "assume […] that ideas can float free" or that "discourse can be elevated to the principal subject of study" because it is *all* that exists (Miller & Dinan 2008: 173), but that illuminating further the ways that journalists talk about certain topics, their discourse, can be seen as part of the larger discourse in which their individual discourses operate. Discourse is not all, but when dealing with a sociological examination of speech acts of humans, it is all that we can observe.

In summary, we must focus on viewing the responses of the journalists as statements made from 'a certain position within social life' that try to 'accomplish' something, to 'turn inside out' the journalists attempts to 'close meaning down' and 'fit its position.' In other words, my CDA needs to focus more on the *how* and the *why* than the *what* of the journalists' discourse, their discursive strategies.

4.V.ii – Systematization vs. Objectivity

The interview answers were analysed in a 'systematic' way, that is, all answers were examined and included in the analysis. This is not to give a way for the analysis to be replicated, but in order to ensure that certain data was not excluded because it did not fit the conclusions that I wanted to reach.

A central discussion in the social sciences is just how 'scientific' they can and should be. Gouldner (1970: 249) describes the notion of 'transpersonal reliability,' in which

> objectivity simply means that a sociologist has described his procedures with such explicitness that others employing them on the same problem will come to the same conclusions[...] this is an *operational* definition of objectivity which presumably tells us what we must *do* in order to justify an assertion that some particular finding is objective. It does not, however, tell us very much about what objectivity *means* conceptually and connotatively.

But, as Halloran (1998: 11-12) asks, if we are supposed to conduct a "*disciplined* and *systematic* study of society and its institutions," then to what extent must the knowledge created be scientific (i.e. "*verifiable*") knowledge? The pressure for social science to conform to natural science standards often leads to the reduction of complex institutions and social relationships to unnatural 'scientific' terms of analysis. A similar critique is offered by Alvesson, who believes that social science "research texts are not – and cannot be – objective and clinical reports of 'how the facts are'," and that if the "impression sought after, and created, is that competent mastery of the rules of science" this will necessarily involve the "denial of any relevance of the pre-structured understanding of the researcher," the background, biases, and even the expectations of the research (Alvesson 2002: 77-78).

I argue that the 'reliability' of the present study comes not from any such notion of 'objectivity' as described by Gouldner and critiqued by Halloran and Alvesson, but, instead, from the *systematic* analysis of the material at hand. The expectations of the research are clearly outlined, and thus should come as no surprise. This is not 'systematic' in the same way that hard science research is. As Toynbee notes, we should be "sceptical" about empiricism in social sciences, because "in the 'open systems' which constitute social reality one cannot produce closed experimental conditions" (Toynbee 2008: 267). For a chemist, an identical procedure for bringing a certain substance to the point of evaporation, for instance, is needed. This is readily controlled by the chemist for their laboratory is a closed system. If the chemist is studying soil erosion, they do not perform their experiments directly in the *open* system of a forest or desert because they cannot control enough variables to ensure consistency. Social science cannot but operate in entirely open systems, that is, in society. "There is [...] no such thing as an enclosed order in society because it is not just the investigators but the inhabitants who can engage in thought experiments and put them into practice" (Archer 1998: 190). This is certainly true for my specific subjects, most of whom are trained to conduct interviews and read multiple meanings into those people's statements.

That being said, this does not mean that 'systematization' is a futile exercise in the social sciences, in my case the analysis of interviews. As Fowler & Kress point out, "Although the structure of English has received extensive description, there is no process of step-by-step analysis which is guaranteed to reveal what constrictions characterize the text" (Fowler & Kress 1979: 197). Also, as Davidson says, "there is no chance that someone can take up a vantage point for comparing conceptual schemes by temporarily shedding his own" (Davidson 1984: 185). The 'conceptual schemes' possessed by the researcher are not limitations to be overcome and made available to any others examining my data, but the basis for the analysis itself.

In other words, even if I spelt out in great detail my mode of qualitative analysis, another researcher would not be able to replicate the results. In fact, I would hope that another analyst would have different results, although not ones inconsistent with mine. The description of the mode of analysis is, thus, not to allow others to replicate it the same way a chemist would want others to replicate their experiment, but to fully inform those reading the proceeding analysis how it was conducted.

4.V.iii – Coding Process

During the coding process, the categories for analysis were grounded in the responses the journalists gave and not any categories I previously had in mind. In order to meet the standards for systematization afforded by semi-structured

interviews, the set of interview questions themselves are sufficiently structuring but not overly constraining.

Indeed, the main critique of strict quantitative methods by poststructuralists lie in their different conceptions of what society is and how the social can be accessed, subdivided and quantified. As Baudrillard points out, due to the development of mass media and capitalist political-economic systems, our modern conception of 'the social' could be described as being derived almost entirely from social science and social science methods itself. The social's "only mode of appearance is that of the survey," and social science research no longer has a "referent in view, but a model" (Baudrillard 1978c: 20). In other words, the tendency is that the categories used themselves have become the objective of the research and not any actually existing social reality. For example, Fairclough argues that because discourses are "constructions or significations of some domain of social practice from a particular perspective" we should thus "identify discourses with names which specify both domain and perspective," such as "Marxist" versus "liberal political discourse" (Fairclough 1995a: 94). One issue with this perspective is the in identifying and specifying discourses as being liberal, conservative, progressive, etc, in that the identification or specification of such discourses is itself a discourse, that of the researcher.

In a similar vein to Baudrillard, and in reference to Fairclough's position, Philo advises avoidance of such quantitative "*a priori* categories" (such as 'statements for' and 'statements against') lest they become "boxes into which language is fitted" (Philo 2007: 189). Instead, "[w]e should try to account for the range of subtlety of language, as it is used to convey a complex variety of meanings" (Philo & Berry 2004: 98), which tends to involves substantial quotation and more general qualitative summaries. Charmaz also advises to "creat[e] qualitative codes by defining what [one] sees in the data" in that "the codes are emergent" and "develop as the researcher studies [their] data" (Charmaz 2006: 186-187, after Glaser & Strauss 1967). The categories inherent in the text must be brought out, not boxed in, an examined in their context by qualitative description.

Furthermore, Wood & Kroger advise that CDA "requires the ability to examine discourse creatively in all of its multifarious aspects and an open-mindedness to entertain multiple possibilities" (Wood & Kroger 2000: 91). Thus, the analysis will entail "a detailed and repeated reading of the discourse against the background of the discourse-analytic perspective" that goes "up and down across different levels and back and forth from smaller to larger units" (ibid: 95, 96).

Thus, the transcripts of the journalists' answers were read in many different ways, often in alphabetical order (from AB to WP) or reversed (WP to AB),

sometimes comparing answers to two questions to get the contrast (i.e. comparing A2 to A3). I would most often read through and compare the answers to a single question, highlighting and commonalities I saw in their answers, such as if a common example was used (Rupert Murdoch, the 'Ground Zero Mosque,' Watergate) or similar phrases ('never,' 'ideally'), of if different adjectives were used for the same subjects (i.e. in talking about the audience, politicians or other journalists), or the same adjectives for different subjects. This was done until some general trends and patterns in the discursive strategies emerged. Consequently, several more passes through the transcript would take place to see if these identified discursive strategies were replicated in perhaps a slightly different way in other answers. Often the analysis would proceed slowly and connections would be hard to make, in which case I would set aside that transcript and move on to another question, coming back to it later when I could have some more perspective and a fresh mind.

When sufficient and clear trends in discursive strategies were identified, they were then pulled out of the transcript and organized into lists based upon the discursive strategy. These were then examined again to see if the distinctions held up or if some quotes could be assigned to multiple discursive strategies (i.e. for B3 in that both AS and BBC1 identified audience and ownership influence). These would be slightly re-organized until more cohesive discursive strategies were identified.

Finally, the quotes from the respective discursive strategies would be grouped together and written into a formal narrative analysis. This more fully explicates why these different quotes from different people perform the same function (i.e. asserting that analysing the story a journalist writes is important in determining liberal bias) and far less so the direct agreement/disagreement with the question posed or the 'conclusion' to their claim (i.e. that if you look at a journalist's story you will find that they, in fact, have no liberal bias). I examined the categories they used to answer the questions, their discursive strategies, which came from the categories they used themselves.

4.V.iv – Summary: Analysis Process

The analysis will take place as a critical discourse analysis of the journalists' responses. As the interview is an unnatural setting, care needs to be given in conceptualizing where exactly the interviewee's comments are directed. The assumption will be that the journalist is, in part, representing the journalistic field in response to other fields, that of the researcher (i.e. the academic field) and the other fields repressed in the questions, such as others in the journalistic field, the political field and the philosophical field.

Furthermore, the interview questions were analysed in a systematic way, that is, all answers were examined and included in the analysis. This is not to give a way for the analysis to be replicated, but in order to ensure that certain data was not excluded because it did not fit the conclusions that I wanted to reach. This is reflected in the coding process in that the categories for analysis need to be grounded in and pulled out of the responses the journalists gave and not any categories I previously had in mind. Certainly, the interview questions themselves are constraining in that there is a set of questions, the interviews were not unstructured; this is necessary, however, in order to meet the standards for systematization described above.

The way in which the journalists respond to questions put by different fields will be termed 'discursive strategies,' meaning the strategies that one field, in this case the journalistic field, use to answer questions from other fields. These discursive strategies do not, and cannot, indicate the 'real' thoughts or 'beliefs' of the interview subjects, but instead the conceptual categories they use to answer the questions. Thus, it is not so much the explicit direct content of their questions as the categories implicit in their discourse. Furthermore, the analysis will at no point posit that journalists 'believe' or 'think' what they answer, as beliefs and thoughts are immaterial and thus impossible objects of analysis. Instead, the interpretation will be about how they *talk* about the topics, an actually observable action, as a reflection of how the institute of the Fourth Estate has constructed journalists as subjects.

5 – INTERVIEW ANALYSIS: EPISTEMOLOGY

In this chapter, the preceding theoretical discussion about epistemology in the news media (§2) will be further explored by examination of the empirical interview data gathered. The questions asked reflect the major issues raised in that section: the ability of the Antirealist news medium to reflect Reality; the antagonisms between Realism and Pragmatism; the necessity for journalists to move between Realist and Pragmatist epistemologies, and; the shortcomings of the Antirealist epistemology to effectively confront Realism and Pragmatism.

§5.I will compare the answers given to A2 and A3, that is, comparing the journalists' discussion of the Realist statement (A2), that news as a 'mirror' of reality (as discussed in §2.II.i and §2.II.ii), with an Antirealist one (A3), that news media is inherently reported from a perspective due to its situation politically, economically and socially (as discussed in §2.IV.iii). §5.II concerns answers to A4, examining the way they talk about the Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas (as discussed in §2.III.i and §2.III.ii), and will compare that with answers to A5, asking if audience's reception of news media is similarly Pragmatic. §5.III will analyse their answers to B1 & B2, asking them to give examples of biased and unbiased news stories. This serves to better explore the ways in which they talk about bias, as well how they position themselves as Realists for 'unbiased' stories in opposition to Antirealist 'bias.'

§5.IV will introduce Tuchman's (1972) 'strategic rituals,' Realist and Pragmatic methods journalists which she argues reflect more Antirealist practical concerns than their purported epistemologies (as discussed in §2.IV.iii and §2.IV.iv). C1, C2 and C3 ask the journalists to give 'good' and 'bad' aspects for three of Tuchman's rituals. §5.V will examine the ways in which they talk about the Realist practice of using direct quotations (C1). §5.VI concerns the ways in which journalists talk about using the 'inverted pyramid' structure to write stories (C2). Lastly, §5.VII will deal with their discussion of the Pragmatic method of using 'he said, she said,' that is, giving perspectives from 'both' sides of a story or debate. §5.VIII then provides an analysis of their reaction to a highly Antirealist quote by journalist Izzy Stone: 'all governments are run by liars and nothing they say should be believed' (E4). §5.IX will then bring together the preceding theoretical discussion about epistemology (§2) with the completed analysis of interviews.

5.I – A2 vs. A3: Subjectivity of Reality

In this section the discursive strategies used to respond to A2 and A3 by all respondents will be compared. This is useful because comparison of how they react to different perspectives on what news 'reflects' and to what extent it reflects 'reality' can give a deeper understanding of how the journalists consider such positions. A2 asked "Some journalists say that news is simply a mirror of reality. Do you think that is accurate?" This was followed by A3, which asked "A scholarly perspective is, [quote] 'because the institutions of news reporting and presentation are socially, economically and politically situated, all news is always reported from some particular angle.' Do you agree?" The quote comes from Fowler (1991: 10).

First we will look at two sets of people who expressed Antirealist views in response to A2: four who say they believe in the general subjectivity of reality (§5.I.i), and six who say news media and journalists cannot reflect reality (§5.I.ii). This will concurrently be compared to their answers to A3. The remaining two discursive strategies of a more ambiguous epistemology will then be explored (§5.1.iii, §5.I.iv).

5.I.i –Reality as Relative/Subjective

KD, who said, "I don't think there's any sort of absolute reality" for A2, clarified in A3 that any "subjectivity" comes from journalist's "knowledge" and "expertise." JL, who replied for A2 that a mirror is "impossible," that "everyone sees everything through their own lens," when asked A3 replied "I think that's pretty much what I just said." This is slightly incongruous, considering her answer to A2 was founded only on the inherent subjectivity of people's personal opinions and not the political/economic/social situation of media organizations. TIM1 said they do not believe "there is a completely objective, um, set of events" to be mirrored for A2, and agrees with A3 because of the physical location that reporters "stand," "who you are," "who you're reporting for" and "what the context is." WP for A3 concluded that "the economics of the news business decide *what* you report… maybe, some of the time," complementing his A2 answer, that "there is no, sort of, objective reality."

This shows consistency between both of their responses. If they do not believe in an objective reality, then any 'angles' in the media must caused by A3's social, economic and political influences.

5.I.ii – News as an Antirealist Medium

The next six said that news media or journalists themselves are inherently incapable of reflecting reality. For A2, AK said "it isn't just a mirror" because

"there's obviously a degree of subjectivity that goes into any reporter's coverage" for A2, and to A3 agreed for "the reasons articulated in the sentence," adding that "by definition" journalists cannot "get all points of view" and the ideal of objectivity can never "fully succee[d]." For A2, in the end AS agreed that "nature" of news media is to report on "what people find interesting" and thus is not a mirror, and for A3 extends that further to admit that "all discourse," including news media, has an "ideological bent."[49] MW, news is "an artificial construct" for A2, agrees with A3 because "that's in the nature of both individuals and institutions," considering access to information and presentation in relation to news organization and audience.

AB's answer for A2, "Human beings are imperfect vessels for... relaying the news" and that "I was taught and told that there's no such thing as complete objectivity," is reflected in his answers to A3, that there are subjective definitions of many topics, his example being of "good" and "bad guys." MR said "you cannot represent reality through journalism" in response to A2, and agreed with A3 because of regulatory "laws" and journalists' anticipation of "viewers" expectations, which she defines as "economic and social" decisions, but not "political" ones. SKY1 said they agree with A3 more than A2, to which they responded that "it's impossible not to [mediate]" in journalism. They then said "the majority of the public would agree" with A3, while "the majority of right-thinking journalists would, ah, when speaking to a PhD student would probably scoff at it, but in their heart of hearts know that it is at least 20% true."

As seen from the responses above, SKY1's prediction isn't exactly correct, ten respondents actually said they believe the political, economic and social situation of news media does cause it to be reported from a particular angle, either because news media, by its 'nature' or by 'definition,' is incapable of being a mirror, or that there is no objective reality out there to be reflected back.

5.I.iii – Mirror-Plus

This section will look at five journalists who used the 'Mirror Plus' discursive strategy, that is, generally agreeing that news is a mirror of reality but adding other aspects, for A2. Americans AM and BS rejected the effects of the political situation of news media structures, but support the other two. AM, mirror-plus "context" for A2, in response to A3 said there is no "established political angle" due to the "collaborative" nature and the plurality of "perspectives" in broadcast news production. She did agree with media as being "socially and economically situated" but part of "*basically* an establishmentarian structure." BS, mirror-plus analysis and

---

[49] Both times AS references his knowledge and study of "sociology" and "communications theory" and "literature."

explanation for A2, said in response to A3 that any "angle" in the news media comes from the reporters drive to get a "good story" that will "gain an audience" (i.e. the economic situation) while keeping in mind the similar "values and inclinations" of Americans (i.e. the social situation), not political influences. BBC1, mirror-plus "analysis" for A2, disagreed with A3 because of the understanding in UK audiences of the presence of a "point of view" for print media and the lack thereof for broadcast media, and the difference between "political" news, which is open to interpretation, and news about "a car accident" which is not.[50] JJ, who agreed with A2 that more "complex" stories are a mirror-plus "interpretation and analysis, um, commentary, explanation," clearly and strongly agreed with A3, saying it is due to the media organization, the "viewers" as well as "legal framework" and "regulatory constraints."

In a more complex and meandering yet thoughtful answer, DH concluded that "in some very *academic,* theoretical sense" A3 is "probably true and accurate," but added that "it is possible to be professionally objective in the news you cover," meaning the theory sounds good, but does not work in practice. This is slightly contradictory to his response to A2, that if news media is a mirror of reality it should also have "some good spotlights" and "a magnifying effect." If the news media outlets all have different spotlights, then it does not follow that they will all cast them on the same aspects of a story as a result of some systematized professional objectivity, thus showing a contradiction between his Pragmatist and Realist perspectives.

These reactions to A3 in comparison with A2 are harder to generalize than the last section. However, it can be seen that (other than BBC1) they agree with most of A3; AM and BS rejecting the 'political' part, JJ agreeing with all, DH agreeing in theory but not practice, BBC1's reaction to the word angle causing them to answer instead by explaining the basic structure of UK news media. Their Realist and Pragmatic perspectives do not seem to get in the way of the socio-economic (and to a lesser extent political) situatedness of news media.

5.I.iv – Disagree With or Question A2

The remaining three respondents are outliers, their responses interesting, but unable to fit in the above categories. CT, who argued that "news is a reflection of culture" for A2, agreed with A3, but interpreted its "cultural" and "economic"

---

50 None of this is related to the political/economic/social aspects introduced in the middle of the question, so it appears that their answer is more in response to the word 'angle' at the end of the question. This can be sussed out by the use of the phrase "point of view" six times in their answer and avoidance of the word 'angle.'

influences to mean "geographic" bias[51] which is a bigger problem than 'political bias,' which for him becomes "ideological bias." This also puts CT in line with fellow Americans AM and BS in regards to focusing on exploring cultural and economic situation of the media and minimising the politics.

SS, who said for A2 that "news is a mirror of *society*" and "hope[s]" the mainstream media can reflect "the true facts" of "what happened," disagreed with A3 because of the plurality of news media organizations, the presence of both "partisan programs" and "straightforward reporting on *all* the news networks." This is a very interesting answer, for if his hope that news media can reflect what happened truthfully is so strong, then he wouldn't necessarily need plurality of media, again showing an antagonism between Pragmatism and Realism.

SC said that A3 is good as "scholarly argument[s]" which he once "engaged in," but he is not sure "as a working journalist I'd be comfortable with that," citing BBC's critical reporting on itself to critique A3. He added that those at the BBC would say they are neutral, but at the same time organizations with such "economic and social influence" do get "privileged access" to "a greater range of sources."

5.I.v – Discussion of A2 vs. A3

While scholars such as Ryan state that "Objective journalists believe a real world exists and that one can produce a reasonably accurate description of the world" (Ryan 2001: 5), this is clearly seen by my results to be untrue, or that around half of the journalists simply are not 'objective,' at least not by Ryan's standards.

Those ten who express an Antirealist view of either reality of the ability of news media and journalists to 'reflect' reality support the notion of political, economic and social influences causing bias in the news media. Those of a more Realist or Pragmatic nature are more accepting of economic and social influences, less so for political (especially the Americans from MSNBC and BS). The others (SS, SC) do not have such strong positions, SS being more Pragmatic in celebration of the plurality of media, and SC slightly uncomfortable with the privileges that his 'neutral' BBC has. We thus have a divide between Realists and Antirealists for A2, which is partially reflected in their more accepting answers to the Antirealist, yet highly reasonable, position of A3.

---

[51] This is his favourite way to show bias in the media, used again in B6 when talking about liberal bias.

5.II – A4 vs. A5: Marketplace of Ideas and News Consumption

For question A4 I asked the respondents if they agreed with a statement by Baggini (2002: 21, 46), asking them the following:

> Here's a statement from a philosopher: News media is the site of <quote> "competing truth claims" where, in the end, "the best we can do [...] is to list the various competing 'truths' which are believed by the opposing sides" and "reason carefully about what the evidence suggests and reach our conclusions accordingly, always mindful that we could be wrong." Do you agree with that?

I picked this quote not because Baggini is a well known 'philosopher,'[52] but because I thought it was a good summary of the Marketplace of Ideas concept as discussed in §2.III.i and §2.III.ii. This question had a standard probe (A5) asking, "Do you think that is how people read or watch the news?"[53]

This section will look at the answers given to A4, that is, how they discuss Baggini's re-statement of the Marketplace of Ideas concept. They do so using four discursive methods, that of supporting the Marketplace sometimes (§5.II.i), constructing truth as being contingent (§5.II.ii), advocating a Pragmatic method for reading the news (§5.II.iii), and talking about partisanship (§5.II.iv). This will then be followed by an examination their A5 answers, talking more about the Antirealism of the audience (§5.II.vii and §5.II.viii) than their Pragmatism (§5.II.ix).

5.II.i – Sometimes Marketplace of Ideas

Nine respondents to A4 indicated that the Marketplace of Ideas approach is appropriate sometimes, but not all the time. Seven of those related this some way to journalists' own Realist activities to find the "objective truth" (AK), "the actual truth" (BBC2), "the truth" (JJ), "what really is the truth" (JL), "the ground truth" (KD), or that the "large... bulk of what you read in, in the news account is indisputable" due to journalists often "simply bearing witness" (DH).

Others are more Pragmatic, saying the "media's attempt to find the truth for our self [sic]" (AK) should go a long with times when there, as KD said, "truly competing truths." BS's account related more to the process of writing news itself, deciding the outcomes could be either Realist or Pragmatic.[54]

---

[52] Indeed I did not mention his name and the one person who asked (CT) did not know who he was and only asked to know if he was still alive.

[53] This was occasionally often clarified by restating part of A4 to make sure the respondent connected A5's 'that' with A4 and not their own reply to A4.

[54] "There are always competing depictions of reality […] so you try to be reasonable and fair and balanced […] to get a diversity of sources, ahhh, and maybe a truth will come out of it or maybe you'll just present all the conflicting interpretations." (BS)

JJ is more critical, saying that "balancing arguments does not always bring you necessarily, in TV news, closer to the truth," and gives an example of coverage of MMR vaccine[55] being un-duly balanced in that opinions about the safely of the vaccine from a minority in the medical community were presented as being as legitimate as the mainstream acceptance of it. He said that:

> I think it is helpful for me not to offer opinion, but to [...] make judgements [...] I think sometimes saying, 'Labour says this, the Coalition says that,' and then saying to people, 'Alright, now go make your mind up,' is not a very sophisticated way of doing it. Eh, I would not say to a viewer, 'I think that Labour's argument is stronger,' though I would feel perfectly [...] entitled to, if there was a factual inaccuracy or theoretical flaw in it, and, to say, 'One needs to look at this and question whether or not it stacks up,' or whatever, and then people get a more sophisticated view of it.

For JJ the difference between 'opinion' and 'judgement' is very clear, the latter being necessary for 'sophisticated' journalism. When Pragmatic means are insufficient, he apparently resorts to his judgement which is cast as being more Realist than Antirealist.

AK's response more directly shows the contradiction between Realism and the Pragmatist Marketplace of Ideas. She said that

> there are things that are true, and our job is to report those things as facts, and so I don't think all readers should assume [...] they have to then go on a hunt for reality once they've read us, although they should.

This inclusion of 'although they should' at the end is very telling, for how can readers both be obliged to 'go on a hunt for reality' and to trust that journalists have only included the 'things that are true' at the same time? Of course, without adding 'although they should' it would appear that AK is saying that readers should trust what journalists say unequivocally, which it a highly untenable position. Also, if readers should go and search out the truth on their own, then it doesn't really matter how good a job journalists do filtering out lies from the truth.

The other two did not relate it directly to truth. AM simply said that some news can be so, but that is not for her show, perhaps indicating that she views her show as being more 'factual' or less about debate. By contrast, BBC1 said that, due to diversity of news sources it is hard to generalize: "some [stories] you may feel are a list of the disagreements, some of them you might feel are a conclusion on those disagreements, ah, and some of them may be an argument for either side of the story," similar to BS's answer above.

---

55 A vaccine against measles, mumps & rubella commonly given to all children.

5.II.ii – Truth as Contingent

The second discursive strategy, used by five journalists, is the Pragmatic assertion (see §2.III.iii) that there will always be different accounts or interpretations and debates about what is true. *Guardian* political correspondents AS and NW both gave similar statements, NW stating that "journalism, they say, the old cliché, is the first draft of history […] there will always be debates," while AS was more direct, saying "that there's no […] final version [laughs] […] there is no… one… overarching objective… truth out there."[56]

AB was more mixed, stating that truth is relative to political partisanship, that Republicans and Democrats "express [truths] in different ways and, um, oftentimes even though they come to different conclusions neither one is factually incorrect." Due to this, he is not "sure there's an absolute truth in every issue," the 'every' indicating that there are some instances where there is an absolute truth.[57] WP's answer was that the journalist's characteristics ("What are you believing?"), their position in relation to the story ("How much can you see?"), and the type of story ("What are you seeing?") cause the way the story is written to be quite relative. He then recommended I read Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (i.e. Lippmann 1922) because "he's got a better definition."

SC started by saying that "the, you know, concept of 'truth' is very important to journalism," adding "when we say, 'We tell the truth,' what we really mean is we're, we're... we're telling the truth as we, as we *see* it [...] as part of the evidence that we've got." He then turned to the structural and practical limitations of journalism, stating that "it's very rare the news media have access to *all* of the evidence that they would want" and due to deadlines, "there's always a point at which we, we stop." But he could still "see why it would be considered a good theoretical definition of, you know, how the news media work." He is the only one to re-define 'truth' to an apparently 'journalistic' meaning of truth, as being impermanent and dependent on the news media production process itself. Lastly, MR related question to the internet, which is her ideal Marketplace of Ideas.

As noted by the title of this section, a generally Pragmatic 'truth is contingent' mode is adopted by these journalists in response to A4, with less antagonism with Realism present.

---

[56] For this answer, as in his others, I believe that AS's hesitations are because he is looking for the right phrasing, not because he is reluctant to give his answer.

[57] This is also indicated by AB's answer to C3, that "there are certain absolutes in society where we don't need to allow a counterpoint for."

5.II.iii – Read News as Journalists Do

Two respondents related A4 to be closer to the way that journalists consume media, TIM1 saying A4 is "a very good... summation of my view," while SKY created a scenario of giving advice to someone who has never consumed news before, telling them to do what journalists do "which is read as widely as you can and then form your own opinions."[58]

5.II.iv – Increasing Partisanship

CT and SS did not relate the question to Marketplace of Ideas directly. CT ties this question more in relation to what he views as the increasing partisanship of modern news media,[59] causing "tension" as some media outlets go back to the era of partisan news, which is "*my* concern, as a journalist," simply noting the move from more to less back to more partisan news. SS is pro-pluralism, stating that "based on your point of view, and based on what you think is the truth," the current structure of news media will "allow you to go to a place where you find… you're more compatible." He states that "the key is going to those competing points of view to understand what the other is saying […] in order to better make the case for your point of view," not relating it to the viewer changing their minds, finding out the truth or even finding a better solution. SS is happily Pragmatic, while CT is more concerned about the conflict of his Realism with the current Pragmatic yet politicised mediascape.

5.II.v – Discussion of A4

The varied ways in which the respondents answered A4 makes a summary quite difficult. The plurality, however, used a strategy in which they seemed to accept the Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas-type of news media along with the journalists' own Realist efforts to find the 'truth.' Only three respondents were highly sceptical of the notion of absolute truth being an end of news media. SC was close by re-defining 'truth' to what he called the 'journalistic' meaning of truth, indicating again the antagonism between Realism and Pragmatism. The other respondents answered in a great variety of ways, MR touting the internet as the Marketplace of Ideas *par excellence,* TIM1 and SKY1 advocating following how journalists consume news and, more specifically, SKY1 and MW suggesting getting input from many sources, and AB referring to truth in general being sometimes relative, sometimes absolute.

---

[58] Similarly, but not in reference to journalists, MW's answer is a brief re-summary of A4 as saying, "Read lots of newspapers."

[59] He gives history lesson about how before WWII and "until the last 3 or 4 years [...] most news organizations didn't subscribe to that [partisan news] philosophy" where "you want to prove your point of view correct..."

These answers alone are enlightening, indicating a preference to mix Pragmatist 'he said, she said'-style reporting with journalist's own Realist efforts to produce 'truth.' However, even more can be gathered from comparing the answer to A4 with their answers to A5, looking how do they discuss the audience in relation to the Marketplace of Ideas concept in contrast to how the view it in general.

5.II.vi – Responses to A5

This section will explore the ways in which people responded to Question A5, asking if the Marketplace of Ideas concept applies to audience reception of media messages. There were three different major discursive strategies used to answer the question. The first (§5.II.vii) involves stating that people consume media that adheres to their own ideology, used by eleven. In §5.II.viii, four talk about the active/passive nature of the audience, and in §5.II.ix two argue that that the audience is sceptical. A further four unique responses will be discussed at the end (§5.II.x). These will be related to the respondents' answer to A4 throughout.

I find (§5.III.xi) that the audience is generally cast as Antirealist in desire and the journalists generally cast themselves as being Realist, more so than in their other answers, especially A4, apparently in response to the audience.

5.II.vii – Audience as Reinforcing Own Ideology

The most common answer to A5 involved invoking the pre-existing prejudices, ideologies, philosophies, conceptions, tastes or values of the readers to explain their choice in which media outlets' products to consume. All of the responses that use this discursive method are not totalizing, none say that people *only* consume media that fits their own ideology, just that 'some' or 'most' do so. The point is that these nine respondents spend the majority of their time talking about such Antirealist audience members and not the ones that adhere to the Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas model.

Many state this directly. WP said often "people hear what they want to hear," MW that audiences "go to news sources which reflect their own tastes, values and prejudices and read it to confirm what they already think," KD that most "tend to gravitate toward, uh… what they see as news that supports what they already think," CT noted they have "their favourite place that they've gone […] that agrees with their own philosophy or ideology," and BBC2 said they "will believe one view or the other, won't they."

The others state it more indirectly, but eventually focus on the negative. NW's response is more political and views it as a political allegiance and trust issue.[60] SC said, due to lack of education on how to read media messages, the audience is "often not aware that [...] the newspaper or the news organization approached it from a particular angle, because they'd say, 'What they're depicting is my view of the world'." MR said that people tend to prefer one news organization, while not explicitly indicating that they do so to reinforce their own ideas. BBC1 said that there are a plurality of types of relationships, and "maybe they completely trust everything that is said in that outlet" they have consumed their whole life.

AB said some people "come to the show with their perspective and a lot of the times they, uh… will seek out things that agree with that and dismiss things… completely out of hand that they don't agree with." While he began with a seemingly strong support for critical ability, it was still only 'some' who do and 'most' who do not. AS is the only one to give a more balanced explanation, saying that that some want to "reinforce their, sort of, prejudices and their… preconceptions about the world" while others want to "challenge their preconceptions." He, however, did give the 'reinforce prejudice' argument first.

That so many journalists talk about this subject in a tone that is very sceptical about the audience's ability to rationally debate competing claims in news media is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, so much time and energy is spent in most news media outlets getting many different opinions, or at least two opinions or two sides to an issue, but if journalists do not really think most of the audience benefits from such an effort, then what is that energy balancing news reports actually doing? It is clear that this is, again, indicative of the antagonism between Realism and Pragmatism.

Secondly, such a 'some do, some don't' explanation is entirely reasonable. It would, in fact, be quite unreasonable if they said that all people all the time always think deeply about both sides and reach a rational, well-reasoned conclusion. Thus stating that only a portion do makes sense, but then why do most spend the majority of the time discussion those who do not? British journalists SKY1, MW and BBC1, along with American WP, all instantly reply with a strong 'no' (in SKY1's case, "Oh god no!"), while the others give a more meandering answers, but one that focuses on the anti-Marketplace of Ideas habits of news media audiences.

---

[60] NW gives the example that "if you're a Conservative you're probably not going to trust the *Guardian*, uh, and if you're a Labour supporter you're not going to trust the *Daily Telegraph*."

5.II.viii – Activeness of the Audience

Four journalists responded by bringing up the active or passive nature of the audience. MR said "TV's a very passive medium […] they sit there and watch and they listen [and] don't question TV that much." This is in contrast to her previous statement about how active the internet is and grows naturally from that.[61] Similarly, when asked A5, JL directly responded, "No, I think consumers are very passive… unless they're you or I, unless they're keenly interested in the art of reporting." AM said, "I wish that was the case, I suspect not. […] unfortunately when you… look at surveys, what people are inferring from what you say is not what you're saying [laughs] […] people are not paying ... really close attention." DH said "some readers and consumers of the news are doing that… I think others are much more causal about it, they want a quick sense of what's going on in the world."

JJ's answer, by contrast, was highly supportive of the active nature of the audience. He said that "I always presume that the viewer is interested or else they'll be watching something else," and advocates "presum[ing] a level of engagement" in order to "stay more interesting." While stating this more as a part of 'interest' or 'engagement,' an interested and engaged audience member is more likely to think critically about what they are watching. Also, he is only talking about his professional presumptions, not what he actually feels the audience does.

While being a different explanation from the first discursive strategy, lack of activity on part of the audience as opposed to ideological exclusivity, the end result is the same. These five talk about this subject more in terms of how active or engaged the audience is. For them the audience is generally too passive and thus cannot really participate in the Marketplace of Ideas. Only JJ would like to believe, or at least says he acts as if he believes, the audience is engaged and interested in what he has to say. Interestingly, MR was the only one to bring this up as a function of the type of media itself, for her passive (and hence Antirealist) TV audience does not fulfil the Marketplace of Ideas criteria, but the active (and hence Pragmatic) internet audience does.

5.II.ix – Consumers as Sceptical

TIM1 and AK both replied that news media audiences are 'sceptical.' TIM1 said very firmly that "people consume news with a, um, sceptical mind" and talked about how different organizations "have different… standards of accuracy" which are generally known. AK was a bit more soft, saying that people "are educated" to

---

[61] I was not actually able to directly ask A5 because MR brought up that topic on her own.

be "sceptic[al]."[62] These two responses go against what was observed above, that journalist might not be able to reasonably state that people are always critical or sceptical, however, as their two backgrounds and media organizations are quite different, it is hard to see why specifically these two replied in this way, or why TIM1 was the only strong supporter of the audience's ability to read news media critically.

5.II.x – Other: Normative & Journalistic Responsibility

SS said, "I think that the audience does do it, but not every person in the audience, and if they don't do it they should." While not giving an explanation for why or why not the audience is critical, he is the only one to actively advocate that the audience be critical. BS related it more to the Realist responsibilities of the journalist,[63] avoiding discussion of Marketplace of Ideas

5.II.xi – Discussion of A5 vs. A4

For A4 Journalists in general are very supportive of the Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas in a normative sense, that it is what should be done as often what it is that journalists themselves do. But, this is not reflected in the way they talk about how the audience itself consumes the news. Only two strongly contend that the audience is 'sceptical' about what they consume. The rest either state that it is occasional or focus time talking about the audience as looking to consume news media that fits their own prejudices and ideologies. The journalists talk in a Pragmatic way for their own views, but in a Realist way when confronted with the Antirealist audience, showing a great flexibility in their epistemological strategies.

5.III – B1/B2: Biased and Un-biased Story Examples

For B1 and B2 I wanted to get a sense of how the journalists judge what 'bias' is. This was done by asking them B1: "So now I want to talk about bias. Can you give a recent example of a news story that you thought was very biased? And why is that?" After that answer was given, I then asked B2: "Okay, and how about a story that was unbiased? And, again, why is that?" If their answers were not specific enough, I offered a standard probe, saying, "Because I am just wondering how you judge if a story is biased or not." If they hesitated to name names, I would remind

---

[62] AK did not elaborate any further as she claimed, "I'm not a good, sort of, media critic, apart from what I do as a journalist."

[63] BS said, "Most people want to know what's going on, ah, and they also want to know why I should *care* […] what you have to do is to make sure the viewer or the reader understand why this story is of any interest or importance." This is part of his larger picture of journalists as elites who should use their news judgement to inform the people of the things they need to know.

them they could be anonymous, an offer only taken up by one British respondent, labelled as B-ANON. All twenty interviews were asked the question.

The analysis in this section will look at the plentiful discursive strategies employed by the respondents for both of these answers together. The specific stories they mention are not that important, it is, again, more about the discursive strategies they use in picking and describing biased and unbiased stories. Ten of the respondents discussed bias in terms of political partisanship (§5.III.i), while a further eight discussed it in terms of balance (§5.III.ii). Seven used the discursive strategy of populism or nationalism and the audience (§5.III.iii), and seven more for journalist's personal prejudices and biases (§5.III.iv). Four discussed the media outlet's prejudice (not that of the journalist or the audience) (§5.III.v), while three viewed contradictoriness or irrationality as a marker of bias (§5.III.vi), and three talked about terminology (§5.III.vii). Only four respondents replied in an Antirealist way, stating that objective stories are impossible (§5.III.viii), while three talked about lack/presence of evidence or fact-checking (§5.III.ix) and two British journalists self-deprecatingly announced that the stories they personally do are unbiased (§5.III.x).

5.III.i – Political Partisanship

Unsurprisingly, the most common example of bias, used by half of the respondents, six British and four Americans, pointed to political partisanship as the arbiter of bias. British respondents BBC1, BBC2, JJ and B-ANON all pointed to British newspapers. BBC1 & B-ANON relate it more to elections, saying that partisanship is "more overt" near elections (BBC1). B-ANON[64] and SKY1[65] both gave examples of the treatment of a politician by the rival party's newspapers. BBC1 asserted, however, that "having a political allegiance and a bias" is "not necessarily the same thing." BBC2 said "most of the newspapers will [...] put their own political slant on [stories]," as did JJ, who said he is "quite happy for newspapers to be [politically] biased [...] because that's the way our media works and it's, sort of, a marketplace of different views." AS was a bit more general,

---

[64] They note that many right-wing papers published negative stories about Nick Clegg because they "don't like to see the Liberal-Democrats do well, um, and, um... they decided to go, um, go *after* him." They then backtrack slightly, saying that "each story... was, sort of, legitimate on its own grounds" but if "you saw all the papers on the right going after Nick Clegg, you did sort of think, 'Mm, what's going on here?' [...]".

[65] Their example is of a reporter from the right-wing tabloid *Sun* in covering the 2010 UK General Election, deciding in advance how to spin a story about Labour candidate Gordon Brown as a "very clear example of an editorial slant, ehm, creating the news, in a very real sense in that he decided on, you know, the way he would report a very simple, eh, set of facts [...] which can then get spun into" something biased based on the paper's own criteria.

saying that un-biased news "doesn't take… take a partisan line," while NW said BBC is "where is the news done really straight [...] because they're not driven... by *any* political agenda..."

The British respondents, being pluralist and Pragmatic, generally seem highly accepting of political bias in the British newspapers, but look towards broadcasting for non-political, and thus unbiased news. The American respondents, however, give a different view, but one that equally reflects the modern, common-sense divisions of US media.

SS pointed to cable news for bias, giving Fox News and MSNBC's political biases as his examples.[66] CT and JL both pointed to political activism and political agendas, the games that politicians play, creating a bias and using the media as the weapon. CT mentioned a story "driven by [a political] agenda" in order to attract "potential supporters,"[67] while JL's example was of "political activism" causing a story to be "drummed up" for the media to consume.[68] However, CT adds that "this debate about bias in the news media is really about 10% of news stories, which, of course, all have to do with politics and public policy" which involves "*ideological* bias." DH said most "*mainstream*" non-op-ed US news does not "fal[l] victim to a left/right... you know, Democrat/Republican… bias" because for political news "you sort of have your antenna up for a left/right [bias]." DH seems to be referring only to newspapers, as compared to SS, CT and JL who mention cable news.

In their answers, both British and American journalists are replicating the common-sense divisions of their countries, in the UK that broadcast is neutral and newspapers partisan, in the USA that cable television news is partisan while newspapers are not. The British are more accepting of the partisanship of their newspapers, talking about it more as a positive aspect of their system, while the Americans, at least CT and JL, are slightly hostile to the 'controversies' generated by the right-wing in cable (i.e. Fox News). SS seems to view it as more balanced,

---

[66] SS: "[...] if you watch Fox [News] ... you would almost believe that the deficit began under Barak Obama, and if you watch MSNBC you'd almost believe that George W. Bush is still in the White House." This is a common method he uses in many of his other answers; if he first critiques Fox News, MSNBC is soon to follow, but Fox News always comes first.

[67] CT used the 'Ground Zero Mosque controversy' (GZM) of Summer 2010, stating that "the story has been driven by an agenda [...] a couple of politicians on the right [...] using it as a way to connect to... uh, potential supporters". The GZM is actually an Islamic community center several blocks away from Ground Zero in New York City, and was a hot button political issue that summer.

[68] This is the Summer 2010 Shirley Sherrod 'controversy' (see also footnote 81). JL states that "people are *so* looking for a conflict that they drummed up this thing, I mean, and that was also political activism [...] we're very drawn to tension, tension is what makes a story tick, right?"

however, with Fox News and MSNBC at the extremes. They all, however, seem accepting of this style of 'bias' for it is easy for a good Realist to detect and functions in the Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas.

5.III.ii – Balance

A further eight journalists mention the presence or absence of balance as an indication of bias. Most talk about balance within the story, but AM instead talks about the long-term balancing effects. She begins by mentioning the 'Ground Zero Mosque' controversy (GZM)[69] where "initial" accounts were "out of context and distorted by many people," but subsequent reporting "has tried to counteract that. SS, meanwhile, is very positive, mentioning the balance of network coverage of Hurricane Katrina anniversary.[70]

Four mentioned the more short-term Pragmatic 'he said, she said' style of balanced sourcing. AS said that objective news "tries to present two sides to a story," while DH said bias can be observed "when there are clearly two or more sides to a story" and the "piece is focusing on only one," and, similarly, SC said, bias can be found by "the fact that they might only put forward one view." BS is more specific in his example of the GZM, opposite to AM, saying that the media "miss[ed] part of the story" and "not enough effort was made to comprehend the critics' [i.e. the anti-GZM group] point of view."

Lastly, two discussed the structure of the story being balanced or not. AB and MW both mentioned that while all the facts may be in a story, it is the placement that gives it the bias. AB gave an example where he felt "the important part […] was buried […] It was still written about, but the emphasis was placed on the controversy as opposed to the merits of the argument." More generally, he mentioned bias can be found by looking at "emphasis," that is if "one side gets more quotes or gets more prominent placement." MW's concerns are similar, noting that in the biased story he mentions, if you read it "carefully […] the basic facts are reported at the bottom," that, in general, newspapers "would give up all the facts on which you could base a sensible judgment" but that "they would give them in a different order which would reflect their particular biases."

Similar to answers for C1 (see §5.V) and C3 (see §5.VII), balance is a very contentious issue. The GZM story was biased for both AM and BS, but in opposite ways. The Pragmatic 'he said, she said' method also gets praised by four journalists, as the balance of sources is an easy way to judge lack of balance and thus presence

---

[69] See footnote 67.

[70] SS said they "had a pretty balanced perspective on how New Orleans is recovering, what went wrong [...] painted a very balanced picture [...] very straight-forward, storytelling journalism."

of bias. AB and MW are more critical of this, however, noting that literally having 'both' sides is not enough, as the placement and emphasis within the story is also important, and that Antirealist journalists can easily manipulate this Pragmatism. This finding again shows the inherent conflict between Pragmatism and Realism.

5.III.iii – Readership, Nationalism & Populism

AS and DH talked about bias in terms of nationalism. For AS, several tabloid newspapers painted Obama's remarks about the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico as "using anti-British rhetoric" and "clearly seemed to be, ahm… influenced by a… sort of, anti-American agenda," inspired by the tabloids' audience. DH mentioned what he feels the pro-American bias of most American news media which is "taken for granted," is "so much of the fabric of how… the news that is reported," and does not get "questioned much." He said this is because "no… reader… complains about [it]," before correcting himself: "ah, no, no *American* reader [complains]." He was concerned that his "bosses... worry sometimes about... the... impact of, of the story on... *American* national security" when, perhaps, it should be about "people... *wherever* they are," expressing a desire for mainstream Western news media to be more internationalist.

The other five mentioned the audience, and for three more specifically populism, as the cause of bias. For BS, the reporting of the BP oil spill was "biased against" BP because "the press really shared the American public's… populist anger and resentment […] the populist bias of its readers." For BS, the press attracts its readers by "pandering towards popular prejudices and popular sentiment." SC similarly mentioned the media "highlight[ing] certain […] shared, sort of, assumptions of their readers" as indication of bias. SKY1 said, because "the vast majority of the population of the United Kingdom are supportive, em, of the troops" in Afghanistan, it is "increasingly difficult now to report, em, what's going on […] in a biased fashion."[71]

NW mentioned that, while the BBC is "really straight," they are also driven "occasionally by a *ratings* agenda […] which means that maybe sometimes they can sensationalize." MW mentioned that day's[72] front pages of the *Daily Mail* and the *Financial Times* as examples of two newspapers that target their stories to their audiences, thus showing a bias. The *Daily Mail* "likes to terrify its readers, particularly its women," and so its front page was about the murders by Derrick

---

[71] What exactly this bias is, either pro- or anti-war is not clear from their answer, but it is still pointed at the audience.
[72] July 5, 2010.

Bird.[73] For the *Financial Times*, since its readers are in public sector they like stories about "civil servants [having] their pay wacked," which was reflected in their front page story. For these respondents, the Antirealist biases of the audience act as a constraint of the media, who have to replicate those biases in order to, we might say, appear unbiased.

The relationship of the audience to bias in the news media is quite interesting, for in a commercial news media system, correspondence of the audience's bias to the news media outlet's bias seems like a sound financial decision. British tabloids and the *New York Times* react to their audiences' nationalism. Populist stances are taken when reporting on the BP oil spill and the War in Afghanistan. Anti-civil servant stances are taken by news media with high public sector readership. Female tabloid readers (apparently) want to be scared, thus their tabloid heavily reports on serial killings. News media replicate the Antirealist 'prejudices' and 'shared assumptions' of the audience. Even the non-commercial BBC has to pay heed to its ratings or else lose its legitimacy.

Yet all of this is apparently quite unsettling for these journalists and is thus a major factor in news reporting. This indicates a Realist reaction to perceived Antirealism. For them truth should not be relative to the ebbing and flowing of the population's Antirealist appetites, but on something more stable and universal.

5.III.iv – Journalists' Prejudices

The effects of journalists' own (or group) prejudices are considered as an indication of bias by seven respondents. For CT ad SS this is inevitable, for "the minute you *choose* to cover something, that's a bias" which "happens in every newsroom" (CT), and "everyone, every reporter has a bias" (SS). SS goes on to say that, due to this inherent bias, "The challenge is, and the goal is, to make sure that that bias does not influence or interfere with your storytelling." CT mentioned his own bias, that since he is from Miami[74] "the story of Cuba is, is of more interest to me," implying it thus gets more coverage in news media he produces. BBC2 mentioned the reporting of a former MPs' biography, that journalists on the left and the right "are resentful of [him] and what he's done, for different reasons," thus colouring their reporting.

Americans BS and DH gave criteria for exposing bias: "if there's an *agenda*," "if they're trying to make an argument" (BS), or if "the reporter is doing more telling than showing… um… and more telling of what's on their mind" (DH), that

---

[73] Derrick Bird was implicated in a string of shootings on June 2, 2010 in the environs of Cumbria, UK, killing 12 and injuring 11 before taking his own life.

[74] Apparently because Miami has a large Cuban expatriate population, something CT did not mention.

indicates the journalists' personal bias. Conversely, NW mentioned the *Financial Times* as "a very serious paper" that has "very serious journalists," and *that* seriousness is what keeps them from being too biased. SC gave a more personal account: he said he has "never seen anybody [at the BBC] sit down and write something which… they set out to be biased or set out to present a certain… view."[75]

This discursive strategy is interesting, especially compared to that of organization-based bias or reader-originated bias. For these seven, despite all the editorial control and influence from readers and advertisers, the Antirealist personal bias of reporters can still be present. If the journalist is not 'serious' enough, if they have an 'agenda,' make an 'argument,' 'tell' instead of 'show,' are 'resentful' of someone, or if they cannot make any inherent bias does not 'influence' or 'interfere,' *then* bias can get out. Unprofessional journalists, like the audience, are thus cast as being Antirealist.

5.III.v – News Organization's Prejudices

This discursive strategy was deployed only by three British journalists, and all refer to the bias of British newspapers. TIM1 said they can tell if a news story is biased or not if the story is "brave" in that "they are written against the grain of, uh, a paper's, um... prejudice, as it were."[76] BBC2 gave a general example, that "most of the newspapers will approach a story from a particular perspective, of either something they believe or something they want to happen." MR's response approaches the subject a bit differently, that is, looking at her own personal bias when she consumes news media. She said, "if, if I read an article in the *Daily Mail*, I'm biased against that article [...] because I assume that that [...] article has a bias [...] based on what my... judgements are."

These three examples do not explicitly mention political bias, but simply the bias of the news organization itself. They do not explicate if the bias is caused by political partisanship or the audience, but is still similar to the political partisanship discursive strategy (see §5.III.i).

5.III.vi – Terminology

Three American journalists mention the terminology of a story can help determine if it is biased or not. AM and CT, two chief correspondents for

---

[75] Interestingly, SC also responds this way ("I have never seen...") for §6.I when talking about the lack of ownership influence.

[76] Their example was a story in the *Daily Mail*, which apparently has a "well-known dislike of, you know, licensing liberalization," in favour of "24 hour drinking," in that such an against-the-grain story, for him, "must be a really good story."

MSNBC/NBC News, both mention the GZM controversy,[77] and the labelling of the 'mosque' as the 'Ground Zero Mosque' itself. CT said

> I don't think I've seen very many straight... reports about it. Some people call it a 'Ground Zero Mosque'? Sometimes, bias, the story could be right, but the headline could be biased [...]

Similarly, AM mentioned as biased

> almost everything that is written about the Imam [Faisal Abdul Rauf] in New York and the Islamic Center. Calling it the 'Ground Zero *Mosque*' when it is a prayer room inside an Islamic community center... two and a half blocks from Ground Zero? Not defining the Imam as someone who has worked with the *George Bush* White House [...] caricaturing and excerpting what he said [...]?

For CT and AM, the labelling of the controversy as the GZM, a term coined by conservative website that first 'exposed' the 'controversy,' biases the story. In the same vein, AB mentions his college thesis which was about "the different terminology that, uh... partisan political magazines use for different elements of terrorism."

We have here a concern about how language itself can be abused in the news media (as discussed in §2.IV and explicitly in §3.IV.i), but the fact that both MSNBC respondents point out the same one, and it was a recent example, it may not reflect a deep-seeded scepticism of language.

5.III.vii – Contradictoriness and Irrationality

Three journalists mention that they feel bias can be found in contradictory or irrational statements made by Antirealist journalists. AM, when asked to name *who* is doing the biased reporting for the GZM story, replied, "I certainly think that some of the hosts on Fox News, uh, contradicted their past statements" about Imam Faisal Abdul Rauf who was in charge of the Islamic Community Center. AS, continuing his discussion of reporting of the BP oil spill, mentioned that tabloids accusing Obama of "damaging the interests of British pensioners" by his comments about BP, indicating for AS "the... irrationality of some of that reporting..."

JJ is more general, saying, in contrast to his preceding endorsement of the political partisanship of the British press, that, "What I don't like is when [journalists are] disingenuous, inconsistent, incoherent... [...] when people offer contradictory views or change their views in a way that is clearly designed to curry favour with a new government." For JJ consistency of bias is important: if one

---

[77] See footnote 67.

cannot already know the inherent bias of the story you are reading, then how can a good Realist filter out that bias?

5.III.viii – Impossibility of Being Unbiased

Interestingly, only four of the respondents, two Americans (CT, WP) and two British (SKY1, AS), mention that objective and unbiased stories are impossible, a rare Antirealist response for B1/B2. CT, WP and SKY1 mentioned that the moment facts are selected, bias exists. As mentioned above, CT said that "the minute you *choose* to cover something, that's a bias [...] that happens in every newsroom in the country, so by *that* measure... then there's *always* bias." Veteran *Washington Post* reporter WP was also quite sceptical of the utility of talking about bias and objectivity:

> I'm one of those people who thinks that anybody can find something that's wrong with every story... [...] I *try* to write... factual stories that are... honest, but every time you select and, and leave out facts, you're showing a bias. Sometimes it's a bias because you don't have enough space.

SKY1 is of the same school, saying that "it is difficult for me to think of a way in which a story could not be accused of being biased, eh, by one constituency or another." They also give the notion that bias is relative to the Antirealist audience, saying "in a sense, you know, every story is, is unbiased if you, the reader, em, agree with everything that's in it."

By contrast, AS said he knows enough about "media theory" that "you can quite quickly prove that [...] even the most apparently objective piece of news is, sort of, packed full of all sorts of ideological assumptions," but then adds that for "working journalists, sort of... that doesn't mean that the term... 'objective' is one without value or use," without giving any alternate definitions. This is, however, a very logical perspective to have. If I had asked a question like, "Would you agree that every story, since the journalist has to pick and choose what to put in it, can be accused of bias?", most would probably agree. However, as AS said, objectivity still has to be viewed as useful for journalists, but he fails to spell out exactly how it can be if any story can be accused of bias. Such direct Antirealism is quite rare in the responses. It is not clear if this is because of experience, in the case of WP, or education, for AS, but, again, this answer is in the minority.

5.III.ix – Evidence and Fact-Checking

That only three journalists mentioned evidence of fact-checking, a Realist activity supposedly integral to journalism, in relationship to discovering bias is quite remarkable considering how often they previously relied on Realist discursive strategies. WP indicated the lack of fact-checking might be because of a change in

the nature of news media over his long career. He said that "in the old system we used to 'Truth Squad' [sic]," meaning that "When someone stated a fact that is wrong and you're writing a story you could [check it]."[78] However, he noted that "a fact that is wrong nowadays, pretty much, you have to get somebody *else* to say it [is wrong]." DH was more general, saying bias can be found when "the reporter is doing more telling than showing," 'showing' meaning giving evidence to support what they are 'telling.'

TIM1 gave an example of front-page story on the *Sunday Times* about Muslims kicking guide dogs off public busses which they say was "based on nothing more than a, uh, a, uh, a claim made in the House of Lords, uh, and there was not a single example cited," which they consider a "truly appalling piece of journalism." This example, of a front-page newspaper article being based entirely on a politician's statement, is perhaps indicative of the frustration that comes from the *de facto* legitimacy of politician's statements, and also from the neutral journalist perspective, it is, in fact, true that the Lord made that statement, despite the veracity of the statement itself.

As mentioned above, perhaps the change, as WP describes, is from journalists verifying statements in their articles to getting others to do the verifying. This is because, perhaps, a journalist verifying a fact could be accused of bias, whereas a journalist quoting one persons' 'fact' to contract another's fact is seen as more defensible Pragmatic 'he said, she said'-style journalism.

5.III.x – Self-deprecation

Lastly, we have two self-deprecating statements from two British journalists. BBC2, when asked B2, said, "You could look at any of my reports [...]!" before chuckling at their statement. NW also joked, when asked for examples of unbiased stories, "Um, obviously everything that I write!", laughing, and then saying "No, that won't do," and moving on to his example of the "straight" BBC.

5.III.xi – Discussion of B1/ B2

For political partisanship and news organization strategies, we find an acceptance of the Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas, but most likely because such bias is very easy to spot. The respondents indicating balance were more sceptical of it, some praising 'he said, she said,' while others believing it can cause distortion (similar to responses for C3). Responses concerning audience were pro-Pragmatist and pro-Realist, indicating a resistance to the pressure to pander to audience's prejudices and ideology. The strategy of pointing out journalists' personal biases and

---

[78] This is, interestingly, in contrast to WP's Antirealist response to §5.III.vii.

their contradictory/irrational statements is also implicitly Realist, indicating such biases could be filtered out. Similarly, a call for fact-checking, highly Realist, was indicated by only three respondents. Discussion of the terminology was highly topical, however, and thus might not be a standard discursive strategy.

Only two of the discursive strategies could be described as Antirealist or Hyperrealist. One is discussion of the impossibility of non-biased news stories, the second two brief, self-deprecating references to the respondent's own work being perpetually unbiased.

5.IV – Tuchman's Strategic Rituals Overview (C1, C2, C3)

The next three questions are based on three of Tuchman's 'strategic rituals' that she says journalists use to maintain objectivity (Tuchman 1972, also 1978). This was introduced briefly in §2.IV.iii, but will be explained in more detail here. Her main contention is that there is a distinct discrepancy between the ends sought and those achieved" in the journalists' strategic rituals for objectivity (Tuchman 1972: 676). Her results have been replicated elsewhere. For instance, Mindich (1998), in reviewing journalism texts, found a common set of practices and procedures that journalists learn that are supposed to make their work 'objective.' These include Tuchman's findings, that is, a reliance on 'facts,' balance, and the use of the inverted pyramid (ibid: 8). As mentioned in §2.IV.iii, this puts Tuchman approach squarely in the Antirealist camp. To explore this more I asked the journalists to give good and bad aspects to three of the strategic rituals Tuchman mentions.[79]

C1 (§5.V) concerns the use of direct quotations. As Tuchman puts it, they are used so that "a reporter may remove his opinions from the story by getting others to say what he himself thinks" (Tuchman 1972: 668) and thus giving the impression of Realist objectivity. As Bennett notes, this is part of the 'documentary method' of reporting in which "only the information that they have witnessed and only the facts that credible sources have confirmed" can be included (Bennett 2005: 196-197). His critique is that "in practice the method creates a trap for journalists confronted with staged political performances" which creates a paradox in that "The more perfectly an event is staged, the more documentable and hence reportable it becomes" (ibid: 197). In other words, as discussed in §2.V.ii, the 'Reality' of this might, in fact, be a pseudo-event-derived reality. Also, despite the apparently high level of Reality built into this, there is always the potential for *selectively* quoting people.

---

[79] A fourth question concerning the clear separation of editorial and straight news content was devised, but was only asked of two of the early respondents. Their responses were not very informative, thus I skipped the question in all subsequent interviews.

C2 (§5.VI) asked about use of the inverted pyramid (IP) format. This is described by Tuchman as "the most problematic formal aspect of objectivity for the newsman" as they cannot claim that the choice of the lead and the structure of the story "belongs to someone else" (Tuchman 1972: 670). Some are more accepting of this format. For instance, Bennett believes that "the story" is the standard format for news reporting because they "are also the most common means of everyday communication about events" and thus "enable the public to judge the consistency and plausibility of news accounts" (Bennett 2005: 184).

C3 (§5.VII), that is using the Pragmatic 'he said, she said' method of presenting quotes from more than one side, usually two, to provide balance, is the third journalistic method inquired about. This is open to a lot of criticism in the field. Patterson, talking about political news, notes this is a "common technique" which "use[s] a politician's opponents to discredit his claims or performance. When a politician makes a statement or takes action, they turn to his adversaries to attack it" (Patterson 1998: 26). The weakness of this is that the criticism is made "not by a careful assessment of this claim or action, but by the insertion of a counterclaim" (ibid). Furthermore, as Tuchman notes, since many claims made by sources cannot be verified in time for publishing, and since government sources are *de facto* more credible than other sources, it is far easier to report that a government official stated 'A,' and 'X said A' is regarded "as a 'fact' even if 'A' is false" (Tuchman 1972: 665). In other words, that the President or Prime Minister said something is in itself 'true' enough to report upon, and the validity of their statement has no practical impact on the legitimacy of using it. Hackett agrees: "far from being in some absolute sense neutral, news balance generally leads the media to reproduce the definitions of social reality which have achieved dominance in the electoral political arena" (Hackett 1984: 234).

Again, the differences between 'good' and 'bad' aspects will not be the major distinction in the analysis simply due to the fact that, as noted previously, the discursive strategies they use to answer are more important than making a "good vs. bad" chart. Also, sometimes the answer is ambiguously positive or negative, and to use my subjective judgement to put it in either camp would not be helpful.

5.V – C1: Using Direct Quotations

In this section answers to the question asking journalist to give good and bad aspects of "Using direct quotations" will be explored. This was asked of sixteen respondents, the majority of whom gave multi-faceted answers, exploring both the negative and positive aspects of using direct quotations when producing news stories. There were six major discursive methods used by the journalists. The first

was to mention the Realist directness or authenticity of the quote, usually in a positive manner, used by eleven (§5.V.i). Secondly issues of fairness and balance were discussed by eight (§5.V.ii). Issues of context were important for seven journalists, mostly that context is needed in addition to quotes (§5.V.iii), while a further eight discussed the structural or practical issues behind using direct quotations (§5.V.iv). The last two discursive strategies were used by only three journalists each, that of a normative nature (§5.V.v), and that regarding truth (§5.V.vi).

5.V.i – Directness, Authenticity and Voice

The majority of respondents said that direct quotations were good to use because it provided some authenticity or directness to the voice of the people being interviewed, firmly constructing it as a Realist method. Voice is mentioned by four journalists. For instance, AM said that direct quotes are "the best way to show... what people said... [...] so their voices are heard," BBC2 said that with direct quotes you "have the specific and authentic v, voice or, or views," while MW said he sees benefit in "allow[ing] your readers to hear the precise tone of voice in which someone said something," and SC said "it, uh, shows you've actually been there or you've actually spoken to somebody who was there." The authenticity of voice for these four seems to be more related to credibility of and ability to defend the news report as to getting at some deeper truth of the situation.

Four journalists praised the directness of direct quotes, CT said "it's their words [...] you let the reader interpret their words rather than the reader interpreting your interpretation," while KD said "I think people would, would probably [...] like to hear somebody directly involved in it say something," and AS said it "allow[s] people to, ah... read what was said and make up their own minds." MR says "the good thing about a direct quote is it is a direct quote, you know, straight from the horse's mouth," a slightly tautological statement. These four talked about directness in relation to the audience and fulfilling their Realist informative role.

AB and JL, both American early-career bloggers, talked about direct quoting more directly in relation to protecting the integrity of their story from criticism.[80] It is interesting those working in the domain of the internet are the only ones to bring up paraphrasing in relation to directness of quotes, perhaps this is because of bloggers' use of hyper-linking to other stories, transcripts or complete interviews, things that print and television journalists cannot do easily. They, perhaps, feel it is

---

[80] AB said "ostensibly can't change what they're saying, this is coming directly from them, you're not rephrasing them or characterizing what they say," while JL said that "no one can dispute you if you use a direct quote. [...] Paraphrasing... is gonna, can get you into trouble, because then it's, like, 'Well, that's just your interpretation of what I said!'."

easier to protect their journalistic integrity by simply providing the information in whole. The final two relate directness to what the person quoted *thinks*: AS said it is "almost always a preferable way of reporting what... what someone, what someone thinks," while SKY1 said "they demonstrate what a person thinks about a story."

Thus, we can see over half of the journalists talking about quoting in a highly Realist mode, while most also talk about it as being more for self-defence. It is also interesting that only two out of the sixteen respondents connected direct quotes to actual thoughts of people, perhaps showing scepticism of the purpose of quotes, but certainly no strong reliance on any inherent veracity. This is fairly supportive of Tuchman's findings, direct quoting as being a defence mechanism and not only a way to stay objective and to find the truth.

5.V.ii – Balance and Fairness

Discussion of balance and fairness in relation to using direct quotes was seen in eight of the journalists' answers. The only positive, yet still highly defensive, example, and the only one to use the word 'bias,' was given by CT, who said that using direct quotes "certainly is a way to [...] erase any fear among some that, that you're biased." The others mostly warned of unfair use of quotes.

BS, while at first saying it is "generally seen as *fair*," quickly pointed out that journalists "have very limited space. On television we had to think in 10 second sound bites." This means that "journalists *edit*, they select quotations [...] the worst kind of journalists [...] they pull the quote that makes *their* point, and that's not fair." His example was the affair with Shirley Sherrod[81] which was "clearly unfair" and was "a *deliberate* effort" to "distort her words" by selectively quoting her. Similarly, MR warned that as a journalist "you can allow your, kind of, you know, your, kind of, news-making mind to, kind of, get the better of you and to use a quote in a mischievous way," while MW simply responded that the technique is "Wholly open to manipulation," and NW said "you can... if you're disreputable, use them to give the impression of objectivity and fairness when actually you're doing the very opposite." More generally, SS warns that "the danger is, you know, is your point of view and the quote you selected, is that the right one?"

This shows the journalists are readily able to admit to the Antirealist abuse of direct quotes, the *unfair* use of quotes by journalists who have their own agenda and

---

[81] In which a video of Sherrod, a black US Agriculture Department employee, edited to show her admitting to previously discriminating against white farmers who had applied for aid, was released online, leading to her being immediately fired. A full video was later released showing her anecdote was part of a larger story of how she learnt that all farmers, black or white, are in it together. (See also footnote 68.)

bias. Of course, if asked if they manipulate quotes in an unfair way, the response would be negative, but it highly rational to admit it happens elsewhere.

NW and SC mentioned balance in relation to quoting directly. SC viewed this positively, that "they allow you, should allow you to get a, uh, a broad spectrum of opinion." NW was more conflicted, saying that while "obviously quotes are an important element of objectivity," journalists need to make sure it "is *balanced* [...] and *reflects* the range of opinion from the person you're quoting." Another issue for NW was that after selecting quotes from a long interview, "often you'll hear people who will say, 'Well, yes, I did say *that*, but I also said a hundred other things that were either the opposite or *balanced* it'." Similar to above, NW points out that balance can be abused, and we can the antagonism between Realism and Pragmatism is quite strong.

That so many negative aspects of fairness and balance in using direct quotes, and only two positive aspects, are pointed out by these journalists is very interesting. Perhaps it is part of them wanting to show to me that they can be self-critical, but of course these ideas did not come into fruition simply in response to my question. Worries about the Antirealist abuse of the nominally Realist act of direct quoting must have existed beforehand.

5.V.iii – Context

Four journalists expressed concern that quotes can be taken 'out of context.' For instance, JL (like BS in §5.V.ii) provided the example of the video edited to show Shirley Sherrod apparently admitting racist actions,[82] and WP that of decontextualized comments George Bush Sr. made in the 1980s. The other three were more concerned with context in relation to providing more information to the story. AM warned that "if... you exclusively... construct a story around direct quotations and don't give context and background [...] you would not be able to explain accurately to people what [the topic] is about." Similarly, AS was worried about "cases where politicians... say one thing and actually mean another," and where "the context" which is a "necessary level of analysis," is needed. MR was similarly concerned about "how to place that, you know, its context," as that is up to the journalists' own judgement.

These are, again, quite negative in nature, concerned about the abuse of quoting without context of giving examples of when they abuse happened. However, it seems as if 'context' here is an un-troubling concept, a simple Realist 'fix' readily applied. No one talked about the abuse of context like they did for fairness and balance despite that any 'context' provided to a story is selected by the journalist

---

[82] (see footnotes 68 and 81).

and just as open to charges of an Antirealist bias. For example, in the Shirley Sherrod case the 'context' could be the rest of her speech which showed that she did not act on her racist ideas, or it could be a negative portrayal of affirmative action and growing racism against whites in America since the 1960s: both are subjective and up to the journalists' discretion yet would be 'context.' Context in this case seems to be, ironically, a de-contextualized universal Realist fix for the normative need to supply direct quotes. The quotes may be biased, but with enough context the bias can apparently be counteracted.

5.V.iv – Structural and Practical Issues

Eight journalists related the use of direct quotes to practical and structural issues of journalistic practice. For instance, AK & BBC2 mentioned using quotes to "back-up" their story, while MR said it is "a good way of illustrating a *point* [...] making a point as long as, you know, you are making the point that the person who said it, you know, *intended*."

Others are more concerned about fitting the quotes into the story itself. AS said that "often journalists can summarize, ah, what someone is saying more crisply and clearly then they can themselves," indicating the need to paraphrase to save space. KD was similarly concerned about space, because "a lot of people" use "kind of, boiler plate, uh... uh... quotations that, kind of, take up a lot of space and don't really say that much." SC's concern was mostly with quotes from sources that are not named, because then "you can't be entirely sure [of] their reliability, and also, you cannot, sometimes, be sure that, uh, they're actually from more than one person."

BS and CT related it more to fitting the content for the Antirealist medium itself and the audience. BS talked about it in terms of complexity and the nature of news media, saying that the act of selecting and editing down quotes is

> not entirely fair... when the interview subject has... complex thoughts, but you know *what?* Complex thoughts don't work in the news media.

CT was more concerned about the differing registers between what experts say and what the audience can read: "You don't want to quote this whole gobbledegook about the political insider angle [...] just put it in terms that easier for, uh, uh, the *less* interested to understand." Both were concerned about how to deal with the complex specialist language of many of their sources in a Realist way while making it compatible with the Antirealist medium of news.

These practical concerns are understandable, as dealing with them takes up most of the time of journalists while doing their job. It is also important to note that these concerns are only broadly, and inconsistently, Realist.

5.V.v – Brute Normativity

Relying on a purely normative explanation for using direct quotes is far less common for C1 than it is for C2 and especially C3, as only three journalists use it. For instance, SS said that "any... good reporter" will use direct quotes, and NW said that they are "absolutely sacrosanct" and never be manipulated. Early-career blogger JL's response is more interesting, stating at first that "it's certainly what we *do.*. She adds shortly after, "it's funny, that's the way we write, that's the way we learn to write, so it's almost hard to think of how it wouldn't be without [direct quotes]."

It is not clear why this lack of relying on a normative framework is prevalent for this question. Perhaps the earlier discursive methods of authentic voice and directness were sufficient to defend it, whereas for C2 and C3 (as we will see) the immediate utility was not clear, and a knee-jerk reliance on normativity was needed.

5.V.vi – Truth and Lies

Lastly we have the Realist notion of truth in relation to directly quoting someone. It is quite remarkable that only three journalists (AK, AM and AS) mentioned issues of truth, and also that only one (AK) mentioned 'truth' directly. AK's concern was "if what the person's saying isn't true, you're giving credence to something that isn't true [...] if it isn't true [we try to] find out that it isn't true." AM's and AS's concerns were similar, but instead she was worried than when someone is "misrepresenting facts," simply quoting them is not sufficient (AM), while AS was concerned for "cases where politicians... say one thing and actually mean another" (Antirealist), and thus advises an additional "level of analysis" (Realist).

It is interesting to note that AM and AS both avoided using the words 'true' and 'lie,' relying instead on 'misrepresenting' and 'saying one thing and meaning another.' This, again, supports Tuchman's findings, as out of the sixteen asked this question, only three relate it to any notions of truth, and only one actually uses the word 'true.'

5.V.vii – Discussion of C1

As seen from the above examples, the ways in which the journalists responded to the question are highly supportive of Tuchman's (1972) findings. Eight journalists talked about directness in quoting as being more of a defensive action taken to stave off criticism of their work. The only person to use the word 'true' (AK) did so in a defensive manner, i.e. that it's her job as a Realist to filter out the truth in the quotes she is using. Only two related direct quoting to the actual thoughts of the people being quoted. The journalists were also quite critical of the potential fairness and balance provided by using direct quotes, focusing more on the potential for

Antirealist abuse. And finally, only three talked about direct quotes being used to Pragmatically help the audience make up their own minds.

In these journalists' discourses about using direct quotes we can see a high ambiguity in regards to the truth. They talk about a very standard journalistic method more in terms of being used to defend their work than for providing the audience with material to make up their decisions, more as an Antirealist act to distort what people said than to actually give the audience the truth.

5.VI – C2: Inverted Pyramid Structure

Following on from C1, the sixteen respondents were asked about usage of the inverted pyramid (IP) structure for composing stories. The question asked continued the 'good and bad aspects' format of C1, this time asking "What about writing in an inverted pyramid to present the most important facts first?" For this question, the discursive strategies used by the respondents vary a lot from C1 and (as we will see in §5.VII) C3.

Twelve of the respondents discuss the inverted pyramid in terms of the audience (§5.VI.i), while ten are concerned with the structural issues of writing a news story (§5.VI.ii). Nine rely on a discussion in a normative or educational manner (§VI.iii), while seven talk about problems relating to context and the lack complexity inherent in such a structure (§5.VI.iv). No one discusses this in relationship to objectivity, bias or truth as their concerns about this seem to be more practical in nature.

5.VI.i – Audience

As mentioned above, twelve journalists out of the sixteen discussed the audience in relation to IP, but for several different reasons. Seven journalists said it is needed to hold or "grab" the audience's "attention" (MR & NW), or to "bring them into the story" and "make people invested" especially if "it's a mass audience" (CT). WP said "you do have to worry about […] making it interesting enough," and SC says "the first three or four sentences [should] entice someone to come and read." AB and BS both talked about IP as useful in order not to lose the reader's "attention." As BS said, "Journalism 101 is: 'Don't bury the lead'," while AB said it is more useful "today" due to the fact that "people's attention spans are a little shorter."

Five more said they find this structure useful due to uncertainty as to how much of the article will be read by the audience, how far 'down' to the 'bottom' they will get, due to their (apparent) lack of time to read the news. KD said, because of this uncertainly, you need "to tell people up-front" the basic who-what-when-where-

why, while SC was more concerned with putting multiple view points at the beginning. AK, JL and MR suggested using IP because the audience lacks time to read it,[83] while BBC2 said it is "the clearest way of understanding a story." SKY1 was sceptical of the structure because "a person does not pick up a newspaper in a vacuum […] people who are reading political stories generally have that context already." This shows a lack of relating this method to a Realist truth-finding and instead more practical reasons.

5.VI.ii – Structural Issues

General structural issues surrounding IP are brought up by ten respondents, discussing the universality of the structure, the limits of the medium of news itself, and the potential sensationalizing or exaggerating effects. AM was supportive of the format, but does not elaborate. SS put the IP in a more universal context, as the modern form of a town crier.[84] Contrarily, AB, KD and NW talked about the IP not being the universal structure for news, pointing out which types of stories do and do not fit.

JL and SS were also concerned with the Antirealist limits of the medium of news itself, for SS it is "space," for JL it is "pressure to [...] tighten everything up" and be concise. MR, MW and WP are more concerned with the "exaggerat[ing]" (NW) or "sensational[izing]" effects (MW) the structure can have.[85] WP states that "One of the old issues used to be turning down editors who wanted to push your story onto the front page… by jazzing it up." SKY1, despite working on television news, views it useful from the editorial perspective of a website or newspaper, saying that "if you're going to cut a piece you start from the bottom […] you don't cut from the top."

5.VI.iii – Normative/Educational

A very interesting discursive strategy to discuss the IP was to rely on normative standards and journalistic education. All of these nine were the immediate response to the question, always followed up by other discursive strategies, similar to C1 and C3.

---

[83] AK suggested using it "allows people to get to the news quickly" because "people don't have a lot of time." JL contrasted it with the formal essay structure (i.e., intro/body/conclusion) which is "not meant for the hurried, harried consumer." Similarly, MR noted that "people have less and less time and are less and less willing to sit down and, you know, read, kind of, three columns of a newspaper," thus the inverted pyramid structure is needed.

[84] SS: "from the beginning of time, you know… if there was a fire down the street your goal was to say, "Hey, there's a fire around the corner!" […] *Then* you fill in the pieces."

[85] MR added "But on the other hand, if they're sensational then they're the most interesting, and why the hell shouldn't they be the… thing at the top."

Four responded by calling up journalism education: "that's what I was taught" (AB), in "Journalism College," "that's what they teach, generally" (KD) and "that's the first thing you learn" (NW). JL said, referring also to C1, "you're asking about things that I've learned, like, from the moment I started writing [laughs]." BS called it "Journalism 101," SS "Basic Reporting 101." Others discussed this as a basic element of journalism. Using IP is "how news gets in the newspapers," "the standard way," "the way the news works," "how these things operate" (all from AS), "the structure of news" (AK), an "old" and "absolute rule" (BS), "always a good idea" (MW), and what "needs" to be done by journalists (SS). It something fundamental that is taught to everyone in the basic classes at journalism school, and is relied on in a manner agnostic to the 'truth.'

5.VI.iv – Contextualization and Complexity

This section is much more highly relevant to the discussion of the epistemology of news media. Seven journalists are worried about the position and value of proper 'context' in an inverted pyramid-structured story. Americans BS, AM and KD were concerned that the reader might not get past the first part of the article, AM adding that the bottom is what "contextualize[s]" the top. CT & AK talked about headlines, that "you may feel like you… *over-emphasize* the, the headline fact… to the point of, where the entire context of the story can get lost a little bit" (CT) or it can "leave out nuances" (AK). The two British respondents discussing contextualization were not as concerned as their American counterparts. NW and SKY1 noted that context might not be needed because the topic might be "something that's *known*" (NW) and that a person does not pick up a newspaper in a vacuum" (SKY1).

Seven respondents discussed the lack of complexity in IP-style stories. This is a bit odd, considering that, arguably, IP is not necessarily concerned with or limited by word count or space, but instead subjectively or arbitrarily assigns varying levels of 'importance' to the information contained within, but for these seven they are related. Early career blogger JL was concerned that the "gist of [the] story [...] is that's all you get to *say*", while AB & MW both mentioned over-simplification, while for WP "Things are always much more complicated than… you can sum up." NW was troubled because it could "make things a bit basic."[86]

BS told an interesting anecdote about a specialist who was rejected to appear as a guest commentator on TV because the producers thought the specialist was "too thoughtful," echoing his answer from C1 (see 5.V.iv). He concludes:

---

[86]NW's example being "Alistair Campbell and the Hutton Inquiry, you know, summing complex things up in 25 words."

> Uh, you can't be too thoughtful and work on television, you can't say,
> 'There's six reasons why this is happening.' Uh, whenever someone would
> tell me that I'd stop them right there and I'd say, 'Please pick *one*.'

AS went more Antirealist than the others, saying that IP "normally [...] does involve a level of… distortion because it involves a reporter deciding what is the, sort of, single salient most important fact [in a] complex and, um, um, sort of, multi-faceted situation."

5.VI.v – Discussion of C2

Again, practical considerations of the audience and structure of news presentation aside, the respondents concerns about contextualisation and complexity, or lack thereof, shows great anxiety about news media's potentially Antirealist nature. Five worry about the ability of news media to report sufficiently complex information. Experienced former-CNN producer and political analyst BS but it best, that "you can't be too thoughtful and work on television," showing a tendency to views news media as Antirealist in nature, and positing that it is the journalists' job to inject Realism into it. The ability of news media to properly contextualise is problematised as well, mostly by the US respondents.

5.VII – C3: 'He said, she said'

C3 asked of sixteen respondents to list good and bad aspects of the journalistic practice of "using at least one source from each side, like 'he said, she said'?" Most were able to give both good and bad aspects, and as this was the third question in the "good-and-bad-aspects" format, bad aspects were volunteered more readily than, for instance, for C1.

For this analysis, relevant responses from question A4 (examined earlier in §5.II) will be included, asking, in part, if they agree about "list[ing] the various competing 'truths' which are believed by the opposing sides," largely parallel to this question (especially for §5.VII.vii). For instance, AS, BBC2 and JJ's responses from A4 are included because of the limited time for their interviews in which I did not ask them C3 (or C1 and C2). Unless indicated otherwise, the quotes come from responses to C3.

There are four major discursive strategies used by the respondents to answer this question. The first, used by ten, is to bring up normative standards to defend the method (§5.VII.i). Close to this is the discourse of journalistic judgement coming into play, discussed by six respondents (§5.VII.ii). Thirdly there is a more multi-layered discourse surrounding the issue of balance and the Antirealist dangers of false balance, all together used by thirteen respondents (§5.VII.iii). Lastly we have

some discussion by seven respondents about the relative or absolute nature of truth (§5.VII.iv). Many of these discursive strategies overlap with one another, but they will be examined within these four distinctive strategies listed above.

5.VII.i – Brute Normativity

This strategy was deployed by ten respondents, nine (excluding SKY1) as their first response to the good aspects about 'he said, she said.' AS said it is "good and obvious," an "obvious standard, good journalistic practice."[87] Others answered in less detail but were quite supportive, saying that it is "by tradition" (NW), "conventional" (BS), that you "should," "need" (SS), "*do* have to do that" (JL), and "can't really dispute that" (MR). Others were more aspirational, saying that it is a "good goal to aspire to" (AB), you "try to be fair" (AK) or you "need to be as balanced as you possibly can" (MR), and, in answer to A4, JJ advised me too look to BBC guidelines.

SKY1's answer is arrived at in a different manner than the others. They avoided giving a concrete answer for a while, talking about general good and bad aspects of the practice, then seemingly give up and concluded:

> […] let's be fair. If you're doing a political piece you always have to hear from the opposition, that's just the way it is.

Their process is opposite to the ones listed above, trying to be critical and then resorting to a simple reliance on 'the way it is' as the support for the practice.

These answers (other than SKY1) are largely defensive, a knee-jerk reaction to one of the basic tools of their trade. Such highly normative answers are given first, followed by other reasons to support it or, when being critical, go against it. It is probably because this one is the most 'common sense' out of C1, C2 and C3. However, as we shall see below, the following discursive strategies they used were not to add substantive support to their volunteered normative statements, and in many ways were quite un-related to issues of normativity.

This discursive strategy in itself does not illuminate much about the journalists' true feeling towards the practice of quoting from 'both' sides, but it does show a tendency to resort to normative answers (some very radically normative,

---

[87] This is similar to AS's answer for A4, that giving competing truths is "a good description of the way that […] serious […] responsible, liberal, market journalism" works, and "ah, where we should be heading."

such as MR's "can't really dispute that") at first and then to elaborate with the other discoursed examined below.[88]

5.VII.ii – Journalistic Judgement

Six of the respondents brought up the notion of journalistic judgement in response, usually to explain why simply reporting 'he said, she said' is insufficient. AB said "it's a judgement call," while BS explained that "professional journalists are supposed to use [news] judgement about what is important and what is fair..." They both also mentioned the subjectivity of such judgements, that "where you draw the line is where it starts to get difficult" (AB), and "there's no hard and fast rule about [using news judgement]" (BS).

BBC2, KD and JL mentioned part of their job is to 'evaluate' or 'judge' information as it comes. BBC2 stated "in the [BBC], doing a job like mine, I try to have a bit more than just a 'he said, she said,' but a judgement as well."[89] For A4, KD brought up her 'job,' replying that more experienced journalists like her "hopefully have built up some judgement and experience and knowledge," and that "when there are… *truly* competing truths then, then you're not doing your job unless you say what they are" and "discard" the ones that are "not true." JL advised that journalists have to make "an *evaluation* of an argument" to avoid giving time to "bogus" claims and perspectives.

SKY1 again contradicted their colleagues, saying that while journalists are not "preclude[d] from saying, 'This side of the argument has more weight than this one,' […] generally we don't do that." This, like their use of the normative strategy discussed above, again puts them at odds with the other respondents. They know that alternatives exist, that there are no hard and fast constraints on what they do, but political just don't do it because that's just the way it is.

We thus have a Realist idea, journalistic/news judgement, being used by these six as an argument against the Pragmatic 'he said, she said' method, further showing the uneasy relationship between these two epistemologies. However, their arguments are not against using the practice itself, but as admittedly subjective fixes to that practice. Furthermore, what exactly 'judgement' or 'news judgement' consists of is not expanded upon by them and what exactly they say they are doing is not clear from what I can gather. These concerns are expanded upon more fully in the following discourse.

---

[88] This also shows the strength of the method used, that is, asking for negative and positive things, for if I were to have asked instead, "What do you think about using 'he said, she said?" I would probably have only arrived at these normative statements.

[89] Similar to their highly Realist answer for A4, that "someone in a position like mine, um, part of my job is to get to the bottom of who is telling the truth and ex, and explain that."

5.VII.iii – (Im)balance

This section will examine the discursive strategy discussing 'balance,' employed by thirteen respondents, plus JJ's highly relevant answer from A4. Discussing 'balance' in relationship to the question is not unexpected; however the way in which they discuss it and the implications of their answers are highly interesting and illuminative of the discourses surrounding the issue of balance and truth.

BS, NW and SS praised 'he said, she said' because it provides "balance" (NW), a "balanced point of view" (SS), and is "fair and balanced" (BS[90]). The other respondents might have started out with positive views of balance, but all except these three moved on to be far deeper critique.

At the second level, eleven journalists brought up a major weakness in the 'he said, she said' method, that of having more than one perspective for appearances without some of the perspectives having legitimacy. Several are concerned largely with the superficial use of 'he said, she said.' WP gave an example of the new practice presenting new information to an outsider for a comment "knowing full well what his biases are" in order that "you have somebody to quote." AK was concerned that if "one side may be saying something that isn't true, and if you quote them equally, you're giving the impression that it is [true]," while CT criticized Fox News' slogan 'fair and balanced' as "giv[ing] you a false sense of fairness." SS was more concerned about journalists "just doing another point of view" without providing "the right context." Similarly, JL said "you can't give 50% of your story to one... one side if, if you think it's bogus," advocating the use of the journalist's "judgment."

Three stated that balance cannot be purely quantitative. KD said that "you can't chart it out like a, like a graph and say, you know, 'I'm giving two sentences to this and two sentences to that'." Similarly, SC said there is a "danger in presenting certain things that look as if people are filling out a form, as though, 'Well, this is terrific, you've really hit the mark on your objectivity!'," while AB brought up that although some "people think, 'If I have a […] counter-point here, there's my balance'," it can be "a bit deceptive." KD, SC and AB's view is telling, for them objectivity is described not as something formulaic or brutely Pragmatic, but more ephemeral, perhaps of the journalists' own judgement (although only KD mentions 'judgement' explicitly).

Similar to the discourse about 'judgement' (§5.VII.ii), these criticisms are aimed more at repairing the 'he said, she said' method; no one critiques the basis of

---

90 This is similar to BS's A4 answer: that "you try to be fair and balanced".

the method, just the potentially Antirealist application of that method in the day-to-day routines of journalists. These show concern over 'he said, she said' being used in a shallow, superficial, Antirealist way, either by hurried journalist or by those who want to purposefully give a distorted picture and thus manipulate the Pragmatic 'he said, she said' method.

Seven journalists extended this criticism even further, going so far as to say that an Antirealist false picture or depiction of reality can be created by using 'he said, she said.' For several journalists, this was talked about as a 'distorted,' 'skewed' or 'imbalanced' view of the real world. AS viewed it as a "problem" when "knee jerk assumptions" and efforts to be "neutral" causes "two sides, kind of, one of whom is right, one of whom is wrong" to be included, which "*can…* create a, introduce a, sort of, a distortion of its own." MR supposed that if there's "a lack of balance in terms of the quality" from each side then "you could end up with quite a skewed story." BBC2 worried about the "undue significance" that could be given to "a tiny minority" and that giving "both sides of the argument" can give the impression they have "equal weight or equal significance" or "being supported by an equal, um, proportion of society," indicating the construction of an imbalanced view of the real range of opinion. SC was concerned about "construct[ing] a false, um, dialogue, or […] invent[ing] a debate that's not there," and that if you do so, "in *fact*, it's a false kind of picture."

AM, AB and JJ are more concerned about providing inaccurate information. AM says that presenting "two points of view which may not be equally supported by evidence" in that "one side is fact and the other is not [...] the net effect is to mislead people and to misinform them." AB says that "a lot of times the second quote was just thrown in there for just some, sort of, um... impression" and that "it can be a bit deceptive." Similarly, in his answer to A4, JJ warns that "balancing arguments does not always bring you necessarily, in TV news, closer to the truth."[91]

Thus we have an important Pragmatic journalistic method, that of quoting 'both' sides of an argument, talked about as being highly problematic and potentially Antirealist because it can be easily manipulated and, in fact, highly distort the subject or story the journalists are trying to cover. This can be due to several factors, for instance Antirealist journalists purposefully manipulating 'he said, she said' to give a distorted picture. However, the respondents are mostly concerned about under-thought usage of 'he said, she said,' using it just for the sake of using it without thinking deeply about the negative consequences.

---

[91] He gives example of coverage of MMR vaccine in the UK in the 1980s being un-duly balanced and leading to misperceptions in the public of the safety of the vaccine (see also footnote 55).

It is also interesting that eight journalists were able to extend their critique to indicate that a basic and widely touted journalistic method, one that many of them reacted to by relying on its Pragmatic normative nature, could have the exact opposite intended effect, not of giving a balanced picture of reality but distorting reality itself, pure Antirealism. Thus we have journalists advocating using their professional practices to re-inject Realism into a Pragmatic method that is widely open to Antirealist distortion. These observations contrasts nicely into the next discursive strategy used, that of truth in relation to 'he said, she said.'

5.VII.iv – Absoluteness of Truth

This Realist discursive strategy was used in answer to C3 by seven journalists who stated that there is some objective truth that journalists think about when using 'he said, she said.' The relevant responses to A4 by AS and BBC2 (who were not asked C3), as well as BS, will also be included.

AK, AB and KD stated that journalists have to act as a Realist judge of what is true and what is not true early in the production process. For AK, "the truth isn't always subjective."[92] Similarly, KD stated that "when there are… truly competing truths then, then you're not doing your job unless you say what they are [and have] discarded some… because, in fact, they're not true [and] that you have given the reader a fair… fair assessment of what, of what the ground truth is." These statements talk about such truth as being Realist ('ground truth,' 'things that are true,' 'facts'), within the grasp of journalists, and that need to be applied during the writing of a story.

AB stated that "there are certain absolutes in society where we don't need to allow a counterpoint for," an interesting counterpoint to his A4 answer, "I'm not sure there's an absolute truth in every issue," that it is relative to political affiliation. For AB some issues have Realist absolute truths, others have an Antirealist relativity to one's political ideology.

AM, DH and JL gave similar Realist assessments, but at what stage in the production process it falls is not clear. JL said that "the point of journalism is to come up with a truth, to tell the truth," similar to her A4 answer, that "more sophisticated reporting in print publications […] there'll be more of an attempt to ferret out what really is the truth." DH says that "journalists… play a crucial role in simply bearing witness" as "the representative ears and eyes of our readers" so that the "large… bulk of what you read in, in the news account is indisputable." AM described a danger of 'he said, she said' as being that "you're giving weight... to two

---

92 As she answered for A4, "there are things that are true, and our job is to report those things as facts."

points of view" when "one side is a fact and the other is not." BBC2's answer to A4 is also relevant, saying,

> I think there are competing truths, but I think someone in a position like mine, um, part of my job is to get to the bottom of who is telling the truth […] I think it is sometimes quite simple to work out what the actual truth is.

By contrast, CT briefly said "you can't balance the truth, you know," indicating that use of 'he said, she said' has no relationship to the truth, pointing out quite directly the antagonism between Realism and Pragmatism.

BS, in answer to A4, said that "There are always competing depictions of reality […] maybe a truth will come out of it or maybe you'll just present all the conflicting interpretations." This indicates that truth, as well as confusion, could be a by-product of journalism. However, in contrast to the ones mentioned above, he places truth-finding as something that occurs during reception, not production. The only answer that directly rejects objective truth was given by AS in response to A4: "there is no… one… overarching objective… truth out there."

Thus we can see nearly half of these respondents saying the Realist action of differentiating between truth from non-truth is something done during news media production. Only BS placed it at reception, only Antirealist AS was sceptical about objective truth, and neither are in direct response to C3. Even CT's statement that truth cannot be balanced supports the notion that discerning the truth is something that journalists do during production of news media content. The antagonism between Realism and Pragmatism is especially apparent here.

5.VII.v – Discussion of C3

As shown above, Realist normative explanations were often used first as a knee-jerk reaction to the question. They were all, however, followed up by the more critical topics later on. Journalistic or 'news' judgement was mentioned quite frequently, however it was ill-defined and thus not helpful to the analysis. Balance was far more critically discussed, only three simply saying it was good and stopping there. Most of the rest are highly dubious of Pragmatic balance, warning of the potential Antirealist distorting effects that it can have. This is quite similar to the 'balance and fairness' discursive strategy used in C1 to discuss use of direct quotations (see §5.V.ii).

The Realist finding of truth is mostly talked about as something that is only of concern during news production, which is not very supporting of the Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas concept. The journalists mostly purport it is their 'job' to judge what is legitimate or true for the audience rather than talking about the audience's judgement itself. In this way, these discourses are closer to that of Realism than

Pragmatism, that the debate about truth occurs during the 'encoding' part of the mass communication practice, and that truth is not 'contingent.' They do, however, simultaneously acknowledge the dangers of manipulation of balance by Antirealist journalists and show a scepticism for news media's ability to be a Realist medium.

5.VIII – E4: 'All governments are run by liars'

Question E4 asked sixteen journalists the following:

American investigative journalist I. F. Stone said that 'All governments are run by liars and nothing they say should be believed.' Do you agree?'

This was not asked necessarily to see if the journalist agreed or not with Stone's provocative statement (indeed I anticipated that not many would agree with it), but to get the journalist to talk about the relationship between what government officials say and the 'truth.' A standard probe was included if I felt their answer was a bit short or unclear: "Well, when I read that I thought he was saying that journalists should *start* from the premise that they are lying."

The most informative direct response to this came from septuagenarian WP, who said that "Izzy [...] helped me get started in this business. Ah, he didn't believe it himself, but he said it." I asked, "Then why did he say it?", to which WP replied, "So he could get quoted! [laughs] You know, Izzy was a great character [laughs]."

Eleven journalists disagreed with the statement very directly. For instance, MW indicated Stone's statement was "characteristically provocative" and added "I could say with equal conscience, 'All journalists are liars and nothing they say should be believed,' but that wouldn't be true either, certainly not..." Five others agreed to a certain extent, for instance, JL said "I think that's a really dramatic statement that has a few shreds of truth! Yeah." However, since no strong conclusions can be drawn from a more quantitative look at their direct answers, other than that eleven people indicated disagreement with the statement, the other five partially agreeing, we will now turn to the discursive strategies they used in replying.

The first strategy, used by six journalists, is to try and redefine or define what 'lie' means in relation to politicians (§5.VIII.i), which is closely related to the second strategy used by two, to state that political discourse is beyond true and false (§5.VIII.ii). Thirdly is the admission that lies are possible (§5.VIII.iii), given by three. Lastly, in a more normative sense, was to mention what the job and/or role of a journalist *should* be in regards to scepticism (§5.VIII.iv), and was used by eleven.

5.VIII.i – Politicians and (Re)defining 'Lie'

One major feature of this discursive strategy, used by six journalists, was to (re)define what it actually is that politicians say, perhaps due to dislike of the term 'lie' included in the question. Sometimes this required a long explanation, and thus needs to be quoted at length as to paraphrase would eliminate the important nuances.

> [...] there are occasions where you suspect that people are using the information in a way to represent their case that isn't exactly, ah [...] what I would feel to be an accurate representation of the facts [...] (BBC1)

> [...] politicians and public officials... often shape, try to *shape* or *shade* the truth. Sometimes they lie, but sometimes *everybody* lies [...] (BS)

> My experience is, sort of... most politicians most of the time will, sort of, make an effort to, to, ah, sort of.... tell you what they think [...] Governments also have a, uh... predisposition to put the best... uh... ah, spin on what they do, the inclination to, uh, cover up bad news [...] they do it with, kind of... varying degrees of dishonesty. (AS)

> There, there is a strong desire [...] to see things presented, that happened, in a way that is favourable to them [...] I wouldn't say even distort things [...] try to make you see something that happened in such a way that, eh, it's slightly more favourable to them [...] (JJ)

JL simply responded "spinning the truth is their job." SS first said "Do [politicians] tailor their answers to, to their own political benefit? Absolutely they do," and when I asked SS to give a specific example when journalists failed to do their job, he discussed the time leading up to the Iraq War when "the Bush Administration was not being forthright in all the information that it had or didn't have" and they were "not reticent to try and get that information out at the outset."

Notably, BBC1[93] and BS[94] universalized the tendency to 'lie' or 'take information to support one's own case,' as it is, according to them, part of normal human behaviour. Contrarily, AS described "spin[ning]" and "cover[ing] up bad news" as a "predisposition" or "inclination" for politicians, thus locating it more specifically in that field than a universal property of humans.

These often long-winded explanations, which were (except for the latter half of BS) (re)definitions of 'lie,' on one level show the journalists hedging the validity of politicians' statements. AS and JL were the only ones to use the word 'spin(ning),' seemingly less derogatory than 'lie,' but not necessarily an inherently negative practice. Perhaps politicians' statements cannot be viewed as inherently Antirealist because they are the source of the vast majority of political journalists' information?

---

93 BBC1: "I think in pretty much any walk of life, people take information to support their case."

94 BS: "sometimes *everybody* lies."

Thus what politicians say must be something else, a softer Antirealism; not distortion, but not being forthright or reticent about giving information, spinning, shaping and shading the truth so as to make events be favourable to themselves or to support their case. The difference is that their examples can be dealt with through the Realist work, as with B1 and B2 (see §5.III), of professional journalists: un-shaping, un-shading, un-spinning, and keeping in mind what the politician's interests are.

This seems like, on the surface, an Antirealist position, in that the politician's statements' relationship to an underlying reality is bracketed out, but seen in the context of the following sections, I argue it will be more fruitful to view them as indicating more a Hyperrealist perspective.

5.VIII.ii – Beyond Truth and Lies

A second discourse, used directly by two British journalists confronted the possibility of politicians even being able to lie:

> [...] actually, you very rarely find politicians telling *outright* lies, they can be quite sophisticated in... not telling you... every single bit of the story, or telling you absolutely everything that you'd like to know [...] (SC)

> [...] anybody who consistently tries to lie, either to the public or to journalists, pretty... quickly... is, is, would be found out [...] so the idea that somehow you can just, uh, talk, you know, *wilfully* lie [...] when the demands of transparency are greater and greater [...] I just don't think it's tenable. (BBC1)

This is also highly implicit in the responses given by AS, BBC1, BS, JJ and JL (and BS who views lying as a universal practice) in §5.VIII.i, as they went to great lengths to define what politicians do as something other than 'lie.'

SC and BBC1's statements were phrased in the same way with Baudrillard's Hyperrealist thesis (as discussed in §2.V.iii) that media and advertising, and by extension news media, cannot lie because if they "really 'lie,' it would be easy to unmask them" (1970: 93). Politicians cannot lie, thus instead they spin, they shape, they shade, they make their statements in such a way that even a good journalist cannot necessarily 'prove' that they are wrong. Of course, this does not happen *all* the time, lies, and soon after apologies or corrections *are* made and admitted, as we will see next, but a far more useful strategy is unverifiable statements.

5.VIII.iii – Admission of Lies & Liars

Contrary to those above, NW and SS readily admitted the deficiencies of politics, while SKY1 accepted that potential and gives their Realist solution.

> Um, there are liars in government. There are people who are up to no good
> [...] But just because there are some liars in government up to no good
> doesn't mean that [everyone is]. (NW)

> Are there [...] examples of, um, egregious lies and mistakes? Absolutely, it's
> out there [...] To say there are corrupt government officials? Absolutely, ah,
> there have and will be more in the future [...] (SS)

> [...] a politician approaches you, they're speaking to you for a reason [...] it
> might be they're trying to plant something, it might be that they genuinely
> like you [...] once [politicians] achieve power the primary concern is holding
> onto that power [...] (SKY1)

NW and SS's direct admission is striking, especially considering the lengths journalists using the first two strategies went through to, as it were, cover for political lies. It is not clear *why* specifically these two were the only to openly admit it, but it makes little difference in their larger scheme of things, as with SKY1. As we will see from the next section, no matter if the politician lies or spins, the Realist journalist *should* be there to catch it.

5.VIII.iv – Journalists' Roles and Scepticism

In this discursive strategy, used by eleven journalists, the respondents prescribed what Realist activities journalists *should* do in regards to the validity of politician's statements. One major theme of these answers is 'scepticism' or being 'sceptical,'[95] most viewing it as a good thing. AB said "you gotta be sceptical about everything [...] look at things [...] beyond face value." AK said "I think our job is to be sceptical." JL says "you should always question everything they say." MR said "I don't think that anyone should accept what they are saying lying down and they should question it." SC said "we have a responsibility to test claims [...] possibly even test them to destruction" which needs "a certain amount of scepticism." SKY1 said "you always have to bear in mind that a politician approaches you [...] for a reason, and you have to work out what that reason is." SS said "you have to look at everything with a sceptical eye [...] delve into those questions and to try and get the right answers." WP's scepticism is expressed by saying "you shouldn't automatically take... what everybody says as the truth..."

In a slightly different mode BBC1 said due to "low levels of trust" there's too much "scepticism" and "cynic[ism],"[96] while still maintaining some as necessary. The only statement given that is *not* conditional about the need for scepticism in

---

[95] Those words being directly used by five of the journalists and implicit in the rest.

[96] BBC1: "I actually think that there's so much scepticism about what politicians say that I think that people are... perhaps more cynical than they need to be [...] I'm not sure people expect politicians to tell them the truth." ('people' here referring either to journalists or the audience, it is not clear.)

journalism is given by BS, who said "you always have to be aware that they're trying to advance an agenda. The news media are properly *sceptical*, sceptical of everything." This is, however, most likely not a totalizing statement, as BS's conception of journalistic professionalism is quite specific, admittedly "elitist."

The other respondents are far more conditional and normative than BS, saying that is the journalists job, they have a responsibility, they should be sceptical, shouldn't assume truth in the statements, they have to do this, gotta do that, I hope they do it, etc. Even NW, who does not mention scepticism, still says "Um, there are liars in government […] and it's our job to expose that."[97] Thus, as implied by their '(re)defining lie' discursive strategy, the journalist want to (re)inject 'reality' into Antirealist politician's statements and discourse to recast it in a *usable*, Realist mode.

5.VIII.vi – Discussion of E4

Insight into the epistemological relationship between journalists and politicians is shown by this analysis. The descriptions given are not always antagonistic and instead are couched in terms of what each field's 'job' is; it is expected that the politicians spin or even lie, but it is also expected that the journalists should check it. A purely antagonistic relationship between two parties would result, probably, in far more absolute answers, perhaps like Stone's, that all politicians lie. However, such a "cynical" view (as KD and MW describe it), while possible, is not tenable in such a professional field. The politicians may be the source of the vast majority of the political journalists' information, thus having them at a seeming advantage from the start, such power is denuded by the journalists' Realist scepticism. Politicians and their press officers can give their Antirealist information, speeches, interviews, data, etc, to a journalist, but the good Realist journalist does not necessarily need to believe it or blindly re-print it.

This type of relationship is described by Blumler & Gurevitch (1995: 24-44) as a way to resolve the uncertainty and complexity inherent in political communication. They conclude that such a relationship is not "reassuring" in regards to democracy; "political communicators" and their messages are given a "privileged position," there is a "reduction of political messages to the demands of journalism" (that is, of being a spectacle), the concerns of voters and audiences are often overlooked, and new ways of communication are not very welcome due to the need to maintain a measure of "stability" (ibid: 43-44). Government information and politicians' messages and the subsequent framing which dominates the media (Herman &

---

[97] The rest of his response is just highly critical of Stone's "conspiracy corner madness" and the danger that such conspiratorial positions would have journalist expose real liars.

Chomsky 1988, Fowler 1991, etc) are distributed by skilled press relations officers, tailored to the media, being either unverifiable or highly politically loaded, which journalists then try to decode for story-worthy information. Such a relationship is also not 'reassuring' for revealing truth to the public, one of the purported functions of a press in a democracy.

The important thing I want to stress about these strategies is the general avoidance of characterizing what politician do as being verifiable, something quite important if the people are to have access to true information to make our political decisions. A journalist can *try* to un-spin, un-shade, etc, a politician's Antirealist statement, they can *try* to understand their motives for presenting things in a certainly way and *try* to filter that out, they can compare their own facts with the politician's facts, etc, but none of these methods guarantees the emergence of truth. We also have the admittance of the possibility of lying by only four (BS, NW, SS, SKY1), however that is countered by their espousal of journalists' ability to decode their lies.

A notable feature of these discursive strategies is the invocation of the idea of political discourse being beyond lies, as discussed in §2.V. If a political leader promises simple nouns that are open to interpretation (hope, change, charity, etc), attacks abstract nouns (The War on 'Drugs' or 'Terror'), that is something that *is* impossible to prove or disprove. This is in contrast to more concrete messages ('no new taxes,' 'no raise in tuition fees') which are far more problematic as they are verifiable. What journalists describe as the Antirealist spun, shaded, shaped, or inaccurately represented facts and truths given by politicians are not necessarily things that can be reversed, un-spun, etc, to get the facts and the truth. These journalists' own view is largely that of a world of political news that is necessarily beyond the true and the false and thus Hyperrealist.

5.IX – Discussion of How Journalists Talk About the Epistemology of News Media

5.IX.i – *Summary of Discussions*

In §5.I, I found ten of the journalists replied to A2 in a quite critical Antirealist fashion, either that there is no objective reality or that news media and/or journalists themselves are not able to mirror reality. This is also reflected in their support for the influence of the political, economic and social situation of news media inevitably causing bias. By contrast, those with a Realist/Pragmatic answer to A2, that news is a mirror plus additional things, or that news is instead a mirror of society or culture,

are more mixed in their reaction to A3, more often than not rejecting or replacing the 'political' aspect.

While A3 is implicitly an Antirealist position, it is also highly reasonable and logical (could we not say the political, economic and social situation of people in general, not just the institution of journalism, causes us to always have our own perspectives?), disagreeing with it totally is not practical, despite its theoretical incompatibility with A2. Their Realist and Pragmatic perspectives do not seem to get in the way of agreeing with the socio-economic (and to a lesser extent political) situatedness of news media. We thus have a clear divide between Realists, Pragmatists and Antirealists for A2, which is only partially reflected in their more accepting answers to A3. This Antirealism strain is not as present in their other answers as A2's Realism is quite stark and, on its face, not as logical as A3.

Comparing the answers of A4 and A5 in §5.II gives us a unique angle. In response to A4, asking if they agree with the Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas, the majority agreed, but often contradictorily adding that a journalist's own (Realist) efforts to find some 'truth' were also needed. Only three were still sceptical of truth being possible in news media, indicating a more Pragmatic approach with some slight Antirealism. Four others also advocated Pragmatic approaches, such as consuming media the way journalists do or viewing the internet as the ideal Marketplace.

For A5, the respondent's general support for the Marketplace of Ideas did not extend when applied to the audience, who were usually constructed as having Antirealist desires. These answers indicating a preference to mix Pragmatic 'he said, she said'-style reporting with journalist's own Realist efforts to find 'truth.' However, this was not replicated in the majority of them viewing the audience as consuming news media in an Antirealist fashion. Only two said the audience was Pragmatically 'sceptical,' while the plurality talked about an Antirealist audience consuming news to reinforce their personal prejudices. Thus the journalists here talk about themselves as guardians of Realism, *not* Pragmatism, in reaction to the audience's Antirealist consumption habits.

As shown in §5.III, in giving examples of biased and nonbiased stories for B1/B2, we see more of a Pragmatist streak, especially in looking at the biases caused political partisanship and news organization's allegiances. Yet most were sceptical of the ability of balance to show bias, some praising 'he said, she said,' some indicating it can cause bias (similar to their answers for C1 and C3). The audience was, again, constructed as being Antirealist in their choices of consumption, with the journalists stepping in to fulfil a Realist or Pragmatic role. Realism was more readily apparent while talking about journalists' personal biases and contradictory/irrational

statements, and the need for fact-checking. Antirealist/Hyperrealist positions were only taken briefly, and by only a few respondents, when talking about the impossibility of non-biased news stories or self-deprecating reference to one's own lack of bias.

As seen in §5.V, §5.VI and §5.VII, the journalists' responses to C1, C2 and C3 largely were parallel to Tuchman's (1972) findings, that these 'strategic rituals,' in the Pragmatic tradition, are not part of any Realist strategy for news media production and instead use it in a defensive fashion. In response to C1, around half talked about direct quoting as being defensive in nature, to guard against potential criticism. Only one talked about 'truth,' also in defensive manner, and only two related quotes to the actual 'thoughts' of the source(s). The abuse of 'fairness' or 'balance' in regards to quoting was also much discussed, indicating a Realist cure to the potential Antirealism of *other* reporters. Three took a Pragmatic position, that having direct quotes would help the audience make up their minds.

C2 featured largely practical considerations about the usage of the Inverted Pyramid format. Otherwise, their widespread concerns about problems the structure causes for context in and complexity of stories indicate a tendency to talk about the news format *itself* is potentially Antirealist, and that good Realist journalists must be on their guard for abuses.

C3 is more productive than C2, in which journalists largely reacted to the question in a highly Realist mode. Critical discussion of 'using at least one source from each side' consisted of reliance on under-defined but Realist 'news judgement,' and a more interesting, layered consideration of the potential abuses of the 'balance' given by 'he said, she said,' over half ending up saying that balance can be 'distorting' and abusive in an Antirealist way if not used by proper Realist journalists (similar to their responses to B1/B2 and C1). The Realist action of judging what is true or not during the production process also had high support. Thus, again we see their Realism being put at odds with the Pragmatism of 'he said, she said,' and the Antirealist potential of journalism's own techniques.

Lastly, in §5.VIII, E4 gave another interesting layer to the discussion by journalists of the epistemology of news media. The journalists generally avoided talking about politician's statements as being verifiable, instead talking about the politicians' Antirealist act of spinning, shading, etc, the truth. Again, journalists talked about their job being to restore Realism to this by checking facts and being perpetually sceptical. It is also in this question that we see the first indications of seems to be a Hyperrealist point of view, that political statements are beyond verifiability.

In general, the major trend of the ways that these political journalists talk about truth and bias in the news media is the antagonism between the elitist Realist journalistic normativity, and the more democratic Pragmatic Marketplace of Ideas. Neither position could be wholly rejected and people advocating one position could easily move to the other depending on the question, or even within the same question. Antirealism was talked about in relation to politicians, the audience, the news media, and other journalists who are not doing their job properly, but, again, mostly as a problem that need to be solved by re-injecting Realism, and not through Pragmatic means.

However, we should discuss again if Pragmatism and Realism are fundamentally incompatible. If journalists are indeed the holders of truth, or at least have the proper keys to get us close(r) to truth, then why would any competing truths need to be aired? If the truths that they hold or the ways they access truths are not objective, and instead contingent, and we should view all news media products as inherently biased, then what exact legitimacy or expertise do journalists hold?

5.IX.ii – Critique of Realism

While the Realist position of finding an actual truth is examined very critically by many of the respondents, their other answers show that it is still a major structuring factor for them, whether they say they believe in it or not. The Antirealist position is untenable for the majority of journalists to hold across all questions. Although, as noted, the majority do admit to at least Antirealist social and economic influences to news media, it is, again, something to overcome through their own Realist actions or the Pragmatic plurality of media organizations. Thus, a way to explain the function of this contradiction can be seen in the Hyperrealist position.

As I argued in §2.V, any 'reality' in the news based in the beginning on some brute reality or social structures, as the Critical Realists would put it, does not necessarily filter on down to the other levels of reality. In espousing the 'reality' base of the social construction of news media, the Critical Realists miss the specific effects that language and mass media have on the way we construct news stories and the flows of 'information.' Communication between politicians and journalists is structured by the encoding, decoding and orchestration rituals of the media which are only to a very limited extent 'social' in nature. They are, instead, based on models of communication: if a certain pseudo-event happens there are certain prescribed ways of talking about it that are the basis in the planning and reporting (i.e. encoding) of the event which is then viewed (decoded) by other reporters and the audience, all using a range of codes that derive from within the media itself. This is now used for non-pseudo-events as well, as the encoding and encoding practices and the codes themselves become the dominant way all things are en/decoded. This

process has only been accelerated by the speed and scale of the growth of mass media, especially in the internet era.

I argue that the Antirealists are wrong in saying there is no underlying reality to such events, or that the underlying reality is not important. Such a critique unhelpfully pushes Antirealism out of the bounds of epistemology. We should view these events as being of a Hyperreal nature, which instead act to reassert that there is such an underlying 'reality' to counter any Antirealist criticism. Saying the Emperor has no clothes acts more to assert that the Emperor is an Emperor than to embarrass him for his lack of clothing. The journalistic act of (re)asserting Reality to the Antirealist audience, news medium, politicians and 'bad' journalists restores the Reality principle. The 'Realist' journalists are, in fact, asserting Hyperreality to the Antirealists, using the Hyperreal to 'fix' the Antireal. The Antirealist stance thus only helps by giving the Realists a cause and breathing life back into Reality by its denunciation.

5.IX.iii – Critique of Pragmatism

Similarly, the Pragmatism of the journalists acts to reassert that there is a plurality of opinion, that it is up to us to decide the 'truth' that we will accept for the near future until we decide to change it based on discussion and dialogue. This is despite the fact that we are all good sceptical Antirealists and know the news media's information is potentially untrue, unverifiable or so politically motivated that we cannot trust it. But a good democratic society needs to maintain the appearance of such autonomy and choice. Constantly being in an elitist Realist mode with Stalinist journalists telling us what is the truth and what is not the truth is too constraining. Being in a democratic Pragmatist mode would be far too ungrounded. They thus need to move constantly between the two poles, ironically, to provide any stability, avoid the evils of totalitarianism and provide balance by a perpetually antagonistic news media epistemology.

The Pragmatic idea of open discussion and conversation to find the best current solutions to our problems, as defined in §2.III, is quite seductive for it also asserts that each of our opinions are wanted and needed. However, as argued in §2.III.iv, it ignores that not everyone is of such a Pragmatic socio-discursive origin to be able to contribute effectively and relies instead on the *ideal* that humans are all equal and thus *theoretically* can all participate. But this would rely on an incompatible elitist mode advocating that, no matter if we are Pragmatic or not, we should all become educated to be Pragmatists for that is the best we can do right now. Such Pragmatic ideas thus open up the usual elites to control and shape the debate; not (necessarily) to tell us what to think, or what to think about, but *how* to think. We are urged to think in the Pragmatic way, discuss, debate, be anti-dogmatic.

The pragmatic reliance on persuasion instead of force gives those good at persuasion the power, and thus still relies on maintaining a system based on power.

Similar to the critique of Realism, the new experiences we go through that help us Pragmatically reweave our 'web of knowledge,' as Rorty puts it (see §2.III.iii), is also subject to the Hyperreal effects of mass media. The encoding, decoding, reweaving, etc, processes may have *once* been based on experiences mediated by nothing other than our senses, but that cannot be said anymore. The methods we use to code and weave are based on the same methods the media uses to code and weave its information for that is the dominant input people in developed nations have. Debate and discussion are largely inconsequential because they are based off of those Hyperreal codes, the discussion is about Hyperreality and not Reality itself.

5.IX.iv – Conclusion

Thus, I argue that my findings support the System Maintenance theory described in §1.I.iv. Even if the Realists are right and we can succeed in finding a way to remove the substance that separates our thoughts from reality, the reality we will find is a Hyperreal one based on mass mediated images, models and codes. Even if the Pragmatists are right and a good debate and discussion to reach our contingent conclusions will also be based on these models, the reweaving of our web and en/decoding of the messages on these codes.

The Antirealist audience, politicians, journalists and theorists are right in that mass media is not based off of or not related to the Realist's conception of Reality. But I argue that instead of rejoicing or decrying the death of Reality, thus bracketing out discussions of the Fourth Estate, we should constantly be asserting that what Reality we seem to have access to is, instead, based off of Hyperreality, a more vital, more Real Reality than any Realist could ever hope to provide. We must instead start from the position that epistemology of the news media is Hyperreal in nature, not that it is Antirealist and we need to re-inject Reality, and not that it is Pragmatic and thus increased plurality of voices and clear discussion is sufficient. Critiquing the Fourth Estate from an Antirealist perspective only reinforces the idea of Realism, instead a Hyperrealist stance need to be taken in order to reveal the phantoms of Reality that haunt our news media.

6 – INTERVIEW ANALYSIS: PROFESSIONAL IDEOLOGY

In this chapter, the theoretical discussion about professional identity of news media professionals (§3) will be further explored by consideration of the empirical interview data gathered. The questions asked reflect the two major issues raised in that section, 1) that of the conceptions of direct and indirect ideological control, best explained by socialization and self-censorship of journalists (§3.IV), and 2) that of *idealization* of professional norms, as I argued best explained by the concept of fetishistic disavowal (§3.V).

The first four sections examine the nature of control of news media and journalists. §6.I examines B3, how journalists talk about on what forms the range of opinion in the news media, probing specifically for the impact of the audience and ownership. §6.II explores B4, which put forth the idea that news media reflects the range of opinion in society and marginalizes disparate points of view. §6.III looks at answers to B5, moving the discussion over to the idea that news media reflects the opinions of political and economic elites. Lastly, §6.IV looks at a standard probe for question D3, asking journalists about governmental interference being a major limit to journalism. I find that the indirect control of audiences, the market and society is highlighted, while any potential control from owners and governments is downplayed or naturalized. This represents an excellent complement to the discussion in §3.IV, giving empirical evidence of discourses indicative of a process of indirect control conducted via professional socialization.

The latter three sections deal with the process of idealization in news media, that unreachable professional norms are held to be the ideal standard, and are often admitted to be unreachable. §6.V looks at how journalists talk about the news media as a 'mirror of reality' in that being a mirror is, for the plurality, an admittedly unreachable ideal. §6.VI returns to the discussion in §3.II about personal bias, examining answers to B6, the notion that journalists have a liberal bias. In this, as in §3.II, the journalists present idealized journalists, news stories and media systems and often admit such ideas cannot be actualized. Lastly, §6.VII looks at discursive strategies used in response to E2 which asked the journalists to respond to an assertion by a political news insider that journalists necessarily enter into unprofessional relationships with politicians which compromises their role as the Fourth Estate. To this, too, the majority apply the ideal of the perfect journalist-politician relationship.

§6.VIII will then conclude the discussion, combining the findings of §3.IV with the results of §6.I to §6.VII. In this I posit that both professionalization via

indirect control and idealization via fetishistic disavowal are needed to maintain a stable ideology for the Fourth Estate. Certain type of people must be filtered out in the professionalization and socialization process of becoming a journalist, while the remaining journalists are permitted room to critique their professional norms while, most importantly, still obeying them.

6.I – Range of Opinion, Audiences and Ownership

For question B3, the journalists were asked "What determines the range of opinion we find across the news media?" Two standard probes were also included in case their topics were not mentioned in the initial response: "How about audience?" and "How about ownership?" This was to make sure that, no matter the initial response, I would have a more specific range of responses to examine. For initial responses, three (BS, JJ & MR) brought up either the audience or the market of a media outlet, AK brought up ownership, while AS, BBC2 and NW brought up both ownership and audience. Those who did not initially volunteer 'ownership' or audience' were asked that probing question after their initial response.

Unique initial responses were given by five respondents and will be discussed first (§6.I.i). Then the ways in which they talk about audience and markets (§6.I.ii to §6.I.iii) will be examined, followed by the ways in which they talk about ownership (§6.I.iv to §6.I.vii). I will then discuss (§6.I.viii) the results, that despite talking about the influences of owners, audiences and markets as being indirect, the audience and market, two fields often conflated, is given higher explanatory power than ownership.

6.I.i – Unique Initial Responses

SKY1 mentioned the input of individuals, that, at least for Sky News, "from the head of news down to the lowliest, you know, junior producer, you know, they are all involved in deciding what is news and what is not." They also mentioned the presence or absence of "pictures"[98] to illustrate the story and "people to speak to" as issues that can limit the importance of a story. They added that "these are not insur [sic], insurmountable considerations. If a story it demands it, it will be the top of the news, uh, agenda even if we haven't got any pictures of it and even if we can't find a fucker to talk to." JJ briefly mentioned the UK "regulatory component of what is acceptable" and politicians. SS's answer is harder to categorize as he just gives a

---

[98] CT also brings this topic up after being asked the follow up about audiences, stating that "maybe the *order* that you cover the news... on TV will be dictated by which story has better pictures because [...] television has to have them to tell a story."

history of the diversification of voices in news media.[99] Americans CT and JL both mentioned the presence of controversies that were blown out of proportion and that fit the demands of cable news. CT said, "Unfortunately, I think it [is]... mostly [...] who's best at... creating a 'shiny metal object' for their... point of view."[100] JL mentioned that "on TV, people like to make a splash, people like a reaction, people like to gravitate toward a story that's gonna... drive the [24 hour news] cycle [that] we constantly need to *fill* with gobbledegook."[101]

These answers are interesting, showing that controversies generated for media are of some concern, at least to the two American reporters, but a wider view that this limits the range of opinions in news media is not illustrated. Similarly, the collective input of individuals in news media organizations is only mentioned by SKY1 and governmental media regulations only by JJ. As mentioned above, the audience or market for media is viewed as being the most important to look at, with ownership, for the British, coming in second.

6.I.ii – Audience as Influential

The most common volunteered answer to B3 was given by five journalists who said the audience is important in determining the range of opinion. BS said it has recently been found that "there's a market for, for news presented from a point of view..." which has thus given rise to Fox News and MSNBC, because "if there's a market in this country there will be a product." MR implied as much, saying "I guess a lot of it's to do with sales, really," mentioning that right-wing papers sell better than left-wing ones.[102] NW briefly brought up the influence of Rupert Murdoch, before largely dismissing it due to what he views as the more basic influence of the audience: the *Sun* supported Margaret Thatcher because their audience did.[103] He rejects a conspiratorial view of ownership, instead stating "I think that the views of the readers, and what they think, are *hugely* influential, 'cause

---

[99] SS says that "I think the *opinions* have always been there, now, though, you're able to... have a destination, whether online or on cable, that you maybe not have had before."

[100] CT gives the example of the GZM controversy again as an issue that has very little to do with "the debate that everyone is having around their kitchen table," which is the "economy," and sums it up thusly: I think in *politics* these days the tail wags the dog in how politics is covered and that *opinion* can create a narrative... that then gets covered as *the narrative* factual.

[101] JL gives two examples of recent stories that were popular and that she had to write about despite their lack of substance, which she calls "noise" and thinks are "distracting."

[102] MR gives the specific example of the dominance of "media that lean *right*" such as the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail* which "sell very, very well" contrasted with the *Independent* and the *Guardian* which have lower readerships.

[103] NW: "I mean, the biggest influence he has had, obviously, is on the *Sun*, and, you know, the *Sun* in the 80s was a cheerleader for Margaret Thatcher, but, hey, guess what? That's where most of the *Sun* readers *were*."

no paper wants to get ahead of or be behind their readership." For JJ it is less about the 'market' for an audience than about the "viewers" and the "public" reacting when "boundaries have been ... transgressed." This leads to journalists and news media "always trying to anticipate what the public will view as being acceptable or unacceptable for the way that we behave."

AS and BBC2 were in the middle attributing it to both the audience/society and the ownership. AS claimed it is "partly [the] range of opinion in society itself," a statement added after first saying it is "mainly... who owns the British media." He contextualised it more broadly, however, that in determining what opinions the public may have, we need to "tak[e] into questions about, sort of, yeah, history and background and, sort of, the political structure of society." In the probed response from BBC2, they said that ownership and audience "come together" because "obviously you're targeting it at a particular type of reader, and the reader is going to expect what they get," and working out the dominance of each sector is "it's sort of chicken and egg".

Three other probed responses also brought strong support for the audience's dominance in forming the range of opinion. Americans JL and SS both brought up how the audience of cable news media organizations has, or for SS "tends" to have, a direct relationship to that organizations' political slant.[104] SKY1 also gave a contrast between Sky News and BBC: "whilst we all are speaking to everyman, em, perhaps Sky is more focused on the, the everyman definition than BBC is."[105]

6.I.iii – Audience as not so Influential

Only five are sceptical of the influence of the audience. Speaking broadly, AK noted that markets like San Francisco and Boston while having many liberals do not have a corresponding liberal media infrastructure. This led her to conclude that "I don't know that it's... it's... an, an automatic given that people who want it are going to get it." AM spoke more about her experience in broadcasting, saying that "I've never observed a decision to not cover an important story... because it was judged to

---

[104] JL said that "for cable news, in my opinion, the audience definitely parallels, you're not gonna find liberals watching Fox News, it's like, it's like... listening to *blasphemy* to them, in the same way you're not going to find... conservatives listening to Rachel Maddow." SS's opinion is similar but gives the audience a bit more range, saying that people who "watch Fox News tend to be conservative or Republican, not all of them, but they tend to be more conservative or Republican, and th, those who watch NBC, or, MSNBC tend to be generally more liberal and more Democrat."

[105] SKY1 elaborated: "BBC [News] presupposes a level of knowledge on the part of its audience that Sky does not" and often focuses on "niche" stories "which don't have particularly broad relevance," while Sky is more "populist" in that "a greater section of the population might be, be interested in" the story or that it "may be more relevant to a greater cross-section of society."

be not... likely to attract... a big audience" and mentioned that they have done "very tough-minded stories on some really difficult complex issues [...] that... aren't tabloid friendly or sexy" because such serious stories are "our DNA, that's who we are." Her colleague CT gave a similar answer, "Look, you're gonna cover the top news of the day no matter what," as in no matter what the audience wants.

SKY1 also mentioned this tension between giving the audience what it wants and what news journalists believe should be covered. They brought up that

> *Private Eye* have been running a story for quite some time about the *Guardian* and how their editorial policy was dictated by the number of hits that stories were getting on website. We [Sky News] pay attention to it, but we certainly don't let it, eh, dominate or dictate our news agenda.

While JL gave strong credence to the influence of the audience on cable news, as mentioned above, she does less so for newspapers, saying that she is not sure if such political partisanship is "mirrored on, in major newspapers, the [*New York*] *Times*, the [*Washington*] *Post*, the [*Wall Street*] *Journal*" because people "of both persuasions read" them.

6.I.iv – Audience and Range of Opinion – Discussion

This shows a generally pervasive and (except for AS) not often critical strategy in talking about media power, a more common-sense assertion of the audience's influence, and often conflating 'audience' and 'market.' The only strong argument against audience influence comes from the two senior correspondents at MSNBC, AM and CT, as well as SKY1, citing a news agenda outside the audience's control. AS and BBC2 are unsure exactly who is dominant, the audience or the ownership.

But for five audiences are still groups that need to be targeted, pointing out the commonly-understood political biases of US cable news and UK print media as being marketing strategies to get audiences. SKY1 also argues that a sort of 'market' differentiation to exist between BBC and Sky. This shows a general support for audience determination of media content, but it is certainly not monolithic. In order to get a better contrast, we will also need to look at what strategies they used when talking about ownership influence.

6.I.v – Ownership Interference and Personal Experience ('Never'?)

When asked about the influence of ownership, most of the American respondents strongly and directly rejected this, either citing their personal history or that of their colleagues, that it 'never' happens, similar to how many talked about government interference (see §6.IV.i). SS felt so strongly about this he brought it up three separate times:

> I would be hard pressed for you [sic] to find *anybody*, anybody who had said, 'The President of the company, or [...] the head honcho said we can't cover this story.'
>
> I, I can't think of a single example of a *major* news organization where the company executives have said, 'You gotta cover it this way,' I, I just don't think it happens.
>
> I, I can't recall anyone saying, 'Management told me I gotta cover this story *this* way.'

He explained the reasons for this twice: "I think if that happened, if you're a true journalist, you would leave that news organization," and "if that were to happen, certainly if that happened to *me,* I would say, 'See ya later!'." Other Americans used the same strategy:

> I, I've never seen ownership... of media to, in anything like a heavy handed way, or even a light handed way, interfere with editorial decisions. (BS)
>
> I've never seen *any* influence brought to bear from one end or another, it didn't matter who was in charge of [NBC], um, the news was kept quite protected... from that. (AM)
>
> I, I have worked for the [*Washington Post*] for 40 years… it's never… told me what to do or say, but it told me afterward that it didn't like it, why'd I do it [laughs] but… in the process I never had *any* interference from ownership. (WP)

CT said that, due to its ownership by multinational GE, NBC has been accused of having a "pro-defence contractor," yet he replied simply that this "never happens."

BBC's SC also stated this, for both himself at the BBC and for other reporters in general:

> I'm in a happy position that I... am not... you know, I've never encountered, I've never been involved in anything like that […] I don't, I don't know, from my own personal experience, of people, many people who've actually ever had to sit down before writing an article and to think to themselves, 'How will the, the boss [...] take this?'

He continues, saying that while there is "an endless fascination" for British newspapers to talk about ownership, his examples being the Telegraph Group-owning Barclay Brothers and, again, Rupert Murdoch, he does not know "how much influence any of them really wield on the day-to-day, w, for journalists."

NW and BS followed a similar pattern to SC's later quote, mentioning that personal experiences of day-to-day operations are not the way to judge ownership influence, both in reference to Rupert Murdoch. NW started off his by bringing up that "People talk about how it is the media barons who own the paper and they drive it, and obviously the most... obvious figure is Rupert Murdoch." He, however, gave

evidence to contradict this, pointing out that "historically" the *Times* has "always sucked up to whoever's in power" be they left- or right-wing, a "venerable tradition" that has not changed with Murdoch's ownership. As mentioned above,[106] he noted that while "the *Sun* in the 80s was a cheerleader for Margaret Thatcher" that was due to the concurrent audience for the *Sun* and not necessarily Murdoch's own political leanings. BS said that even though Murdoch "owns a lot of the big media, I'm not sure he dictates what they cover or how they cover anything."

6.I.vi – Ownership Interference Occurs Over There, But Not Here

AM and MR mentioned Murdoch, citing his influence in newspapers. AM at first only talks about her own work experience,[107] later adding that Murdoch's ownership "has made a difference" mainly with the *Wall Street Journal* as evidenced by a "quite apparent change in... the editorial approach to the news pages" and that the "firewall between the newspaper and the editorial... page side" is now "less apparent." Sky News' MR takes a bit longer to come to a conclusion. At first she said that, while "the *Sun* and the *Times* fall into line with [Murdoch's] ... views, or whatever," the *Sun* and the *New York Post* both also "take their own, kind of, editorial lines on things," while the *Wall Street Journal* "is fine," implying a lack of strong influence. She then, however, stated that, "I guess to some extent it does have some kind of, um... maybe it has some kind of an influence," before again giving counter-evidence, that "I don't think there are many... newspapers owners who are, whose sole focus is that newspaper," and that "they leave the day-to-day running of it" to the editors, a view she admitted might be "naive." She then concluded, as did many in §6.I.v, with her personal experience, that

> his name has never been mentioned, you know, in all the years I've been working at Sky... other than to say, you know, 'Rupert Murdoch is coming to visit,' or whatever.

KD stated while there are owners who are "willing to put money into something without the expectation of *making* money of it," most are run by "either individuals who are trying to make a living" or "shareholders who expect a return on their investment." She did not elaborate any further, but it is interesting to note that she implies heavy influence by owners and making a profit are mutually exclusive.

---

[106] See §6.I.ii and footnote 103.

[107] AM: "I worked for NBC when it was owned by RCA and I've worked here [at MSNBC] now for decades under General Electric, and... I have not seen any... change, other than... a willingness to spend money or not spend money."

6.I.vii – Ownership Does Influence Some Things

Americans JL and AK mention that ownership does influence, but only the op-ed pages of newspapers.[108] Veteran reporter and current editor MW's probed response was, contrary to most, quite supportive, but takes a more macro perspective: "Oh yeah, there is a sort of bias towards, obviously, a bias towards market capitalism in the structural ownership of the press, certainly in this country and the United States," but he does not elaborate any more.

As mentioned in §6.I.ii, both AS and BBC split the determination between audience and ownership, however AS said that it is "mainly" ownership without further elaboration about it.[109] BBC2 took a bit longer to get to their conclusion. Their volunteered answer was that it is "the starting point and the stance of each particular media organization" in that the BBC News' "approach" is being "fair and balanced," while "you know what the political perspective is" of newspapers like the "*Daily Telegraph*." This answer being a bit vague, I asked "What do you think causes this?" to which they replied that it has to do with the news organizations "whole ethos and management." I then asked, "So it's the ownership or?" to which they replied, "I see. Well, I am sure it flows from the ownership and the management, yeah." When I asked about the audience they replied that both audience and ownership are important, but that "it's probably whoever starts up that organ will start from that perspective and that will effect who views it," but still concluding, as mentioned above, "it's sort of chicken and egg."

6.I.viii – Discussion of Ownership and Range of Opinion

The insistence on no ownership control, as evidenced by the personal experiences of six journalists, shows an orientation toward thinking about control as a direct action done interpersonally and visibly. They do not mention any more passive means of control, such as promotions or employee bonuses as evidence of ownership influence. Interestingly, AM switches from using her personal experience at MSNBC and NBC News to a content analysis of the *Wall Street Journal* to note Rupert Murdoch's ownership influence. The ones supporting ownership influence discuss the non-controversial ownership influence on the op-ed sections of

---

[108] JL: "Is Murdoch conservative? Yeah. Is the *Wall Street Journal*, which is owned by Murdoch, does that have a conservative editorial page? Yes. Does the *New York Times* have a liberal editorial page? Is it owned by a liberal? Yes. Um... just to some extent." AK: "…on the newsgathering side there isn't much [influence]", however "institutions that have an owner that has a point of view, that owner is free […] to influence the... opinion pages..."

[109] AS says this before laughing and then adding "and, partly rage of opinion in society itself" which he says also "takes into questions about, sort of, yeah, history and background and, sort of, the political structure of society,"

newspapers (AK & JL) or more abstract and not well defined structural critiques of the economic basis of news media (Westminster-based *Guardian* reporters MW and AS).

Can we thus simply conclude that because the majority of journalists 'never' experience personal interference from the owners of the company that it does not happen? Or is it fair to conclude to the contrary, that because it does not happen directly it means the interference is, necessarily, indirect? As mentioned in §3.IV.iii and §3.IV.iv, it is inherent that in any profession a degree of socialization and filtering out of incompatible employees must occur, especially for the elite political journalists who work for large media organizations that I interviewed who need to internalize professional norms to reach their positions.

MR, SC, NW and BS purported that owners cannot get involved in the day-to-day operations, but this lack of direct interference only shows the need for indirect influence, for some measure of control is needed for any complex commercial organization to function. I argue that the defensive 'never' statements from AM, CT, MR, SC and SS, as well as using the ownership control of op-ed by AK & JL as a contrast, shows a naturalized denial of the power of ownership.

6.II – Society and Range of Opinion

B4 deals more with the effects of society on the range of opinion, with a quote from McNair (2009: 46):

> A scholarly perspective is that, quote, "the news media of a particular society […] tend to construct accounts of events that are structured and framed by the dominant values and interests of that society, and to marginalise (if not necessarily exclude) alternative accounts." What do you think?

This was to give the respondents a chance to respond to a more macro-social perspective, to see how, by their response, they would interpret 'dominant values and interests of society' to mean.

Most of the respondents for B4 generally agreed with the question, but gave different reasons why. The most common explanation for agreeing was to note the influence of the audience or the media market, used by nine (§6.II.i). A further seven, responding to the 'exclude or marginalize' part of the question, discuss the presence of niche markets (§6.II.ii). Three brought up that this occurs because the news media can only reflect valuable, popular or important opinions in society (§6.II.iii). Two noted that the sources for news stories do need to be expanded (§6.II.iv), and four miscellaneous discursive strategies are also briefly described (§6.II.v).

6.II.i – Audience as Market

The relationship between news media content and the demands of the audience is the most common answer. Americans AK and CT, and British NW, agreed, relating the audience more directly to being a market. AK agreed ("sure") because journalists are "members of the society whose pay checks get paid by people who are part of the society," while CT gave an example, that "there are some news organizations that, I think, write headlines to garner clicks" (and thus more audience to sell to advertisers) on their web pages. NW agreed, saying

> I am sure that's right… because, um, remember, remember *news*, apart from the BBC, is a commercial business, and… you know, you're not quite selling… washing powder… um, but you are selling a product, and you want your, the consumers of that product to *buy* it.

He concluded by saying, "I think you are right, I think that newspapers *do*, sort of, try to give their readers what they want," re-paraphrasing the question in an interesting way.

MR agreed, saying that Sky News chooses stories about immigration and crime because "we know that those play well with our audiences" and thus those are the types of stories they "would give prominence to." SS said that it is less about societal than political interests, and related it more to the audience's own choice.[110] WP appeared to disagree, but part of his answer does support the notion of the first half of B4, noting "we're in a mass media business, and we're trying to reach a whole range of people with a whole range of different types of stories and coverage."

BS and SC decided, despite implying a feedback mechanism between the two fields, in the end it is the audience who is determinate because news media outlet does not want to get too 'far away' from audiences. BS said that "The values of a society are likely to be shaped the way the news is covered because the press shares those values and so does the audience, the readers, the viewers...", implying a circuit between social values and the media. SC said B4 is "a reasonable analysis of, um, certainly, a lot of newspapers" because they "have their own view of what they consider to be the popular culture or the cultural mores of society […] depending on their readership."[111] He noted that the audience, "they reflect the, kind of, cultural norms and cultural assumptions, you know, back" which causes them to "reinforce

---

[110] "If you don't agree with [conservative Rush Limbaugh] you might listen to him for a little bit, but you're not going to stay with him for a long period of time, same if you're listening to a, uh, liberal commentator like, you know, Bill Press... or Rachel Maddow." (SS)

[111] SC's spectrum from a "cosmopolitan, metropolitan, liberal view" to "a much more conservative traditional, uh, view."

one another." They both gave determinacy to the audience, that "you can't go... too far away from your customers in interpreting events" (BS), and that the news media "always wants[s] to be in the *right place* when it comes to where, you know, cultural values are" (SC).[112]

MW's answer was a bit mixed, at first explicitly citing ownership, but in the end basing his answer in the audience's demands on the news market. He said at first that news organizations (he does not specify newspapers or broadcast) "very often constructs news to reflect the values of the people who own and run the news papers" as opposed to "automatically construct[ing] views that reflect the values of society." His example was the *Daily Mail*, which he said "reflects a level of society way out of reach of most of its readers" and thus "reflects an aspirational view of society," "a sort of fantasy world" and "doesn't really reflect the diversity of its readers day-to-day experienced lives." He then quickly added, however, "There's a great market for it," indicating that the audience actually wants the distorted image that the 'aspirational' and 'fantastical' *Daily Mail* stories presents to them. When I tried to get him to apply his answer to news media in general, he still maintained it is "a kind of fantasy world" and "wholly invert" to our daily lives, because if newspapers did reflect real life then "all the women would be walking around here with their tits out."

These nine, in the end, all give determinacy to the audience, in a much stronger way than they did for B3, most likely due to the second part of B4 about excluding and marginalization. This determinacy is, however, quite abstract and indirect, no specific instances of *direct* audience influence were given other than, often, vague allusions to markets.

6.II.ii – Presence of Niche Markets

Seven respondents reacted to the question by noting that, in fact, niche markets for minorities or smaller communities do exist. AS disagreed with "exclude" but, in the end, agreed with "marginalize," adding that "if you... look hard enough for... [a] range of perspectives on British society […] you will find them." BS similarly noted "there *are* niche audiences which may have a very divergent point of view," also noting that the internet "has identified a lot of niche audiences." JL simply agreed with B4, pointing to gay, black and Hispanic community newspapers which can deal with "issues that are really big in *those* communities [but] are just, like, not necessarily big issues… by [sic] the mainstream white… uh, privileged [media]."

---

112 This is a similar answer to what NW gave in §6.I.ii in regards to why the *Sun* in the 1980s was supportive of the Conservatives; because their audience was.

While NW mentioned that consumers are needed for commercial media, as noted above, he adds that "there are… voices… and opportunities for people who aren't in the mainstream," giving the example of Channel 4 which has "a *specific* remit to, uh, diversify, um, broadcasting opportunity and provide, um, uh, programming that's, uh... really is of interest to groups who feel that they may not be, um... catered for in, in, in the media mainstream." SC said that "I am not sure that… that alternative voices are squeezed out all together," but that liberal media marginalizes conservative voices and vice versa, and "taken as whole" there is "a very broad spectrum of opinion." WP instead notes the diversity of content within a single newspaper itself: "That's why we have funnies, that why we have a woman's section, that's why we have a sports section."

This strategy seems to be slightly defensive, apparently reacting to the words 'exclude' and 'marginalise' in the question to assert that while exclusion or marginalisation may happen, the information is still out there for interested people, or ones from a specific community, to get. They apparently feel the best way to answer is to mention the presence of niche markets, thus nullifying any notion that groups or opinions are excluded, and in this way is largely congruent with the previous discursive strategy.

6.II.iii – Macro-Social (Value, Popularity and Importance)

Interestingly, only three respondents agreed with B4, relating the media with representing society in general without reference to 'markets.' AB agreed with and defends B4's position, saying that it is because "there's not many people who subscribe to the Green Party [or] are Libertarians" and that journalists "gotta make a judgement about what to include and what's […] the important parts [sic] of the story […] who is actually... valuable enough to mention, sort of." CT answered by giving a metaphor (in a self-admitted "simplistic way") that "soccer" will get less coverage in the USA because "American football is more popular."

AS is more critical of this position, however. He first said, like AB and CT, that, "It *might* be the case that, sort of, minority opinions are minority because... most people don't, ah, ah, ah, agree with them," adding that the "media available within a society is... determined by the […] ideological bent of, uuuh, that society." He then quickly gave a much more critical response to his own observation, that this has "its roots in, um, sort of, yeah, class and money and, um, history and, uh, ownership" and acknowledges that "narrative[s] and ideologies […] that threaten that are [less] likely to flourish than those that do."

6.II.iv – Sourcing

Two journalists linked notions of range of opinion to problems in sourcing. AM said she thinks B4 is "a very, um... apt criticism" and that she has "tried to be conscious of... that tendency... of our media to marginalize... disparate points of view and minority points of view." Likewise, SC noted that "most journalists don't set out at the start of the day, you know, to give a partial account" and that "they do try to give a full account, but I think inevitably some voices get lost, some voices can, can get crowded out." For AM, this is "a real challenge for the establishment, mainstream media" and she laid the blame on news companies not being "diverse enough in [...] our own outreach... for the kinds of people that we interview." SC also added that the question raised by B4 is

> a tricky one because every now and again, you know, you do come across a point of view and you think, 'Well […] maybe we should have included that point of view because that's clearly a valid interpretation of what is going on,' and, 'Have we included all the people?'

This is a very common charge against the news media, that their sources of information and the people they interview are not diverse enough (see Herman & Chomsky 1998, Philo & Berry 2006, Davies 2008, etc), and it is somewhat surprising that only these two journalists, both in an introspective and self-critical way, mention this issue. They do so, however, by mentioning that it is something they recognize and think about, but neither offered a good 'solution.' Unlike the others, they agreed with the question as being a 'problem,' and, while not admitting it is, for instance, an irresolvable problem, treated it as something that can be cured.

6.II.v – Other Discursive Strategies

Other responses include CT, talking again about his 'shiny metal object' thesis.[113] DH, who got excited when I asked the question, raising his hands as if to say 'of course,' replied, "That's inevitable!" without giving a reason specifically why he thinks so. He did give a very long answer, indicating that the solution is a more internationalized mainstream media with global concerns, which he thinks will develop due to globalization.

SC noted that the broadcast media in the UK are "much more restricted in terms of Acts of Parliament" which "represents the people" and "therefore that represents a little snapshot of all the cultural, you know, mores of society," but that journalists still think of ways to include other underrepresented groups. AM was the only one to bring up personal characteristic of journalists, mentioning that the

---

113 More specifically, CT said that "there's... news organizations" who "write to get a get a link on *Drudge* [i.e. *The Drudge Report*]" or to get cable "producers or opinion shows to notice" in order that "their... column... […] becomes a topic of conversation."

"tendency […] to marginalize... disparate points of view and minority points of view" (mentioned in §6.II.iv) is caused in part by news companies not being "diverse enough in our hiring."

6.II.vi – Discussion of Society and Range of Opinion

For this question, the vast majority of respondents find that using the audience as part of their answer gives the most utility, that is, saying that the media is sufficiently diverse of content and opinion. For nine the audience as a market itself is the determining factor, while seven note that niche markets fill up any gaps that may be missing in the mainstream media. Only three mention the value, popularity and importance of opinion in a macro-social way, and only two the problems of sourcing, showing that a reliance on markets to explain the range of opinion has much greater explanatory power than that of reflecting society in general. This is most likely due to the inclusion of 'marginalise' and 'exclude' in the question. If something is marginalized or excluded it must be because there is no market for it, or those 'marginal' groups are, in fact, a market served by nice media. Only AS provides a critical slant on the answer, citing "class and money and, um, history and, uh, ownership" as being a very large influence on the "roots" of this whole discussion, a typical response for AS, and similar to his answer to B3 (see §6.I.ii).

This shows again strong support for the explanatory power of audience-as-markets, and also the internalization of the ideology of the market is the arbiter of what is to be included or excluded from media discourse. As noted in §6.I.viii, the ways in which the audience and owners are discussed is inconsistent; the indirect influence of audiences via markets is given high explanatory power, while the lack of direct ownership influence, at least in their own companies, is categorically rejected. While they might not agree on the specifics, they do tend to agree that some indirect influences are stronger than others.

6.III – Elites and Range of Opinion

Question B5 stated:

And others, like Noam Chomsky, say it is usually the range of opinions of the political and economic elites that forms the range of opinion in media. What do you think?

This was, again, to give a specific group ('political and economic elites') to respond to. The mention of Noam Chomsky was also purposeful, as to get the respondents to reply to a position from someone of his reputation. Only four people (MW, NW, AK and SKY1) actually mentioned Chomsky in the answer, MW and SKY1 to say they do not accept his thesis, NW to say how he can "see" Chomsky is right but still

struggling to totally accept it, and AK to mention how she doesn't have the "luxury" to think about Chomsky "anymore."

The responses to B5 were just as diverse as for B3 and B4. This was a point of major frustration for AK,[114] while MW responded negatively to the question, instead his response being more of a personal attack on Chomsky, only concluding that "he's far too reductionist, he makes it far too simple." Otherwise, the remaining fifteen respondents used a wide range of discursive strategies. Most agreed with B5, six saying political news is about elites so it should cover those elites (§6.III.i). Three agreed, mentioning the greater freedom that the internet gives to non-elites (§6.III.ii), four talked about the personal characteristics of journalists (§6.III.iii), two, briefly, that the news media is constrained to being pro-capitalism (§6.III.iv) and four about the utility of man-on-the-street perspectives (§6.III.v). There were also unique responses from four (§6.III.vi).

6.III.i – Political News is About Elites

Six journalists replied by, in a sense, defending the elite dominance of political news media. AB said that elites "are the people that are often being covered... so those are the perspectives that are coming through" because, for instance, "the leader of an organization ... um, their words carry more heft" than that of the man-on-the-street. BS said "there is an [sic]... political and economic elite in this country, it is a meritocratic elite […] and they tend to share certain assumptions, certain points of view," without connecting it directly to the range of opinion in media, other than that they don't understand "populist" opinions. His use of "meritocratic elite" is in contrast to "hereditary elite," indicating the former's dominance is more legitimate than the latter. DH pointed out that "political and economic elites dominate... many things, not just the media,"[115] but, as noted later in §6.III.iii, he also took effort to assert that journalists themselves are not part of the 'ruling class.' JL stated that the "the political elite, yes, does drive the story and, to a greater degree, the people over there in the White House drive the story,"[116] without giving a specific reason why.

---

[114] AK replied, "I feel like I'm getting a philosophy quiz here, and [laughs], rather than a discussion of practical journalism […] I'm not a philosophy major". She continues to say that "it's not something I've given a lot of thought to recently, this, a great, sort of, undergraduate exercise," and that due to her need to "function in the realm, now, of the day-to-day practice of journalism" she does not have "the luxury of time to be thinking about Noam Chomsky anymore, it was fun when I did, but not anymore." I thus moved on to the more 'practical' concerns of C1 without probing further.

[115] His specific examples being "halls of power and government", "the board rooms in corporate America", "in academia" and "education."

[116] She also has a different conception of what is 'elite' than DH, saying that "the mainstream newspapers... and news organizations [...] all the *big* ones that you're talking to [i.e. MSNBC, *New York Times, Washington Post*], and they're, we *are* the 'political

SC and SKY1 both said that "it kind of goes without saying" (SC), that B5 is "self-evidently going to be true" and Chomsky "has a very truistic point" (SKY1). For SC, the reason is that

> most of the people we deal with are, by definition, you know, eh, part of the elites, they're MPs, or they're ministers, or they're, uh, you know, people who are able to influence opinion and, kind of, govern the country […] a lot of the things that happen at Westminster, involve, you know, just, different, you know, different bits of these quite influential people.

SKY1 added "quite clearly it's going to be the opinion of the elite because those are the people you're going to be talking to," "the elite dictate the terms," "those are the people who control the way in which things go because those are the people who are paid to do that very job."

These six feel the need to point out that elites get more coverage because they are the ones who 'dominate many things,' 'drive the story,' 'influence opinion,' 'govern the country,' 'control the way in which things go,' 'dictate the terms,' and 'are paid to do that,' thus validating the elite's influence on the range of opinion as well as journalism's focus on them. This is, in a way, unsurprising and rational, for to ask sports or business reporters about why they focus on elite athletes or successful companies would seem self-evident. But it also shows a naturalized tendency to view politics as almost entirely about political elites and, as we will see in §6.III.v, *not* about 'man-on-the-street' perspectives.

6.III.ii – Internet and Chaos

Three journalists brought up the chaos theory discussed earlier (see §3.III.i). Experienced American journalists SS and KD both stated that this is new: "that's been the change, really, in the last couple of years" (SS), "I think that [i.e. elite dominance] was probably […] more true [sic] earlier than it is now" (KD). For both of them the reason is, unsurprisingly, the internet. SS noted with the internet "any story can be posted on any site[117] and […] that story will *drive* and have as much influence as the *New York Times*," while KD similarly noted that "there are just so many media platforms and so many outlets that, I think, virtually anyone who wants to... propagate their opinion, uh, can do it." Interestingly, KD added "that doesn't mean you'll get people to watch or read or listen to it, but at, at least you have, for *free* even, you can put it out there."

JJ at first agreed with B5, saying "it seems to be self-evident," but later adds "then you got […] all this other, sort of, what do you call it […] all the Twitter and,

---

elite' [doing "" with her fingers]," adding that they are "the two percent of people that follow all this stuff [political news] every single day."

[117] He lists the *Drudge Report*, the *National Journal*, *the Hill* and Politico.com.

sort of, um, YouTube types." What is also interesting about this is that more people did not bring up the presence of the internet, not even the political bloggers (AB, AS, and JL), otherwise it performs a similar function to the 'niche market' discursive strategy (§6.II.ii), that the presence of alternatives disproves its monolithic nature.

6.III.iii – Personal Characteristics of Journalists

Four bring up the personal characteristics of journalists, MR and DH as reasons to disagree with B5 and AB & BS in agreement. MR said that "I completely disagree with that [B5]," citing her reason as "the majority of people who work in the media are actually liberal, very liberal," implying that such a liberal leaning is anti-elitist. DH said that "a lot of my colleagues […] they didn't… emerge from, you know, some elite ruling class," that not "every, you know, reporter whose by-line appears on the front page of the *New York Times* was born with a silver spoon in their mouth," and that the profession does not pay enough to have "elitists [sic] clamouring to… grab my job."

Contrarily, AB said he would agree "to an extent" in that "people who are in the news business are coming from a lot of the same worlds that those, those ec, economically elites are come from, so they probably have similar perspectives." BS concluded by saying, with religion as his example in that journalists are largely secular, "the media elite *are* out of touch with […] ordinary Americans."

6.III.iv – Pro-Capitalist Bias

CT and NW both brought up that the news media has an inherent capitalist bias as the reason for why elites dominate. CT said

> I think that… when it comes to, specifically, covering the issue of the economy… that… [6sec pause] we certainly wall ourselves off… to a range of opinion within the idea of capitalism […] I think there's some truth to that.

He struggled to give specific examples after his statement, however, and as seen by his extended pause he is slightly hesitant to admit that. NW was a bit more forthright, saying that "it's quite difficult to see a revolutionary Communist publication, sort of, surviving" in the modern media environment. He then added,

> I know *exactly* what Noam Chomsky means but, in a sense, in a capitalist society you have papers that have to survive in that capitalist society so they're obviously not going to be… pulling that capitalist society down.[118]

---

[118] This was mentioned by NW in contrast to France, Spain and Italy where the heads of public broadcasting firms are frequently replaced after elections, something that does not occur in the UK, making it "more diverse than many others".

6.III.v – Man-on-the-Street

Three brought up the merits of including the opinions of the general public in the news, although they did not agree with each other. AB said "a man on the street interview is only so valuable in a news story because it's so anecdotal," in contrast with the views of elites. SKY1 was much more dismissive of their utility, especially in contrast to that of the elites: "Mr Smith who lives in South-East London somewhere isn't going to be one of the people you're going to be calling on to be on your show." SKY1 said that, contrary to Chomsky, people like Mr Smith and the anti-war groups (then) protesting in Parliament Square outside Westminster are not important because they "are not as engaged," don't have the ability to engage in those types of issues," do not "vote," and are not necessarily "stakeholders in society."

Contrarily, AM agreed with B5 to "a certain extent, yes," adding "although I think that there have always been these tendencies to, let's not find out not what the elites think... [...] let's find out what the, you know, average person thinks" about certain issues.[119] AM is in the minority here, but she must be talking about aspirations for news media in general and not her own MSNBC show, *Andrea Mitchell Reports*, which is self-described as "an hour of political news and interviews with top newsmakers."[120]

6.III.vi – Other Discursive Strategies

SS agreed to the extent that a newspaper like the *New York Times* has an agenda setting capability.[121] WP disagreed with B5, saying that since "newspapers are a mass media" they have to "cover a whole range of people," pointing to the sports, food and fashion sections of newspapers, similar to what he said for B4. AM also brought up that "I think there are times when, um, there's a certain value in doing, at least academic elites or, um... people who have experience and knowledge, they don't have to be elite, but knowledgeable."

A more interesting response came from SC, who noted that "senior politicians" and "leading, um, commentators have better access to the media" and "they are better able to make contacts, or more likely to be known to media organizations." He also added that journalists know about this and talk about ways to improve diversity,

---

[119] AM listed "the budget deficit or... how social security should be structured, or, um... whether nuclear power is safe or not safe, um, or whether we can become energy independent... you know, whether climate change is scientifically based."

[120] See Andrea Mitchell's MSNBC profile, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3688874/

[121] He gave the example of an interview he did with Dick Cheney in 2004 which was refused by some outlets, and only became well known because it was run by the *New York Times,* causing it to henceforth widely distributed.

but "very often, you go with the people who will talk to you." The training and structural placement of elites to have inherently greater access to media is a widely researched topic (see Herman & Chomsky 1988, etc) and obviously of great influence in political news-making, yet only one of the respondents brings it up.

AS also gave an interesting response, talking about a disconnect between elite opinion, which is paralleled in media coverage, and popular opinion, a common observation called the 'indexing hypothesis' (see Bennett 1990; Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston 2006). He noted that is there's "a political consensus between all three political parties" contrary to "public opinion" that is reflected in "the media, or… particularly the broadcast media." His examples were the War in Afghanistan and the EU, both of which have support from the three main UK political parties but not from the public, while opposition to it is "perceived" and "presented" as a "fringe opinion," the latter phrase he used three times. His point was, however, despite there being a disconnect for these cases, he apparently does not think that "the bulk that you, kind of, read, eh, um, in the papers, reflects the views of a, sort of, narrow political elite who have somehow, ah... ah... you know, ah, detached from mass democratic opinion."

6.III.vii – Discussion of Elite Opinion

As I have shown, the most commonly used discursive strategy is to bring up the necessary inclusion and dominance of elite opinion in political journalism. Reasons to counteract this dominance, the internet, the personal characteristics of journalists, and the man-on-the-street view were not a strong, with the latter two being hotly disputed, two saying journalists are elites, two they are not, one saying public opinion is valuable, two saying it is not. This shows a sort of uncomfortable perception of elite opinion in the news, largely naturalizing its influence, while to a small extent (and one far lesser than for B3 and B4), showing how the existence of alternatives proves things are not totalitarian.

6.IV – Government Interference

Question D3 asked, "What limits do you see existing for doing journalism the best way it needs to be done?" A standard probe, "How about government interference?", was asked of thirteen of the respondents, none of who brought it up in their immediate answer. We face a similar problem here to that of the answers for B3 (§6.I); their surface answer (i.e. have they experienced government interference or not) could be quantified and then examined, yet if, for example, eight of the thirteen said they *have* experienced government interference, that would not

necessarily lead to the conclusion that the majority of journalists have actually experienced government interference.

§6.IV.i discusses the discursive strategy of bringing up their personal experience to illustrate government interference, similar to §6.I.v. Secondly, they discuss the frequency, directness and intensity of government interference (§6.IV.ii) and, thirdly, any resistance to that interference (§6.IV.iii). Lastly, in §6.IV.iv, they talk about government influences in spheres other than their own, similar to the above method when talking about ownership (see §6.I.vi).

6.IV.i – Personal Experience

The first strategy is mentioning their own personal experience, used by eight of the thirteen. It is similar to §6.I.v about ownership influence. This means usage of the first person singular or plural in their response and/or giving specific examples of their personal experience. For example, AB said, "Eh, not in my experience," KD said, "I *don't* see […] I haven't seen a lot," and SC said, "I've never, I've got, I've got no personal experience of that […] I've never encountered any." It is important to remember that this follow up question was *not,* "Can you give me a personal example of government interference?", yet eight people volunteered their own personal experience as a reference point. On one level, referring to you own personal experience is not an unusual way to explain things to people, but it also points to the idea that these journalists immediate reaction to my question was to consider governmental interference that occurs at a *direct* personal level.

The only ones to give specific examples are Sky News' JJ and SKY1, both referring to personal interactions with politicians critiquing their coverage, but both viewed it as a benign "game" (SKY1) or a "constructive" aspect of the journalist-politician relationship (JJ). SC, KD and AK at first denied personal experience, then later on admitted that "I haven't seen a lot" (KD), "It happens" (AK), and "there is not much that much of it" (SC), indicating while they might not want to admit it happened in their personal experience, or that it actually has not, they still cannot deny the potential. Of the remaining two, AB points elsewhere (see §6.IV.iv), SS says that "free speech" is what prevents it from happening.

The implication from the strategy of personalization is that government power in the media is discussed largely as an intrapersonal activity, be it the government officials who deny AK and AM sufficient access, the ones who *do* contact JJ and SKY1 about their reports, or the ones that, apparently, do not contact the rest. There was no trend of saying that government interference occurs mostly at the top of the media structure, an entirely logical point to make even if they have not witnessed it themselves, nor did anyone turn it around to say the media has undue influence on

the government, another reasonable response. Again, as seen in §6.I.v, this replicates the way they talked about the lack of *direct* influence by owners, ignoring any *indirect* influence they may have

6.IV.ii – Frequency, Directness, Intensity

The second strategy was used by ten respondents, and consisted in mentioning the frequency, directness and/or intensity of governmental interference. For frequency and intensity, NW and DH said "always," JJ said "quite intense pressure," AK said "It happens." This can be compared to SC who said "there is not that much," BS said "rarely," and KD said "I haven't seen a lot." Four Americans made more reference to the directness of interference, KD and DH contrasting direct and indirect influence,[122] and AM & AK specifically about access to sources.[123]

These ten are open to the possibility of interference, but the range from 'rarely' to 'always' is interesting, perhaps reflecting their own experiences and thus not paining a consistent picture. The only ones seemingly accepting of interference, AM & AK limit it just to getting information from government sources.

6.IV.iii – Resistance and Reaction

The mention of resistance and/or reaction to government inference was employed by seven of the thirteen. Americans DH and SS both referred to legal protections for journalists, while British JJ and NW discussed their reaction as being more of a sort of dialogue with politicians.[124] Americans AK and KD both said that despite government interference they have to "push back" (AK) and keep on "trying to find them [i.e., secrets] out" (KD). BS viewed it more as "a real conflict" between government security/secrecy and "the public's right to know" which needs to be worked out by journalists, editors and producers on a "case by case basis" using their "*news* judgement." SKY1, however, characteristically viewed the whole issue very lightly, saying interference is "part of the game […] It's a parlour game, you know, you deal with it."

This strategy is very defensive, all, except SS, admitted to a level of government interference, and then later many gave evidence of how they resist it. SS said it is not a problem, that "government can't tell you what you can and can't use" due to "free speech." Other than SKY1, all view it as something serious and

---

[122] KD said it is "not *overt* […] almost totally unofficial and not official," a telling duplication of opposites for 'official' used for emphasis, while DH contrasted "heavy handed" and "*subtle*" interference.

[123] AM said "I have not… run into… *censorship*… so much as […] lack of, um, access" and AK described as "normal" the "interference of not wanting to quote things."

[124] JJ said he takes criticisms "on board" and feels "it can be quite constructive," while NW said "you've got to be big enough to admit when you're wrong and correct it […] or stan[d] your ground when they [i.e., critics in the government] haven't got a point."

inevitable that just needs to be dealt with as part of the job. It is also interesting that only British journalists (JJ, NW) viewed it as a constructive dialogue, while only Americans referred to legal protections (DH, SS) or more active resistance (AK, KD), showing the different orientation to politicians that is experienced in each country. Still, this shows an acceptance by these journalists of government interference as something serious in the day-to-day life of journalists, but something that does not unduly influence their work. This slight direct influence is accepted and normalized.

6.IV.iv – Government Influence There, Not Here

The fourth strategy was used by only four respondents, and consisted in pointing to government interference elsewhere. It is similar to §6.I.vi, where the respondents pointed to other places where influence by owners can be felt. Early-career political bloggers AB and JL, who both also denied experiencing government interference in §6.IV.i, pointed to other beats, AB to "more sensitive matters like foreign policy," and JL advised me to "talk to people who cover, like, CIA […] the defence industry." As they only have a few years of experience, it is arguable that they actually have not experienced interference, thus view pointing me elsewhere as a way to help me.

AS and KD both pointed abroad. AS said "if you're a journalist working in the UK, you… haven't for a huge lot to worry about" in contrast to Russia, Eastern European and Central Asian countries and "particularly China." Finally, KD pointed across the pond to England, referencing her experience as the *New York Times'* London correspondent in the 1980s. She found in the UK "tolerance of… inaccuracy and hype" and "a subservience to the government" that "wouldn't have been tolerated" in the USA.[125]

Their efforts appear to avoid discussion of their experiences at home by contrasting the control in the US and UK with other, less desirable environment. AS minimizes the problems in the UK by contrasting them with countries notorious for having low levels of press freedom, while KD briefly talks about the problems in America before moving on to a very long discussion of her negative experiences in the UK. We could similarly add in the two journalists who denied personal experience but admitted it does happen elsewhere (AK, SC), although the place they were deflecting towards is unclear.

---

[125] KD gives the example of the post-Falkland Islands War Callcutt Inquiry, the panel of which had journalists who were "perfectly satisfied" with the government recommendations of imbedding journalist with the troops and reviewing their copy before being sent out.

6.IV.v – Discussion of Government Interference

The first strategy, of personalizing the question of government interference, might simply be the easiest way for them to explain government interference. However, when taken with the other strategies deployed it cannot be so simple. The second and third categories show a general acceptance by the journalists of the presence of government power in their work. This is entirely reasonable, as they are political journalists and need to work with politicians in able to do their jobs. Only two Americans (DH, SS) mentioned legal protections from government interference, the others viewing it more as something they need to take care of themselves as part of their day to day job. This connects well with the first strategy of personalization, especially when taken together with the fourth strategy of pointing elsewhere. If it does not happen *here* it must happen *there*, and if it does happen here it is probably worse there, be it China or the intelligence beat.

The respondents view power as something that is decentralized and largely inevitable but occurring in degrees. The reasons *why* government has power is not discussed, other than when talking about access to information from government officials, a more practical concern. This is perhaps because it is obvious to them why government has power and does not need to be explained, otherwise the second, third and fourth strategies would be extraneous, and shows the results of the socialization of journalists.

Only SKY1 viewed the whole concern lightly, as a "parlour game," but still argues that journalist just has to deal with it. This is less than the four who considered the liberal/conservative bias debate in largely cynical terms (see §6.VI.iv), only SKY1 remains from this group, which fits with their very candid style.

6.V – News as Mirror of Reality

The discursive strategy of contrasting an ideal with reality was used by eleven of the twenty respondents in answer to questions A2 ("Some journalists say that news is simply a mirror of reality. Do you agree?"). This question was intended to get the journalists to reflect on the relationship between news and reality, starting with this mirror metaphor, and is not derived from any specific quote by any specific person, and to compliment the previous discussion (see §2.II.i and §2.II.ii).

In the journalists' efforts to answer the question we find a handful of strategies. The first and most prominent is to view the mirror metaphor as the ideal for what journalism should do (§6.V.i). This is often followed by a statement bringing reality into play, acknowledging that in their day-to-day practice they

cannot 'mirror' reality, but they still try to do so. Others relate news to mirroring something other than reality, but still hold that other thing as the ideal (§6.V.ii). For the next two sections, the contradictory mirror-plus (§6.V.iii) and social constructivist (§6.V.iv) discursive methods, as these were discussed more fully in §5.I.iii and §5.I.i respectively, will only be dealt with here in passing.

6.V.i – Mirror as ideal

In this discursive strategy we find journalists holding the mirror as an 'ideal' while admitting that it is unreachable. For example, early-career journalists AB and MR both said the mirror is "ideal" and follow it with a contrasting statement: "I don't necessarily think that's what's attained" (AB) and "you can't possibly represent reality [...] through journalism" (MR). Additionally, KD said that "ideally" any "subjectivity" that exists is due to "your own knowledge and, and expertise" and not "any personal biases you might have," without giving any notion of how successful that ideal is. JL said the mirror is "*ideally*" what "people... would like it to be," but that it is "kind of impossible to have that." She added later that a better analogy is a "funhouse mirror of reality" that reporters "strive [...] to make [...] as flat as possible," further indicating her lack of trust that the ideal can be fully reached. This more express, conscious contrasting of the ideal situation with an unreachable reality is indicative of the other answers these four gave as well.

For the other seven the phrasing is more subtle. For instance, AM replied to A2 that, "Some... news... is, or should be, a mirror of reality." Her hesitation at the beginning and either the addition of "should be" to "is" or the substitution of "is" for "should be" indicates her uncertainty for usage of that metaphor other than in the conditional sense either way. Her vacillation between saying it is a mirror and it should be a mirror shows a common gap between ideal and reality. Other such gaps include: AK saying that "we try to fight our subjectivity some, but no one ever fully succeeds"; AS agreeing that the mirror analogy is as good a "starting point [...] as any," but that "the nature of news" causes it to be "not as simple as that"; NW saying "you'd like to think... it is" a mirror of reality, but politics gets in the way; SKY1 saying "one would hope that it would be a mirror," but "it's impossible not to [mediate]"; and SS stating "hopefully" media coverage is "a reflection of the true facts." This is all expressed mostly by contrasting what can actually happen with aspirations and idealizations of what should happen.

6.V.ii – Mirror as Others

Two other categories of answers also openly acknowledged disconnect between news and reality, but do so in a different way than the ideal vs. reality strategy. The first, used by CT and SS, is to affirm the mirror metaphor, but say that

it reflects something other than 'reality,' that is "culture" (CT) and "society" (SS). This is a highly relativistic approach to reality; extending from their observation, we could argue the Antirealist position that say other cultures and societies can report the same events differently, even at different points in time the same culture or society will report similar events differently. And that is fine; for them there is apparently no anchor for reality. However, news for them is still explained as being a 'mirror,' just not of reality.

Secondly, other metaphors are used to correct the mirror metaphor are given by four journalists. For JL news is a "funhouse mirror of reality", for MR it is a "prism," and for TIM1 it "might be a lens" or "a distillation," and DH purports news to be a mirror with "spotlights" and "a magnifying effect." While different than the first strategy exposing a gap between the ideal and reality (except for JL, whose funhouse mirror is hopefully as flat as possible), they acknowledge that there is a disconnect between news and whatever is out there, that mediation *is* imperfect. And we can say, as these six are still practicing journalists, this disconnect apparently does not cause cognitive dissonance in their working life, they know news does not 'reflect reality' but they still function as journalists who legitimacy relies on being Realist.

As we can see there is a gap between ideal and reality that provides motivation for these journalists in their quests to capture reality, an objective which they readily admit is not necessarily attainable, but is still the goal and still structures their ideas about reality. For the latter six respondents we see an acknowledged discord between the normative functions of news and their daily practice, they know news is an imperfect 'mirror,' but they probably still behave as if it is or else they would not be able to function as journalists.

6.V.iii – Mirror-Plus

Another strategy, used by five journalists, is to broadly agree with the mirror metaphor but then add something else. (see §5.I.iii for the more detailed analysis regarding epistemology). This 'mirror-plus' discourse shows, in a way, disagreement or dissatisfaction with the mirroring function of news media. If additional analysis and explanation is needed, then being a mirror is insufficient. Furthermore, if something else is added then it is really no longer a mirror of reality, thus 'mirror-plus' is inherently contradictory.

6.V.iv – News as a Construct

Deployed only by three journalists, all British, is an Antirealist admittance of the constructed nature of news *without* hold reality as an ideal (see §2.IV.ii for the theoretical discussion and §5.I.i for the epistemology-related analysis). It is still

notable that only three of the people, and only one explicitly and one begrudgingly, use that discursive strategy to respond to the questions, especially to the plurality who explicitly referred to reality as the ideal for news in §6.V.i.

6.V.v – Discussion of News as Mirror of Reality

The ideal vs. reality discursive strategy shows ideology operating as a gap in the way journalist view the relationship between reality and the news media. The relativistic approach of CT and SS, that news mirrors culture or society, and the use of alternative metaphors for a mirror also shows an openly acknowledged disconnect between news and reality to which there is no generally agreed 'solution.'

Alternately, the 'mirror-plus' strategy shows a dissatisfaction with the simple mirror-like mediation of reality, something else is needed to make it actual news. This is understandable for commentaries or opinion pieces, but this is not the way normative theories approach how straight 'objective' journalists behave. Similarly, the strategy of news media as a construction is highly anti-normative; however the only strong defender of that position is MW who has over 40 years of experience in journalism. This shows the respondents as living in a gap or disconnect between the ideal and reality, that their professional ideals cause them to not only perpetually chase such unrealizable goals but that those unrealizable goals structure their activity. Put in terms of fetishistic disavowal: they know very well that they cannot mirror reality, but they still try.

6.VI – Liberal Bias and the Media

Question B6 was asked of 19 of the interviewees:

There is one prevalent view, especially in the USA, that journalists, because they are educated and middle class and tend to support the more liberal political parties, thus have an inherent liberal bias. Do you agree?

This was intended to get from the journalists not necessarily their actual agreement to that statement, but their overall reaction to the view of liberal bias. We saw in §3.II, discussion of personal/organization biases in media usually includes establishing a fuzzy baseline for comparison and use of anecdotal evidence. As I argued then, this 'baseline' approach is highly ideological, for it sets up an ideal that can never be reached.[126] I argued this supports the thesis of journalistic ideology as fetishistic disavowal, and as I show below, the results of this section also provide that conclusion with support.

---

[126] For example, if 50% of a population replies in a survey that they are 'liberal' it would be impossible to force their corresponding journalist population to meet the same ratio. Similarly, as newspaper journalism requires good writing skills, those in that position will usually have some college education, *necessarily* disproportionate to the population.

Eight discursive strategies used to deal with the question were determined. The first three fit very well into the ideal/reality discursive strategy, that of looking for the perfect journalist (§6.VI.i), the perfect story (§6.VI.ii) and the perfect media environment (§6.VI.iii). Lastly, other discursive strategies used will be examined (§6.VI.iv).

6.VI.i – Ideal Journalist

The first strategy is the use of journalists' characteristics and background in discussions about potential liberal bias, all in an attempt to construct the ideal journalist.[127] The number of those directly mentioning the categories I gave in the question are: five for education, and three each for class and for political affiliation. Additionally, with five mentions the most popular category volunteered is current geographic (metropolitan, urban/rural) location; four mentioned social values; three each gave race or ethnic group, economic values, or geographic origin.[128]

The four journalists who deployed the 'social value' category agreed that journalists were 'socially liberal,' largely to clarify what 'liberal' means in 'liberal bias.' Agreement was also reached by the five who brought up the current geographical location of a journalist; that journalists tend to live in and work out of major metropolitan urban areas was a given, but they could not agree on the extent to which this influences their work. As for the race and ethic group category, TIM1 considered journalist to be mostly "white" while the other respondents touted the ethnic or racial diversity of journalists. All who mentioned class concurred with each other, that class affects if one is liberal. For education three agreed, but DH took issue with the idea that education makes you liberal, and CT noted that previously in the USA the more highly educated people were Republicans. For political affiliation, MW agreed that US journalists tend to vote Democrat, WP mentioned he himself has "a liberal bias" and is "a Democrat," while AS suggested a poll be conducted to find out.

Related is the assertion that electoral participation is an indication of bias. MW and AS looked at who journalists vote for, while WP openly admits he is "a Democrat" and has close historical ties to the Democratic Party, thus implying that he votes Democrat. It is interesting that only three people mentioned this as a

---

[127] It should be noted that SC and MW each used eleven categories when replying to the question, while most others gave between one and five.

[128] With two responses each: worldly experience or internationalism, social tolerance, income, secularism, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and elitism. With only one response: xenophobia, orientation towards the EU, orientation towards the War in Iraq, personal opinions, political affiliation of parents, cultural assumptions, common obsessions, ideology, social background, age, immigrant generation, homogenizing professional socialization, and establishmentarianism.

strategy for determining liberal bias, as I mentioned it in the question and it is one of the major pieces of evidence usually given (see §3.II).

The question was not, "Define for me which personal characteristics of journalists could affect their work?", yet twelve of the nineteen felt that doing so, a few giving large lists, was a good way to address the issue of liberal bias. They very well could have mentioned the characteristics of media organizations having an effect,[129] but instead the concept of bias was largely kept at the personal journalist level. That so much time was used to examine these aspects of journalists' personal characteristics is quite telling. 'Liberal' is, perhaps, such an inexact word or is loaded with too many negative connotations that the respondents felt a need to clarify for me what they considered the characteristics to be.

The discursive similarity between the characteristics contained in this large list of categories is that the respondents *say* are important and hold some sort of explanatory capacity. They may not agree on the presence or absence of racial equality in journalism, but they agree that such categories have a role in journalistic practice and have the potential to explain biases that *do* exist. Inherent in this discursive strategy is the implication that no matter what race, location, social or economic value system, etc, the journalist personally believes in, there is an ideal professional journalist who can rise above their personal values and history to report in an unbiased way. Some journalists argue that this ideal person exists and can be reached, others do not but that they still should strive towards it the ideal journalist free of bias helps to structure the way they view the effects of a journalists personal biases. These discursive strategies fit will with the observations in §3.II, in which unreachable baselines for 'unbiased' journalists was established.

6.VI.ii – Ideal Story

The second strategy, where they suggest that examining the type of stories chosen by journalists or the final story produced can determine their bias, was used by seven respondents. SS gave two examples, of how the headline of an article may appear to be biased but the internal content is not, and concerning the importance of distinguishing between straight news and analysis pieces in magazines. By this, SS seems to be saying that the perception of liberal bias comes from a cursory examination of news (the headlines), while a deeper analysis and full context will reveal their un-biased nature.

The other six dealt more directly with the personal bias/output side: BBC1 that journalists' economic position can cause bias in the stories they pick (their example

---

[129] SC did broadly, but more in the context that socialization in media companies leads to homogenizing influence in media output, therefore less potential for extreme bias.

being taxes mostly affecting the rich being reported as a general concern); WP that he "recognizes" and "tries to deal with" his liberal bias; SKY1 that journalists being more of the left "doesn't necessarily translate into bias in news"; MR that despite journalists personal political opinions, "I don't think we display a bias in what we produce" because they "try and hold back" such opinions; BS that "professional" journalists "make a conscious effort to put [their] biases aside. *Often* they succeed, I wouldn't say always," and AB that "not every journalist is gonna be able to set aside their personal views... in their work."

This strategy in itself is quite ideological, for the notion of bias is by its nature contrasted with the notion of balance and inherently assumes that a balanced story is something that can and does exist. It also assumes that professional journalists have the faculty to put aside their personal biases and form neutral criteria to both judge a news story's biases, and determine if another journalist's biases affect the final product, again implying that certain steps could perhaps be taken to produce a neutral story. Thus, even if they judge the story to be biased or not, the process of judging itself asserts that such judging can take place and is a valid activity. The balanced, unbiased story, whether they believe in it or not, is still the motivating factor and major determinant in their truth value systems.

6.VI.iii – Ideal Media Environment

Three UK and three US respondents asserted that the diversity and/or range of media organizations in a country can indicate if there is a general bias or not. This is done often by charting the rise of certain institutions (i.e. right-wing radio and opinionated cable news in the US) in counter to existing structures (i.e. the perceived liberal newspapers in the US). This privileges the idea that a news media organization itself can be either liberal or conservative or neutral, and that a balance can be achieved and is in this way ideologically similar to the first and third strategies.

6.VI.iv – Other Discursive Strategies

Mentioning the geographical location of the media organizations themselves was only used by journalists in Britain, AS, BBC1 and SC said London, while MW said Washington DC, and, when I asked them if a metropolitan bias exists, BBC2 and MR agreed.[130] The respondents all felt this was a potential problem, BBC2 saying it is a "real danger," MR noting she is "careful" about that bias and "tr[ies]" not to let that influence the final product. This shows that the national, London-

---

[130] Interestingly, the only American journalist to bring this up was CT, and that was in response to different questions (see A2, A3), because he viewed geographic location of news media organizations and geographic origin of journalist as very important in answer to most of the questions about bias.

centric media system in UK is acknowledged by half of the British respondents to this question and yet holds little concern for most American journalists in discussing potential liberal bias.

The idea that a survey or poll can be conducted to determine the bias of journalists was given by six respondents. This strategy implies that bias is quantifiable, that a criteria can be made of journalistic characteristics that the surveyor determines to be 'liberal' or not, and that the answers that journalists give would reflect their actual bias. This, again, shows the 'baseline' idealization tendency.

Six mentioned there can be no generalization. AB, BBC2 and DH contested that the heterogeneity of journalists and news organizations inhibits such generalization, SKY1 disagreed with the premise, saying it's too "abstract" to "prove definitively," WP answered by saying "there is no standard,"[131] and SS cryptically paraphrased a Tennyson poem to say that journalist "are all a part of what we have met," also implying that generalization is impossible.

Three asserted that the 'liberal bias' label is simply an attack strategy by the right wing against the BBC (AS), by Fox News against "the network broadcasters" who are Fox News' "enemy in business terms" (BBC1) and in general that "the right is fond saying that, that the media has a liberal bias" (KD). BBC1 is the only person to submit that branding the media as liberal has economic motives, while KD and AS characterized it more in terms of being a political strategy.

Both respondents from the *New York Times* (DH, JL) said that journalists' professional experience causes them to become non-partisan. DH claimed "covering government and politics up close" gives journalists "a much *keener* understanding of the complexities of the world we live in," causing them to be too "dubious" of politics to be strongly partisan. Similarly, JL stated people in her newsroom "are so critical of government, no matter who's in power, that it's almost impossible to tell what people think."

6.VI.v – Discussion of Liberal Bias

We can see from the strategies used above that the reasoning behind journalists' views on bias is certainly not homogenous. However, great similarities can be found amongst such heterogeneity. The focus of the British journalists on the centralization of media companies in London or DC makes sense as it is a basic feature of British media, and is done in contrast to the USA and/or as an explanation to me, a non-British. Stating that empirical research can discover journalistic bias

---

131 That is, before WP admitted "*my* generation [which] wanted to *change* government" has, "since the Nixon Administration" been met by "plenty of conservative journalists"

and relying on the complexity of journalists and media systems in order to avoid giving a strong answer are both fully reasonable strategies as well.

More interestingly, we can see from the first three strategies the existence of a gap between ideal and reality, expressed in the ideal story (unbiased, balanced) and the ideal journalist (able to set aside personal characteristics to write said perfect story), and the ideal balanced national media environment, is an important ideological structure underpinning journalists' conception of bias as it relates to their job. In terms of fetishistic disavowal: they know very well such perfection does not exist nor can be reached, yet they still reach for it, say it can be measured in polls, and maintain it as their objective. They could not rationally admit all journalists are perfect, nor that they are hopelessly flawed. However, the perfect, flawless journalist still haunts them when considering the selection and content of news stories.

Similarly the lack of people mentioning the 'liberal bias' is just part of political and/or economic infighting charge (which was one of my conclusions to §3.II), and that the proximity of journalists to the political system causes them to become *too* knowledgeable to really be drawn into partisan politics, is remarkable. These five are the only ones to express a sceptical, if not cynical, view on the left/right divide in American and British politics, that it is a surface-level distraction from more important views or that it is simply politically or economically motivated.

6.VII – The (Ideal) Journalist-Politician relationship

Question E2, asked of 19 journalists, consisted in a quote from a former journalist regarding the journalist-politician relationship. The quote was highly critical of political journalists, and thus necessarily created often emotional responses from the respondents. The question is as follows:

> Former BBC correspondent turned Tony Blair media advisor Lance Price wrote that, for political and commercial reasons, quote, 'journalists enter into all manner of secret alliances with politicians [...] surrendering any claim to genuine independence and often bolstering rather than scrutinising those in government or aspiring to government.'[132] What do you think of that?

If I had directly asked the journalists if they themselves were 'in the tank' they all would have replied negatively, but they cannot rationally deny that such relationships do not exist for other journalists. This way of asking the question was employed instead as a more covert way to get a response, as in they are responding to *Price*'s quote far more than they're responding to *my* question.

---

132 This quote comes from Price (2010: 7)

First, the answers of those who agreed with E2 will be described (§6.VII.i) before moving on to the two discursive strategies used, talking about balance (§6.VII.ii) and the description of journalists with improper relationships with politicians (§6.VII.iii).

6.VII.i – Agree with E2

Firstly, we have the direct responses to agreement with Price's statement. Thirteen of the nineteen respondents replied by readily admitting the possibility of the types of relationship Price describes. For instance, SC said "I don't think it is true that all political journalists do it," early career bloggers JL & AB both admitted to the possibility of "cosy" relationships, CT said "I think it's possible [that] weak minded journalists can end up doing that," and MW says that some journalists are "compliant and submissive" while others are "independent and assertive."

AM's reaction is harder to gauge. She said at first, "I guess that happens," then pointed across the pond to say, "I don't know if it happens more in the UK than here...", perhaps reacting to Price's description as being that of British journalism. However, after a brief pause she then clarified:

> Uh, not in my experience [4sec pause] and I've been around a long time, journalists are, um, *fiercely* independent... [3sec pause] and most would be ashamed to be viewed as a handmaiden to government officials.

It is interesting to note, in regards to independence, she says "journalists are," not 'some journalists are' or 'journalists tend to be' independent. However, for the shame attached to being "a handmaiden" she specifies that it is only "most" journalists "would be ashamed," adding extra layers of conditionality. This makes her statement a bit contradictory, how can you be independent and then sometimes a 'handmaiden' at the same time? Her pauses, however, indicate that she is correcting her earlier unconditional characterisation of '*fierce*' independence with the more rational conditional "most would be ashamed."

Two British journalists disagreed with the statement by citing instances of journalist-politician conflict as their sole reason. NW said there are "a lot of rows" and "a lot of bust ups."[133] MR gave the more specific example of journalists' critical coverage of the UK coalition government's plans for deficit cutting as giving her "new hope" for the independence of journalism. Journalists "have really, kind of, gone for the politicians [...] *really* trying, where possible, to test the politician's claims." She mentioned a specific example, where her colleague, Sky News political

---

[133] NW gave a long example of the relationship of journalists to Alistair Campbell, former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's Director of Communications and Strategy from 1997 to 2003, noted for having a conflicted relationship with the lobby journalists in Westminster, of which NW is one.

editor Adam Bolton, when interviewing a Labour politician about specifics they would cut from the budget, "he pushed him and pushed him and pushed him on that." She said that going for politicians, 'testing' their claims, and 'pushing' them shows that journalists are not beholden to politicians. Murphy, an academic and journalist, mentions that in his experience "whenever criticized [journalists] turn to odd cases of revelation to show their vigilance" (Murphy 1978: 187), and NW and MR do just that, giving anecdotal evidence as a defensive reaction to the question.

DH's response is unique amongst all of them. He maintained that such relationships described by Price are impossible because politicians and journalists are both "subjected to more scrutiny now than ever before," and, for people who "think there's a cosiness or a bias out there, I'd challenge them to *find* it." He said that such a task is easier to do now because "our stuff is on the web."

In general we can see a tendency of the journalists to admit that the journalist-politician relationship has the potential to be too close, leading to the potential for inappropriate behaviour that violates their role as the Fourth Estate. The strategies they use to answer the question generally follow this pattern, looking at the role of balance in their jobs and giving depictions of journalists who are too close to politicians.

6.VII.ii – Ideal Balance in Political Journalism

The main discursive strategy deployed concerns a balance existing between journalists doing their job properly and maintaining access to government sources, used by eleven respondents. This is understandable, as Price's statement was very unequivocal in branding the journalist-politician relationship as one of unethical complicity on the journalist's part.

Journalists described this balance in several ways, CT said "balance... is a double-edged sword," SKY1 that "it's a symbiotic relationship," AB said "you gotta pick your battles," and JJ admitted that "there are always going to be compromises that you have to make." AK and BBC2 made more general statements, AK that "successful" reporters "think independently and their sources are a little bit scared of them, not because they're beholden to them," while BBC2 said "however much you may try and you know, develop contacts [...] at the end of the day [...] your job is to be a journalist." I asked both of them if there is a balance, they both agreed, AK saying that "[i]t's the central conflict of being a reporter."

SS and WP both said that having good relationships with politicians is beneficial to reporters, but SS maintained this means "you still have to cover a story the way it needs to be covered, not the way they want it to be covered." WP lamented that "there's a whole new generation of reporters who won't socialize at

all with people in government" which can be "harmful" as it makes politicians "one-dimensional."

Contrary to this support of balance between journalists' *personal* need for access and need to do their job, AS directly supports balance on an *institutional* level. He says that journalists that have "very good relations with... politicians and... they're great at getting scoops" are "not always great at writing the, um, um, the, the damaging critical stuff," and thus "it... makes sense that news organizations, to... employ people who... um... sort of... do both." We have here, again, the ideal of a balanced relationship operating to structure their view of the journalist politician relationship.

6.VII.iii – Depiction of Journalists who are 'Too Close'

The other discursive method, used by ten respondents, involves providing a characterization of those journalists who have cross the boundaries and have relationships with politicians that are too close. JL, AM and BBC1 viewed it more in the perceptual realm: BBC1 said that "being a toady" and "being perceived to be too close to people" does not earn a politician's "respect," JL said "you really don't want to be best friends with the people you cover, I mean, it seems *really* bad," while, as mentioned above, AM stated "most journalists would be ashamed to be viewed as a handmaiden to government officials." Also as mentioned above, AS said that journalists with close relationships to politicians are "not always great at writing the, um, um, the, the damaging critical stuff." Americans DH & KD both mentioned that "the readers" dislike such relationships, AK mentioned that it are not good for a journalist's "career," while CT described such journalists as "weak."

JJ gave a topical example, about the June, 2010 article in *Rolling Stone* magazine about US Army General McChrystal written by Michael Hastings (Hastings 2010). He notes how the corps of journalists covering McChrystal probably noted the same things the visiting *Rolling Stone* journalist did, however due to Hastings' short-term relationship with the McChrystal camp, he felt freer to publish controversial material. He said the "journalists who missed that story will be *kicking* themselves now." WP was characteristically more frank, answering by giving a list of several close relationships he has with political figures (i.e. the Clintons, Robert Gates). He concluded it is no problem because "everybody knows it..." It is unclear which 'everybody' he is referring to, but it certainly cannot mean the general public, for it is certain only a small fraction of *Washington Post* readers would know the personal relationships that its reporters have. Still, he maintains that "public" knowledge of a journalists affiliations is important "so *they* can judge" a journalist's credibility.

6.VII.iv – Discussion of Journalist-Politician Relationship

The majority of journalists admit that some of their colleagues do have inappropriately close relationships with politicians. This response is outwardly highly rational, as to purport that none are complicit would be dishonest and easily disproved. The ones who did not (NW & MR) gave evidence of journalist-politician conflict as the reason for why Price's statement does not hold water, while DH challenges the public to do their own research to find complicity. A slight majority also mention the necessity of balance in the relationship. I argue that this is quite ideological in terms of fetishistic disavowal: they know that a balanced relationship can never be reached but they still work towards it.

6.VIII – Discussion of How Journalists Talk About Ideology and Journalistic Professionalism

The responses to these six questions generally fall into two categories for analysis of their ideology. For B3, B4, B5 and D3's probe we have clear examples of the internalization of journalistic norms as modes of control (§3.IV), while A2, B6 and E2 show, to a certain extent a process of idealization best explained by the Žižekian concept of ideology as fetishistic disavowal (§3.V).

6.VIII.i – Professional Ideology as Indirect Control

Answers to B3 showed, in the majority, a common-sense assertion that it is the audience, often conflated with the 'market,' who is in control and, for six respondents, specific groups need to be targeted with politically slanted coverage. The only strong argument against audience influence is citing a news agenda outside the audience's control, while others are not sure who is more dominant. This shows a general, but not monolithic, support for audience determination of media content. When compared to the insistent statements of no *direct* control by ownership via their personal experience, and only admitting ownership control over op-ed content by two, this shows that journalists accept the indirect control of the audience through markets, but generally do not view ownership influence as acting in the same way. This also gives evidence to support the process of internalization of journalistic professionalism and the filter of socialization as controls over the journalism production process.

For B4, the vast majority of respondents also found that stating that the media is sufficiently diverse of content and opinion is a sufficient answer. The audience as a market itself is the determining factor, with niche markets complementing it. There is a general avoidance of talking about media as reflecting macro-social formations, and the routine-level problems of sourcing. The inclusion of 'marginalise' and

'exclude' in the question definitely impacted this, for there must be rational reasons to bracket out certain opinions. The most commonly used discursive strategy for B5 is to bring up the necessary inclusion and dominance of elite opinion in political journalism, with the only strong formation challenging it being the internet. The respondents could not agree if the personal characteristics of journalists affected this or not, nor the importance that can be given to public opinion in political journalism. This shows a naturalizing tendency for elite influence in news media content, and less important than in B3 and B4 of including alternatives.

D3's probe about government interference, while being of a different nature and asked later than the above three questions, shows many similarities but also important differences. The way in which government power is conducted was expressed as being interpersonally, that it happened or never happened to *them*. As with 6.I.i, this shows them talking about power as if it was direct and done on a person-to-person basis. A difference between D3 and B3 is that the journalists seem more accepting of the inevitable influence from governments, the only specifics being in regards to sourcing of information for two respondents. Still, they cannot agree on the actual existence or frequency of such interference.

This shows the political journalists interviewed generally have deference towards political elites not based on fear or greed, but upon journalistic professionalism and socialization, as discussed in §3.IV.iii and §3.IV.iv. Furthermore, their reliance on notions of the audience's indirect control is used, without any anecdotal or other evidence, as an alibi. This is not a result of journalists 'fooling themselves' into believing elites are thus, or that owners do not have control when they actually do, it is simply that if they did not believe so then they would not be in the position they are in now, and indirect 'controls' such as socialization are present so that owners do not have to interfere on a day-to-day basis to maintain order in their companies.

6.VIII.ii – Professional Ideology as Fetishistic Disavowal

For A2, B6 and E2 we can see from the ways in which the journalists answered my questions Žižekian concept of ideology as fetishisitic disavowal at work. The majority do not state that news is or can be a mirror of reality (A2), but they still hold that as their ideal. When exploring bias in the media (B6) they implicitly postulate that if the journalist tried hard enough they could sublimate their personal characteristics enough to become the ideal journalist, and write the ideal news story and that a balanced range of ideologically-motivated media organizations can be achieved, such as my finding in §3.II. When confronted with the idea that journalists need to enter into unethical relationships with politicians to do their job

(E2), the majority again postulated the ideal balanced relationship between a journalist and a politician.

These responses seem to be a contradiction; if you rationally know that you cannot reach the ideal state then why try? The "traumatic, real kernel" (Žižek 1989: 45) inside the journalists mind is the rational knowledge that no matter how hard they try, these professional ideals cannot be reached, yet a journalist's "social reality" (ibid) is that their day-to-day job is to 'try' and get towards this ideal. Thus we see an instance of ideology not as convincing the journalist of a lie, that if they do their job correctly the ideal will be reached, but as a two contradictory poles (ideal and reality) "function[ing] as arguments in favour" (ibid: 50) of their journalistic ideology, with the 'big Other' as a highly effective motivating psychological formation.

6.VIII.iii - Conclusion

We can thus see two major concepts of ideology at work simultaneously: professional norms and socialization being the indirect 'control' that filters out non-complaint journalists, and fetishistic disavowal as the way that they can rationally critique the system that they work for while still doing their job. The absence of direct control does not mean there is no control, only less-direct control.

I argue that both are needed at the same time to maintain the stability of the ideology of the Fourth Estate, one at the beginning of the professionalization process and subsumed in the routines of journalists, and the other as a 'big Other' to motivate journalists in their day-to-day work. Those who cannot accept this 'cynical' attitude eventually leave or are filtered out of the journalistic profession, while those who do adopt a more 'healthy' professional attitude. This is then passed on to the next generation of journalists, just as parents pass down their concerns and predilections to their children. As long as the ideals of the perfect journalist and perfect news story, passed from generation to generation, remain, journalists will not be free to break from this chain of discourse. Furthermore, efforts to 'reform' journalists to accept more stringent professional standards will only lead to a corresponding increase in cynical disavowal of their job. In this way we can see the Fourth Estate is quite a stable ideological formation.

7 – CONCLUSION

7.I – Summary of Thesis

In the preceding thesis I identified key areas of the concept of the Fourth Estate that needed to be further explored, that of the epistemology and ideology of journalism. The normative conception of the Fourth Estate relies on the news media as a *neutral* political actor and center of power checking on government power and as a disseminator of *true* information that the public needs in order to participate in a democracy. Even the two most critical takes on the role of the Fourth Estate, that it actually serves as a power structure under the command of political and economic elites or that news media content consists of little more than political power conflicts between these elites, in the end are restorative and call for a return to the Fourth Estate ideals of the normative position.

This thesis therefore explored the only theory counter to the normative and restorative positions, System Maintenance, in which news media functions as an inherently unsalvageable politically and economically submissive institution dedicated to sustaining and strengthening not only the current structural imbalance of power but a corresponding regime of truth. I argued that the best way to examine this is through exploring the epistemological work of Baudrillard and the work of Žižek on ideology, connecting them both more fully with the corresponding 'mainstream' media research on these topics.

To better examine the epistemological and ideological foundations of the Fourth Estate it was decided to look at the ways in which political journalists in the USA and the UK talk about issues of truth and power through a critical discourse analysis. Interviews with twenty current and former political correspondents, editors and bloggers from elite news media outlets based in the capitals of the USA and UK were conducted. I then examined the discursive strategies they use in responding to questions and statements regarding truth and power. Categories for the discursive strategies were grounded in the talk of the journalists themselves and were subsequently related to the larger theoretical discussions underpinning epistemology and ideology in the new media.

For the epistemology of news media, I found that the discursive strategies used by the journalists (as evidenced in §5.I.iii, §5.I.iv, §5.II.i, §5.II.ii, §5.II.v, §5.II.vii, §5.V.ii, §5.VII.iv and §5.IX.i) ran largely along the same lines as those revealed the theoretical discussion (as argued in §2.II.ii, §2.III.iv, §2.V.iii and §2.VI), that is simultaneously holding the theoretically contradictory and antagonistic positions of

Realism and Pragmatism. As Realism contends that news media can be the purveyors of true information, the journalists often talked about themselves as doing the same. Concurrently, when the questions moved towards a Pragmatist framework, journalists also positioned themselves in support of this system. As I argued (see §5.IX), the theoretical antagonism between Pragmatism and Realism allows us to better critique the various ways in which journalists position themselves epistemologically when responding to criticism and when defining their work. Realist critiques of inaccuracy or bias can be met by Pragmatist defences of media plurality and the contingent nature of 'facts'; Pragmatist critiques of excessive media concentration, for instance, can be met by Realist defences that proper and professional steps in gathering, verifying, and distributing information were taken. A firm position for either epistemology cannot be taken because the antagonism between them drives and stabilizes the epistemology of news media.

Politicians, the audience, the medium of news and 'bad' journalists, by contrast, were cast as being of the Antirealist position. For politicians this means having their statements be beyond true and false, for the audience having their demands be more irrational and based on their personal political prejudices, for the news medium not being structurally able to 'mirror' reality, and for news media professionals breaking journalistic norms. These were all counter to both the Realist and the Pragmatist positions and to which journalist variously positioned themselves.

I concluded from this that the necessary yet epistemologically deficient Antirealist critique of both Realism and Pragmatism could be greatly aided by integration with the Hyperrealist epistemology of Baudrillard. From this perspective we must view not with great scepticism 'Real' elements of the media, but with a firm understanding that many Realist aspects that do occur in the news media are of a Hyperrealist nature. They are simply spectres of Reality that must remain to reinforce the stakes of the 'Real' political-economic situation. Even if, as the Critical Realists argue, the causal mechanisms and social structures that underpin nature and society can emerge, this does not mean that the news media, relying on self-referential codes and 'truths' that do not exist outside the mediascape, is structurally capable of relaying it. This also applies to any of the 'competing truths' we might temporarily latch on to in our Pragmatist efforts to find the contingent and useful 'truths' we need to make the best decisions we can at this moment. They are as open as ever to manipulation for political-economic ends due to their Hyperreal nature. In this way we can better see the epistemological bases of the Fourth Estate.

Secondly, for the discussions of professionalism and ideology I found two major strains of discourse. The journalists talked about the indirect influences of the

government, owners and audience in drastically different manners, relying heavily on the audience and largely discounting or naturalizing any ownership or governmental influence. I argued that this supports the idea of professionalism as indirect control over journalists via socialization and self-censorship.

This is not the whole picture, however, for a great deal of idealization also occurred in their responses. The journalists' positing of the existence of ideal journalists and news stories and the ideal structure for national news systems while, at the same time, largely admitting that these ideals are possible, is a highly productive strategy. I argued that this supports the idea of ideology as fetishistic disavowal: the necessity for vocal scepticism against norms to occur while these norms are simultaneously being followed. Thus, professionalization occurs to not only filter out undesirable workers, those who might be more inclined to strong resistance to certain professional norms and precepts, but to allow those workers who remain a wide latitude for resistance. Depending on one's personality and financial situation, one could rationally quit one's job and find a more appropriate workplace or, on the other hand, keep one's job and sublimate, yet still articulate, one's disagreements, *just as long as one keeps working*. I thus argue that these are the two aspects needed for the ideological formations of journalism as the Fourth Estate to be stable.

7.II – Implications for Further Research

I have also shown that Baudrillardian and Žižekian theories can be fruitfully used in conjunction with certain sociological methods. I urge more interdisciplinary work by those in the specialist field of Baudrillard studies, focusing on bringing a firm Hyperrealist theoretical base to the Antirealist work of the French and British Structuralists, as well as news media Social Constructivist work such as Tuchman and Hall. This is especially important to meet the challenges posed to Antirealism by Critical Realism and democratic Pragmatism. We must argue that, while the Real can emerge from social structures to a certain extent, the Hyperreal effects of language and media need to be taken into account before claiming this 'Reality' extends to news media content itself. Furthermore, a democratic system based on discussing pseudo-events and constructs that do not exist outside the media is not a democratic system at all. It only functions to hide that what is at stake is the *simulation* of Reality and true/false through these Hyperreal 'debates.' Such pseudo-debates in the end do have *concrete* effects on the daily lives of people despite their immaterial origin, and therein lies their danger.

Secondary work using Žižekian theory would also benefit from such applications. The concept of ideology as fetishistic disavowal in relation to

professionalism should be further explored, for it is certainly applicable not only to the journalistic profession. Use of this framework to examine other the professional ideology of other media producers, and even other professions outside the media, will better show to what extent this ideological formation operates. Also, the strong theoretical framework Žižek provides to study the relationship of language to violence (Žižek 2008), explored in §3.IV.i, could fruitfully be integrated with, for example, the study of news about wars and conflict reporting. If done in a systematic manner, such as in this thesis and other content analysis, it will provide this area with a major new theoretical strain to draw from.

Extending this study to include a broader spectrum of interviewees would also be beneficial. News media professionals from 'right wing' media in the US and UK and from public service broadcasters in the US like PBS who, unfortunately, did not want to be or could not be included in this study would make a valuable addition. Other groups not targeted in this study, such as 'alternative' journalists or those working at non-elite news organizations, should also be considered. It would be interesting to see if the ways they have of talking about the truth and power are different than the twenty interviewed here or if it is very similar, for this would better show the extent to which these discourses are functional across the news media field.

Similarly, including respondents from other countries would help increase the depth and width of this project. Examining discourses used by journalists in, for example, other established democracies, be they in the Anglo-American tradition or in Western Europe, post-communist countries in Eastern Europe creating news media inspired by the Anglo-American system, or even from quickly developing yet un-democratic states such as the People's Republic of China, largely out of the Fourth Estate system, will paint a more diverse picture of the types of journalistic discourses around the world and the influence the spread of global capitalism has.

7.III – Conclusion

My thesis supports the anti-Fourth State position of System Maintenance. The epistemology of the Fourth Estate rests on two irreconcilably antagonistic positions, Realism and Pragmatism. I argue that it is the ability of journalistic actors to move between these positions when confronted with different critiques ultimately aids in the stability of the Fourth Estate news media systems in the USA and UK over the last hundred years. The stability of the Fourth Estate's ideology comes from the complementary positions of indirect control through professionalism and the cynical freedom to hold admittedly unrealizable ideals of professionalism. These conclusions strike at concepts at the heart of the Enlightenment project as well, for

the end of religion-based autocratic epistemology and ideology has not given rise to better ways to find out the truth, nor for more autonomy for people.

Instead of replacing truth as defined by a higher power with truth defined through science or through democratic debate, we have truth defined by and within the mediascape itself. The freeing of signs from autocratic control, much the same as the freeing of people from feudalism, caused truth to find another reference; previous 'truths' established within our ever-increasing communication technology. Thus, we can and must perpetually discuss these Hyperreal phantoms as if they were Reality, and are therefore inevitably constrained from affecting Real change in our lives.

As discussed in §3.IV, power structures were also supposed to have been freed from autocratic control, being dispersed amongst the populace instead of coming from above. However, control simply changed registers; as direct violent control was no longer possible for sustained periods, indirect control became the norm instead (Foucault 1977, 1980; Althusser 1970). Enlightened people, however, are not unaware of this contradiction, yet criticisms of the system are not only present and tolerated but *needed* to show just how un-authoritarian things have become (Sloterdijk 1987). The contradictions inherent in the basis of many capitalist enterprises, especially journalism, are supposed to be fixed or managed by adherence to professionalism; yet it is our desire to achieve these unrealizable ideals which is the true motivation for professionals, as well as the way in which ideological closure is indefinitely postponed. This precludes any major efforts for systematic change, as we can always discuss if the 'system worked' or not instead of asking if we should transform it.

This thesis presents a twofold criticism of the Enlightenment via its critical examination of the Fourth Estate, the fulcrum of post-Enlightenment politics, democracy and media. Thus, I argue that it is also only through a firm Antirealist-informed Hyperrealist critique of truth, and from a view of ideological control as needing both indirect constraints and a measure of cynical resistance, that further progress can be made in exposing how Enlightenment-derived institutions such as the Fourth Estate are, in the end, myths.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alterman, E. (2008), 'Out of print: The death and life of the American newspaper,' *The New Yorker, March 31, 2008.*

Althusser, L. (1970 [2001]), 'Ideology and ideological state apparatuses: Notes towards an investigation,' in *'Lenin and Philosophy' and Other Essays*, B. Brewster (tr & ed), (London: Monthly Review).

Alvesson, M. (2002), *Postmodernism and Social Research*, (Buckingham: Open University).

Anderson, D. C., & W. W. Sharrock (1979), 'Biasing the news: Technical issues in "media studies",' *Sociology 13(3)*: 367-385.

Anderson, C. (2008), 'Journalism: Expertise, authority, and power in democratic life,' in D. Hesmondhalgh & J. Toynbee (eds), *The Media and Social Theory*, (London: Routledge).

AP Managing Editors (1994), 'Statement of ethical principles,' (accessed Feb 14, 2011 from www.AMPE.com/?page=EthicsStatement).

Archer, M. (1998), 'Introduction: Realism in the social sciences,' in M. Archer *et al* (eds), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, (London: Routledge).

ASNE (1977), 'American Society of Newspaper Editors: Statement of principles,' (accessed Feb 14, 2011 from http://asne.org/kiosk/archive/principl.ht).

Baggini, J. (2002), *Making Sense: Philosophy Behind the Headlines*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Barnett, S. (2005), 'Opportunity of threat? The BBC, investigative journalism and the Hutton Report,' in S. Allan (ed), *Journalism: Critical Issues*, (Maidenhead: Open University).

Barthes, R. (1957 [1993]), 'Myth today,' in *Mythologies*, A. Lavers (tr.) (Vintage)

Barthes, R. (1968), *Elements of Semiology*, (Hill and Wang), (accessed Mar 2, 2011 from Marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/barthes.htm).

Barthes, R. (1974), *S/Z*, R. Miller (tr), (NY: Hill & Wang).

Baudrillard, J. (1967 [2001]), 'Review of Marshal McLuhan's *Understanding Media,*' M. Gane (tr), in *The Uncollected Baudrillard*, G. Genosko (ed), (Sage).

Baudrillard, J. (1968 [1996]), *The System of Objects*, (London: Verso).

Baudrillard, J. (1969a [1981]), 'Sign-function and class logic,' C. Levin (tr), in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, (USA: Telos).

Baudrillard, J. (1969b [1981]), 'The ideological genesis of needs,' C. Levin (tr), in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, (USA: Telos).

Baudrillard, J. (1970 [1998]), *The Consumer Society*, (London: Sage).

Baudrillard, J. (1972 [1981]), *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, (Telos).

Baudrillard, J. (1973 [1975]), *The Mirror of Production*, M. Poster (tr), (USA: Telos).

Baudrillard, J. (1975 [2001]), 'Mass (sociology of),' B. Freedman (tr), in The *Uncollected Baudrillard*, G. Genosko (ed), (London: Sage).

Baudrillard, J. (1976 [1993]), 'Order of simulacra,' I. H. Grant (tr), in Symbolic Exchange and Death, (London: Sage).

Baudrillard, J. (1978a [1994]), 'Precession of simulacra,' P. Foss & P. Patton (trs), in Simulations, (NY: Semiotext(e)).

Baudrillard, J. (1978b [1983]), 'The implosion of meaning in the media,' P. Foss, J. Johnston & P. Patton (trs), in *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, (NY: Semiotext(e)).

Baudrillard, J. (1978c [1985]), *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, P. Foss, J. Johnston & P. Patton (trs), (NY: Semotext(e))..

Baudrillard, J. (1990a [2009]), *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, J. Benedict (tr), (London: Verso).

Baudrillard, J. (1990b), *Fatal Strategies*, (London: Verso).

Baudrillard, J. (1991 [1995]), *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, P. Patton (tr), (Sydney: Power).

Baudrillard, J. (1994), *The Illusion of the End*, C. Turnder (tr), (London: Polity Press).

Baudrillard, J. (1996), *The Perfect Crime*, C. Turner (tr) (London: Verso).

Baudrillard, J. (2002), *Screened Out*, C. Turner (tr), (London: Verso).

BBC (2011), 'BBC editorial guidelines,' (accessed April 14, 2011 from www.BBC.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines).

BBC Trust, (2007), *From Seesaw to Wagon Wheel: Safeguarding Impartiality in the 21st Century*, (from BBC.co.uk/bbctrust/research/impartiality.html).

Bechmann, A. (2011), 'Closer apart? The networks of cross-media news production', in D. Domingo & C. Paterson (eds), *Making Online News, Vol. 2*, (London: Peter Lang).

Benjamin, W. (2008 [1936]), 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction,' in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Great Ideas*, J. A. Underwood (tr.), (London: Penguin).

Bennett, W. L. (1990), 'Toward a theory of press-state relations,' Journal of *Communication 40(2): 103-125*.

Bennett, W. L. (2000), 'Media power in the United States,' in J. Curran & M. Park (eds), *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, (London: Routledge)

Bennett, W. L. (2005), *News: The Politics of Illusion, 6th ed*. (New York: Longman)

Bennett, W. L. & W. Serrin (2007), 'The watchdog role of the press,' in D. A. Graber (ed), *Media Power in Politics*, (Washington DC: CQ Press)

Bennett, W. L., R. G. Lawrence & S. Livingston, (2006), 'None dare call it torture: Indexing and the limits of press independence in the Abu Ghraib Scandal,' Journal of Communication, 56(3): 467–485.

Berg, B. L. (2007), *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences, 6th ed*., (Boston: Pearson).

Berger, A. A. (1991), *Media Analysis Techniques, revised ed*., (London: Sage).

Berger, P. L., & T. Luckmann (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (NY: Anchor Books).

Bhaskar, R. (1978 [2005]), *A Realist Theory of Science, 2nd ed*., (London: Verso).

Bhaskar, R. (1989 [1998]), 'Societies [from *The Possibility of Naturalism, 2nd ed*],' in M. Archer et al (eds), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, (London: Routledge).

Bhaskar, R. (1998), *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences, 3rd ed*, (Cambridge: Polity).

Bishop, R. (ed) (2009), *Baudrillard Now: Current Perspectives in Baudrillard Studies*, (London: Polity).

Blair, T. (2007), '[a.k.a. "Feral beast" speech],' (accessed June 10, 2010 from www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1554286/Full-text-of-Blairs-speech-on-politics-and-media.html).

Bloom, P. (2008), 'Capitalism's cynical leviathan: Cynicism, totalitarianism and Hobbes in modern capitalist regulation,' in *International Journal of Žižek Studies, 2(1)*.

Blumenthal, S. (2007), 'Afterword,' in W. Lippmann (1920 [2007]), *Liberty and News,* (NJ: Princeton University).

Blumler, J., & M. Gurevitch, (1995), *The Crisis of Public Communication*, (London: Routledge).

Boaden, H. (2011), 'Value of journalism' [speech], at *The BBC College of Journalism and POLIS* international conference, London School of Economics, June 10, 2011, (accessed July 1, 2011 from www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/speeches/stories/boaden_lse.shtm).

Boorstin, D. (1961 [1992]), *The Image*, (Vintage).

Boyce, G. (1978), 'The Fourth Estate: The reappraisal of a concept,' in G. Boyce, J. Curran & P. Wingate (eds), *Newspaper History: From the 17th Century to the Present Day*, (London: Sage).

Bromley, M. (2008), 'Investigative journalism and scholarship,' in H. de Burgh (ed), *Investigative Journalism, 2nd ed*., (London: Routledge).

Burawoy, M. (1979), *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labour Process Under Monopoly Capitalism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago).

Calhoun, C. (1992), 'Introduction,' in C. Calhoun (ed), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Boston: MIT).

Carter, T. B., M. A. Franklin & J. B. Wright (2008), *The First Amendment and the Fourth Estate: The Law of Mass Media, 10th ed.,* (NY: Foundation).

CCJ & Pew Research Center (1999), 'Striking the balance: Audience interests, business pressures and journalists' values,' March 1999 (accessed Jan 14, 2011 from people-press.org/1999/03/30/striking-the-balance-audience-interests-business-pressures-and-journalists-values/).

Charmaz, K. (2006), *Constructing Grounded Theory*, (London: Sage).

Champagne, P. (2005), 'The "double dependency": The journalistic field between politics and markets,' in R. Benson & E. Neven (eds), *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, (London: Polity).

Chomsky, N. (1973a [2008]), 'Watergate: A sceptical view,' in A. Arnove (ed), *The Essential Chomsky*, (London: Bodley Head).

Chomsky, N. (1973b), *For Reasons of State,* (London: Fontana/Collins).

Chomsky, N. (1982), *Towards a New Cold War,* (London: Sinclair Brown).

Chomsky, N. (1988), *Language and Politics*, C. P. Otero (ed), (Montreal: Black Rose Books).

Clarke, D. B., *et al* (eds), (2009), *Jean Baudrillard: Fatal Theories*, (London: Routledge).

Cole, S. J. (2010), 'Baudrillard's ontology: Empirical research and the denial of the real,' *International Journal for Baudrillard Studies 7(2)*.

Conboy, M. D. (2004), *Journalism: A Critical History*, (London: Sage).

Cottle, S. (2007), 'Ethnography and news production: New(s) developments in the field,' *Sociology Compass 1(1)*: 1-16.

Coward, R., & J. Ellis (1977), *Language and Materialism*, (London: Routlege & Kegan Paul)

Crick, N. (2009), 'The search for a purveyor of news: The Dewey/Lippmann debate in an internet age,' *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 26(5)*: 480-497.

Curran, J. (1977), 'Capitalism and control of the press, 1800-1975,' in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch & J. Wollacott (eds), *Mass Communication and Society*, (London: Sage).

Curran, J. (1991), 'Rethinking the media as a public sphere,' in P. Dahlgren & C. Sparks (eds), *Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere*, (London: Routledge).

Curran, J. (2000), 'Rethinking media and democracy,' in J. Curran & M. Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society, 3rd ed.*, (London: Arnold).

Curran, J. & J. Seaton (1985), *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain, 2nd ed.*, (London: Methuen).

Curran, J. & J. Seaton (2003), *Power Without Responsibility: The Press, Broadcasting and New Media in Britain, 6th ed*. (London: Routledge).

Curran, J. & J. Seaton (2010), *Power Without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain, 7th ed.*, (London: Routledge).

Curran, J. (2002), *Media and Power*, (London: Routledge).

Curran, J. (ed) (1978), *The British Press: A Manifesto*, (London: MacMillan).

Daniel, D. K. (2000), 'Best of times and worst of time: Investigative reporting in post-Watergate America,' in M. Greenwald & J. Bernt (eds), *The Big Chill: Investigative Reporting in the Current Media Environment*, (Aimes: Iowa State University).

Davidson, D. (1984), *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, (Oxford: Oxford University).

Davies, N. (2008), *Flat Earth News*, (London: Chatto & Windus).

de Burgh, H. (2003), 'Kings without crowns? The re-emergence of investigative journalism in China,' *Media Culture Society, 25: 801-820.*

de Burgh, H. (2008), 'Forty years: A tradition of investigative journalism,' in H. de Burgh (ed)*, Investigative Journalism*, (London: Routledge).

de Burgh, H. (ed) (2000), *Investigative Journalism: Context and Practice*, (London: Routledge).

de Saussure, F. (1917 [1974]), *Course in General Linguistics*, C. Bally & A. Sechehaye (eds), W. Baskin (tr), (London: P. Owen).

Deacon, D. et al, (2007), *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*, (London: Hodder Arnold).

Dean, J. (2006), *Žižek's Politics*, (London: Routledge).

Democracy Now!, (2011), 'Julian Assange of WikiLeaks & philosopher Slavoj Žižek in conversation with Amy Goodman' [video], *DemocracyNow.org, July 5, 2011,* (accessed July 6, 2011 from www.DemocracyNow.org/2011/7/5/exclusive_julian_assange_of_wikileaks_phil osopher).

Dent, C. (2008), '"Journalists are the confessors of the public", says one Foucaultian,' *Journalism, 9(2):* 200-219.

Deuze, M. (2002), *Journalists in the Netherlands: An Analysis of the People, the Issues and the (Inter-)National Environment*, (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis).

Deuze, M. (2005), 'What is journalism? Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered,' *Journalism 6(4)*: 442-464.

Deuze, M. (2008), 'Understanding journalism as newswork: How it changes, how it remains the same,' *Westminster Papers for Communication and Culture 5(2):* 4-23.

Domingo, D. (2003), 'Ethnography for new media studies: A field report of its weaknesses and benefits,' paper presented at *New Research for New Media: Innovative Research Methodologies* symposium, University of Minnesota, Sept. 2003 (accessed from www.makingonlinenews.net/docs/domingo_nrnm2003.pdf).

Donohue, G. A., P. J. Tichenor & C. N. Olien, (1995), 'A guard dog perspective on the role of media,' *Journal of Communication, 45(2):* 115-132.

Donsbach, W. & T. E. Patterson (2004), 'Political news journalists: Partisanship, professionalism, and political roles in five countries,' in F. Esser & B. Pfetsch (eds), *Comparing Political Communication*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University).

du Gay, P. & G. Salaman (1992), 'The cult[ure] of the customer,' *Journal of Management Studies 29(5)*: 615-633.

Durkheim, É. (1897 [2002]), *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, J. A. Spaulding & G. Simpson (tr), (London: Routledge).

Eagleton, T. (1991), *Ideology: An Introduction*, (London: Verso).

Edwards, D. & D. Cromwell (2006), *Guardians of Power: The Myth of the Liberal Media*, (London: Pluto).

Edwards, D. & D. Cromwell (2009), *Newspeak in the 21st Century*, (London: Pluto).

Ekström, M. (2002), 'Epistemologies of TV journalism,' *Journalism 3(3)*: 259-282.

Elliott, P. (1978) 'Professional ideology and organisational change: The journalist since 1800,' in G. Boyce, J. Curran & P. Wingate (eds), *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, (London: Constable).

Ellis, J. J. (1997), *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*, (NY: Alfred A. Knopf).

Ellman, M., & F. Germano (2009), 'What do the papers sell? A model of advertising and media bias,' *The Economic Journal 119*: 680-704.

Entman, R. M. (2010), 'Media framing biases and political power: Explaining slant in news of Campaign 2008,' *Journalism 11(4)*: 389-408.

Entman, R. M., & D. L. Paletz (1980), 'Media and the conservative myth,' *Journal of Communication 30(4)*: 154-165.

Epstein, E. J. (1973), *News from Nowhere: Television and the News*, (NY: Random House).

FAIR (1998), 'Examining the "Liberal Media" Claim,' *FAIR.org, June 1, 1998* (accessed July 5, 2010 from http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=2447).

Fairclough, N. (1995a), *Media Discourse*, (London: Arnold).

Fairclough, N. (1995b), *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Langauge*, (London: Longman)

Fallows, J. (1997), *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy*, (London: Vintage).

Fiennes, S. (producer) (2006), *The Perverts Guide to Cinema* [Documentary].

Fishman, M. (1978), 'Crime waves as ideology,' *Social Problems 25(5):* 531-543.

Fishman, M. (1997), 'News and nonevents: Making the visible invisible,' in D. A. Berkowitz (ed), *Social Meanings of News: A Text-Reader*, (London: Sage).

Fleming, P. & A. Spicer (2003), 'Working at a cynical distance: Implications for power, subjectivity and resistance,' *Organization 10(1)*: 157-179.

Foucault, M. (1972), *The Archaeology of Knowledge and 'The Discourse on Language,'* (NY: Pantheon)

Foucault, M. (1977), *Discipline and Punish*, A. Sheridan (tr), (London: Penguin).

Foucault, M. (1980), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, C. Gordon (ed), (NY: Pantheon).

Fouquet, D (1967), 'News media criticized for handling of riot stories,' *Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Oct 1967*.

Fourth (2011), *Oxford English Dictionary,* (accessed July 8, 2011 from oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fourth#m_en_gb0313010.010)

Fowler, R. & G. Kress (1979), 'Critical linguistics,' in R. Fowler et al (eds), *Language and Control*, (London: Routledge).

Fowler, R. (1991), *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*, (London: Routledge).

Fraleigh, D. M., & Tuman, J. S. (1997), *Freedom of Speech in the Marketplace of Ideas,* (Bedford/St. Martins).

Fraser, N. (1992), 'Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy,' in C. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Boston: MIT).

Freidson, E. (1983), 'The theory of professions: State of the art,' in R. Dingwall & P. Lewis (eds), *The Sociology of Professions: Lawyers, Doctors and Others*, (London: Macmilian).

Friedman, T. (1998), 'From heroic objectivity to the news stream: The Newseum's strategies for relegitimizing journalism in the information age,' *Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 15*: 325-335.

Gamson, W. A. (1989), 'News as framing: Comments on Graber,' *American Behavioural Scientist 33*: 157-161.

Gane, M. (1991), *Baudrillard: Critical and Fatal Theory*, (London: Routledge).

Gane, N. (2006), 'Speed up or slow down?: Social theory in the information age,' *Information, Communication & Society, 9(1):* 20-38.

Gans, H. (1979 [2004]), *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News. NBC Nightly News,* Newsweek *and* Time, (Northwestern University).

Gauthier, G. (2005), 'A realist point of view on news journalism,' *Journalism Studies 6(1)*: 51-60.

Genosko, G. (1999), *McLuhan and Baudrillard: The Masters of Implosion*, (London: Routledge).

Genosko, G. (2007), 'Jean Baudrillard's contributions to semiotic and structural studies,' in *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, 4(3)*.

Glaser, B. G., & A. L. Strauss (1967), *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, (Chicago: Aldine).

Glasgow University Media Group (1976), *Bad News Vol. 1,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

Glasgow University Media Group (1980), *Bad News Vol. 2*: More Bad News, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

Glasser, T. L., & L. Marken (2005), 'Can we make journalists better?,' in H. de Burgh (ed), *Making Journalists: Diverse Models, Global Issues*, (London: Routledge).

Gleason, T. W. (1990), *The Watchdog Concept: The Press in the Courts in Nineteenth Century America*, (Aimes. IA: Iowa State University).

Glynn, K. (2009), 'The 2004 election did not take place: Bush, spectacle, and the media moment,' *Television & New Media 10(2)*: 216-245.

Goldberg, B. (1996), 'Networks need a reality check: A firsthand account of liberal bias at CBS News,' *Wall Street Journal, Feb 13 1996*, (Accessed Jan 1 2010 from http://www.opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=95001668).

Goldberg, B. (2003), *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News*, (NY: Perennial).

Goldberg, B. (2008), *Crazies to the Left of Me, Wimps to the Right*, (London: Harper Collins).

Golding, P. & G. Murdock (1979), 'Ideology and the mass media: The question of determination,' in M. Barrett *et al* (eds), *Ideology and Cultural Production*, (London: Croom Helm).

Golding, P. & P. Elliott (1979), *Making the News*, (London: Longman)

Gouldner, A. (1970), 'The sociologist as partisan: Sociology and the welfare state,' in L. T. Reynolds & J. M. Reynolds (eds), The Sociology of Sociology, (NY: David McKay).

Greenwald, M., & J. Bernt (eds) (2000), *The Big Chill: Investigative Reporting in the Current Media Environment*, (Aimes, IA: Iowa State University).

Gunkel, D. J. (2010), 'The real problem: Avatars, metaphysics and online social interaction,' *New Media & Society 12(1):* 127-141.

Habermas, J. (1962 [1991]), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, T. Burger & F. Lawrence (trs), (MIT Press).

Hackett, R. A. (1984), 'Decline of a paradigm? Bias and objectivity in news media studies,' *Critical Studies in Mass Communication 1(3):* 229-259.

Hackett, R. A. (2005), 'Is there a democratic deficit in US and UK journalism?', in S. Allan (ed), *Journalism: Critical Issues*, (Maidenhead, UK: Open University).

Hall, S. (1980), 'Encoding/Decoding,' in S. Hall et al (eds), *Culture, Media, Language*, (London: Routledge).

Hall, S. (1982), 'The rediscovery of "ideology": Return of the repressed in media studies,' in M. Gurevitch et al (eds), *Culture, Society and the Media*, (London: Methuen).

Hall, S., et al (1978), *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*, (London: Macmillan).

Hallin, D. C. (1986), *The 'Uncensored War': The Media and Vietnam*, (NY: Oxford University).

Hallin, D. C. (1992), 'The passing of the "high modernism" of American journalism,' *Journal of Communication 42(3)*: 14-25.

Halloran, J. D. (1998), 'Mass communication research: Asking the right questions,' in A. Hansen et al (eds), *Mass Communication Research Methods*, (London: MacMillan).

Harcup, T. (2009), *Journalism: Principles and Practices*, (London: Sage).

Hasan, M. (2009), 'Bias and the Beeb,' *New Statesman, Aug 27, 2009*, (accessed from http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2009/08/mehdi-hasan-bbc-wing-bias-corporation)

Hazen, D. (2011), 'Progressive media suffer losses in the fight against the right-wing media machine,' *AlterNet.org, Apr. 11, 2011*.

Hearns-Branaman, J. O. (2012 forthcoming), 'The Egyptian Revolution Did Not Take Place: On the live TV coverage by Al Jazeera English,' *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, *9(1)*.

Heilbroner, R. L. (1985), *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism*, (NY: Norton).

Herman, E. S. & N. Chomsky (1979), *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism (The Political Economy of Human Rights: Volume 1)*, (Montreal: Black Rose Books).

Herman, E. S. (1992), *Beyond Hypocrisy: Decoding the News in an Age of Propaganda*, (South End Press).

Herman, E. S., & D. Peterson (2009), 'The Iran versus US-Israeli-NATO threats,' *MR Zine, Oct 20 2009*, (from MRZine.MonthlyReview.org/hp201009.html).

Herman, E. S., & N. Chomsky (1988), *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, (London: Vintage).

Hirsch, S. M. (2004), 'Torture at Abu Ghraib' *The New Yorker, May 10, 2004*, (available at www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/05/10/040510fa_fact).

Hjavard, S. (1995), 'TV news flow studies revisited,' *Electronic Journal of Communication 5(2-3)*.

Hofstadter, R. (1955), *The Age of Reform*, (NY: Knopf).

Holloway, W., & T. Jefferson (2000), *Doing Qualitative Research Differently*, (London: Sage).

Homer, S. (2005), *Jacques Lacan*, (London: Routledge).

Horkheimer, M. & T. Adorno, (1947 [2002]), *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, G. S. Noerr (ed), E. Jephcott (tr), (Stanford, CA: Stanford University).

Horrocks, C. & Z. Jevtic (1999), *Introducing Baudrillard*, R. Appignanesi (ed), (Cambridge: Icon).

Horvit, B. (2006), 'International news agencies and the war debate of 2003,' in *Gazette 68*: 427-447.

Hunt, F. K. (1850), *The Fourth Estate: Contributions Towards a History of Newspapers, and of the Liberty of the Press*, (London: David Bogue).

Jeffries, S. (2011), 'A life in writing: Slavoj Žižek,' *The Guardian, July 15, 2011* (from www.Guardian.co.uk/culture/2011/jul/15/slavoj-zizek-interview-life-writing).

Jensen, R. (2008), 'Investigative journalism project reveals problem at core of mainstream journalism' *ZNet.com*, (accessed Feb 8 2008 from MediaChannel.org).

Johnstone, J. W. C., E. J. Slawski & W. W. Bowman (1973), 'The professional values of American newsmen,' *Public Opinion Quarterly 36(4)*: 522-540.

Johnstone, J. W. C., E. J. Slawski & W. W. Bowman (1976), *The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work*, (Urbana: University of Illinois).

Kapitalistate Group, (1975) 'Watergate, or the Eighteenth Brumaire of Richard Nixon,' *Kapitalistate 3*.

Karppinen, K. (2008), 'Media and the paradoxes of pluralism,' in D. Hesmondhalgh & J. Toynbee (eds), *The Media and Social Theory*, (Oxon: Routledge).

Kay, S. (2003), *Žižek: A Critical Introduction*, (Cambridge: Polity).

Kieran, M. (1998), 'Objectivity, impartiality and good journalism,' in M. Kieran (ed), *Media Ethics*, (London: Routledge).

King, N. & C. Horrocks, (2010), Interviews in Qualitative Research, (London: Sage).

Knight, P. (2002), *Small-scale Research*, (London: Sage).

Kovach, B. & T. Rosenstiel (2001), *The Elements of Journalism*, (NY: Crown).

Kovach, B. & T. Rosenstiel (2007), *The Elements of Journalism, 2nd ed.*, (NY: Three Rivers).

Kuypers, J. A. (2002), *Press Bias and Politics: How the Media Frame Controversial Issues*, (London: Praeger).

Lacan, J. (1977), *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, J.-A. Miller (ed), A. Sheridan (tr), (London: Penguin).

Landy, M. & S. M. Milkis (2008), *American Government: Balancing Democracy and Rights*, (Cambridge University).

Lane, R. J. (2000), *Jean Baudrillard*, (London: Routledge).

Lane, R. J. (2009), *Jean Baudrillard, 2nd ed.*, (London: Routledge).

Lasswell, H. D. (1948). The Structure and Function of Communication in Society,' in L. Bryson (Ed.), *The Communication of Ideas, (*New York: Harper)

Lau, R. W. K. (2004), 'Critical realism and news production,' *Media, Culture & Society 26(5):* 693-711.

Lawrence, R. G. (2000), 'Defining events: Problem definition in the media arena,' in R. P. Hart & B. H. Sparrow (eds), *Politics, Discourse, and American Society: New Agendas*, (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield).

Lester, E. (1992), 'Manufactured silence and the politics of media research: A consideration of the "Propaganda Model",' *Journal of Communication Inquiry 16(1)*: 45-55

Levy, L. W. (1960), *Legacy of Suppression: Freedom of Speech and the Press in Early American History*, (Harvard University).

Levy, L. W. (1985), *Emergence of a Free Press*, (Oxford University).

Lichter, R., S. Rothman & L. S. Lichter (1990), *The Media Elite*, (NY: Hastings House).

Lindsey, J. R. (2007), 'Rethinking the political: Taking Baudrillard's "Silent Majorities" seriously,' *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies 4(2)*

Lippmann, W. (1920 [2007]), *Liberty and News*, (NJ: Princeton University).

Lippmann, W. (1921 [1997]), *Public Opinion*, (NY: Free Press).

Locke, J. (1869), *Two Treatises of Government*, (accessed from *Project Gutenberg,* www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm)

MacDonald, M. (2006), 'Empire and communication: The media wars of Marshall McLuhan,' *Media Culture & Society, 28(4)*: 505-520.

Madison, J. (1788), 'The structure of the government must furnish the proper checks and balances between the different departments [a.k.a. Federalist Paper #51],' *New York Packet, Feb 8, 1788.*

Manent, P. (1987 [1995]), *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, R. Balinski (tr), (NJ: Princeton Paperbacks).

Manicas, P. (1998), 'A realist social science,' in M. Archer et al (eds), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, (London: Routledge).

Mann, B (2008), 'McClellen's Mirror: Washington press corps not thrilled with new book,' from *NewWest.net, June 2, 2008.*

Marcuse, H. (1969), 'Repressive tolerance,' in R. W. Wolff, B. Moore & H. Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, (Boston: Beacon).

Martin, N. (2007), 'BBC viewers angered by its "innate liberal bias",' Daily Telegraph, Jun. 19, 2007, (accessed from www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1554936/BBC-viewers-angered-by-its-innate-liberal-bias.html)

Marx, K. (1845 [1988]), 'The materialist concept of history,' in *Marxism: Essential Writings*, D. McLellan (ed), (Oxford University).

McChesney, R. W. (2002), 'September 11 and the structural limitations of US journalism,' in B. Zelizer & S. Allan (eds), *Journalism After September 11*, (London: Routledge).

McChesney, R. W. (2003), 'The problem of journalism: A political economic contribution to an explanation of the crisis in contemporary US journalism,' *Journalism Studies 4(3)*: 299-329.

McChesney, R. W. (2004), *The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the 21st Century*, (NY: Monthly Review).

McChesney, R. W., & J. Nichols (2010), *The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution That Will Begin the World Again*, (Philadelphia: Nation Books).

McClellan, S. (2008), *What Happened: Inside the Bush White House and Washington's Culture of Deception*, (NY: Public Affairs).

McLuhan, M. (1964 [1994]), *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, (Boston: MIT).

McNair, B (2003), 'From control to chaos: Towards a new sociology of journalism,' *Media, Culture and Society, 25*: 547-555.

McNair, B. (2005a), 'The emerging chaos of global news culture,' in S. Allan (ed), *Journalism: Critical Issues*, (Maidenhead: Open University).

McNair, B. (2005b), 'What is journalism?', in H. de Burgh (ed), *Making Journalists: Diverse Models, Global Issues*, (London: Routledge).

McNair, B. (2009), *News and Journalism in the UK, 5th ed.*, (London: Routledge).

Merrin, W. (1999), 'Television is killing the art of symbolic exchange: Baudrillard's theory of communication,' *Theory Culture Society 16(3)*: 119-140.

Merrin, W. (2001), 'To play with phantoms: Jean Baudrillard and the evil demon of the simulacrum,' *Economy and Society 30(1)*: 85-111.

Merrin, W. (2002), 'Implosion, simulation and the pseudo-event: A critique of McLuhan,' *Economy and Society, 31(3)*: 369-390.

Merrin, W. (2005), *Baudrillard and the Media*, (Cambridge: Polity).

Mill, J. S. (1859 [1991]), 'On liberty,' in *'On liberty' and Other Essays*, J. Grey (ed), (Oxford University).

Mill, J. S. (1861a [1991]), 'Utilitarianism,' in *'On Liberty' and Other Essays*, J. Grey (ed), (Oxford University).

Mill, J. S. (1861b [1991]), 'Considerations on representative government,' in *'On liberty' and Other Essays*, J. Grey (ed), (Oxford University).

Miller, S. & W. Dinan (2008), *A Century of Spin*, (London: Pluto).

Mirchandani, R. (2005), 'Postmodernism and sociology: From the epistemological to the empirical,' *Sociological Theory 23(1)*: 86-115.

Molotch, H. & M. Lester (1974), 'News as purposive behavior: On the strategic use of routine events, accidents, and scandals,' *American Sociological Review 39(1)*: 101-112.

Montesquieu, C. (1750), *The Spirit of the Laws*, T. Nugent (tr), (from www.Constitution.org/cm/sol-02.htm).

Moore, M. (2007), 'Public interest, media neglect,' in *British Journalism Review, 18*: 33-40.

Morrison, K. (1995), *Marx, Durkheim, Weber: Formations of Modern Social Thought*, (London: Sage).

Mouffe, C. (2000), *Democratic Paradox*, (London: Verso).

Moyers, B. (2008), 'Is the Fourth estate a Fifth Column?: Corporate media colludes with democracy's demise,' *In These Times, July 11, 2008*.

Murdock, G. & P. Golding (2005), 'Culture, communications and political economy,' in J. Curran & M. Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society, 4th ed.*, (London: Hodder Arnold).

Murphy, D. (1978), 'Control without censorship,' in J. Curran (ed.), *The British Press: A Manifesto*, (MacMillian: London).

Myers, T. (2003), *Slavoj Žižek*, (London: Routledge).

Nichols, J. & R. W. McChesney (2009), 'The death and life of great American newspapers,' *The Nation, April 6, 2009*.

Norris, C., (1992), *Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals and the Gulf War*, (Lawrence & Wishart).

Novak, M. (1970), *The Experience of Nothingness*, (New York: Harper & Row).

Ofcom (2011), 'Ofcom broadcasting codes,' (accessed April 14, 2011 from Stakeholders.Ofcom.org.uk/broadcasting/broadcast-codes/broadcast-code/).

Olberman, K. (2010), 'Countdown with Keith Olbermann,' Jan 22, 2010, MSNBC.

Pasley, J. (2001), *The Tyranny of Printers: Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia).

Patterson, T. E. (1998), 'Political roles of the journalist,' in D. Graber, D. McQuail & P. Norris (eds), *The Politics of News: The News of Politics*, (Washington DC: CQ Press).

PCC (2011), 'Editors code of practice,' (accessed April 14, 2011 from www.PCC.org.uk/cop/practice.html).

Peterson, T. (1981), 'Mass media and their environments: A journey into the past,' in E. Abel (ed), *What's News*, (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies).

Peterson, T., J. W. Jensen & W. K. Rivers (1965), *The Mass Media and Modern Society*, (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

Phillips, L. (2008), 'Pursuit of profit hurting the media, say MEPs,' in *EU Observer, June 4th, 2008*.

Philo, G. & M. Berry (2004), *Bad News from Israel*, (London: Pluto).

Philo, G. & M. Berry (2011), *More Bad News from Israel*, (London: Pluto).

Philo, G. (2007), 'Can Discourse Analysis successfully explain the content of media and journalistic practice?', *Journalism Studies 8(2)*: 175-196.

Porpora, D. V. (1989 [1998]), 'Four concepts of social structure,' in M. Archer *et al* (eds), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, (London: Routledge).

Potter, J. & M. Wetherell (1987), *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*, (London: Sage).

Pound, M. (2008), *Žižek: A (Very) Critical Introduction*, (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans).

Price, L. (2010), *Where Power Lies: Prime Ministers v The Media*, (London: Simon & Schuster).

ProPublica, (2011), 'About *ProPublica*,' *ProPublica.org*, (accessed June 2, 2011 from propublica,org/about).

Quandt, T. (2008), 'News tuning and content management: An obersvation study of old and new routines in German online newsrooms,' in C. Paterson & D. Domingo (eds), *Making Online News*, (London: Peter Lang).

Rai, M. (1995), *Chomsky's Politics*, (Verso: London).

Ranney, A. (1983), *Channels of Power*, (New York: Basic Books).

Roberts, J. M. (2003), *The Aesthetics of Free Speech*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave).

Rorty, R. (1979), *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, (NJ: Princeton University).

Rorty, R. (1991), *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University).

Russell, B. (1912 [1971), *Problems of Philosophy*, (Oxford: Oxford University).

Russell, B. (1940), *An Inquiry Into Meaning and Truth*, (London: George Allen & Unwin)

Ryan, M. (2001), 'Journalistic ethics, objectivity, existential journalism, standpoint epistemology and public journalism,' Journal of Mass Media Ethics 16(1): 3-22.

Schiller, H. (1989), *Culture Inc.: The Corporate Takeover of Public Expression*, (Oxford: Oxford University).

Schlesinger, P. (1978 [1987]), *Putting 'Reality' Together: BBC News*, (London: Methuen & Co).

Schudson, M. (1978), *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*, (NY: Basic).

Schudson, M. (1993), *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget and Reconstruct the Past*, (NY: Basic).

Schudson, M. (2005a), 'Four approaches to the sociology of news,' in J. Curran & M. Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society, 4th ed*, (London: Hodder Arnold).

Schudson, M. (2005b), 'Autonomy from what?', in R. Benson & E. Neveu (eds), *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, (London: Polity).

Schudson, M. (2008a), *Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press*, (London: Polity).

Schultz, J. (1998), *Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability and the Media*, (Cambridge University).

Searle, J. R. (1995), *The Construction of Social Reality*, (New York: Free Press).

Shanker, T. (2008), 'For Pentagon and news media, relations improve with a shift in war coverage,' *New York Times, January 7, 2008.*

Shannon, C. E. & W. Weaver (1949 [1963]), *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois).

Shoemaker, P. J., & S. D. Reese (1996), *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Mass Media Content, 2nd ed.,* (London: Longman).

Shoemaker, P. J., & T. P. Vos, (2009), *Gatekeeping Theory*, (London: Routledge).

Siegel, H. (2004), 'Relativism,' in I. Niiniluoto *et al* (eds), *Handbook of Epistemology*, (London: Klumer Adacemic)

Sinclair, U. (1928 [2003]), *Brass Check*, (University of Illinois).

Sloterdijk, P. (1987), *Critique of Cynical Reason*, M. Eldred (tr), (London: University of Minnesota).

Solomon, N. (2002), '"The Liberal Media" – A poltergeist that will not die,' *CommonDreams.org, Mar 22, 2002*, (accessed Oct 15, 2009 www.commondreams.org/views02/0322-06.htm).

Sparks, C. (2000), 'Media theory after the fall of European communism: Why the old models from East and West won't do anymore,' in J. Curran & M. Park (eds), *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, (Routledge).

Splichal, S. (2002a), 'The principle of publicity, public use of reason and social control,' *Media, Culture and Society, 24*: 5-26.

Splichal, S. (2002b), 'Rethinking publicness: The precedence of the right to communicate,' *Javnost - The Public 9(3)*: 83-106.

Stokes, J. (2003), How to do Media & Cultural Studies, (London: Sage).

Sullivan, A. (2002), 'Let's hear it for prejudiced television news,' *Sunday Times, Nov 17 2002*, (from www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/article831487.ece).

Taylor, P. A. (2010), *Žižek and the Media*, (London: Polity).

Tebbell, J. (1974), *The Media in America*, (New York: Mentor).

Thompson, J. B. (2000), *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media* Age, (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Toffolette, K. (2011), *Baudrillard Reframed: Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts*, (London, IB Taurus).

Toynbee, J. (2008), 'Media making and social reality,' in D. Hesmondhalgh & J. Toynbee (eds), *The Media and Social Theory*, (Oxon: Routledge).

Toynbee, P. (2003), 'Breaking news: Intense circulation wars have created a vicious press pack which ultimately might make the country ungovernable,' *Guardian, Sept 5*, (from http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2003/sep/05/davidkelly.media).

Tuchman, G. (1972), 'Objectivity as strategic ritual: An examination of newsmen's notions of objectivity,' *American Journal of Sociology 77(4)*: 660-679.

Tuchman, G. (1978), *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, (NY: Free Press).

Tumber, H. & M. Prentoulis (2005), 'Journalism and the making of a profession,' in H. de Burgh (ed), *Making Journalists: Diverse Models, Global Issues*, (London: Routledge).

van Dijk, T. A. (1988), *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National Television News*, (London: Communications Policy Research Center).

Voloshinov, V. N. (1929 [1973]), *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, L. Matejka & I. R. Titunik (trs), (NY: Seminar), (accessed July 2, 2011 from www.marxists.org/archive/voloshinov/1929/marxism-language.htm)

Washington Post (2011), 'Conflict of interest,' (accessed May 21, 2011 from www.WashingtonPost.com/wp-srv/opinions/documents/conflict_of_interest.html).

Weaver, D. & G. C. Wilhoit (1986), *The American Journalist*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana).

Weaver, D. H. (2005), 'Who are journalists?,' in H. de Burgh (ed), *Making Journalists: Diverse Models, Global Issues*, (London: Routledge).

Weaver, D. H. (ed) (1998), *The Global Journalist: News People Around the World*, (New Jersey: Hampton).

Weaver, D. H. et al (2007), *The American Journalist in the 21st Century: US News People at the Dawn of a New Millennium*, (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum)

Weaver, P. H. (1973), 'Is television news biased?,' *The Public Interest 26*: 57-74.

Webb, J. & T. Schirato (2006), 'Communication technology and cultural politics,' *Convergence 12(3)*: 255-261

Wimmer, R. D. & J. R. Dominick (2006), *Mass Media Research, 8th ed.*, (London: Thompson Wadsworth).

Wood, L. & R. Kroger (2002), *Doing Discourse Analysis: Methods for Studying Action in Talk and Text*, (London: Sage).

Worlds of Journalism (2009), 'Journalism cultures [raw data],' (accessed Aug 1, 2011 from www.worldsofjournalism.org/download.htm).

Wright, K. (2011), 'Reality without scare quotes: Developing the case for critical realism in journalism research,' *Journalism Studies 12(2)*: 156-171.

Zachary, G. P. (2006), 'A journalism manifesto,' *Alternet.org, Feb 9, 2006*.

Zelizer, B. (2004), *Taking Journalism Seriously: News and the Academy*, (London: Sage).

Žižek, S. (1989 [2008]), *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, (London: Verso)

Žižek, S. (1994), 'The spectre of ideology,' in S. Žižek (ed), *Mapping Ideology*, (London: Verso).

Žižek, S. (1997 [2008]), *A Plague of Fantasies*, (London: Verso).

Žižek, S. (2000 [2008]), *The Fragile Absolute, or Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?,* (London: Verso).

Žižek, S. (2001), *Enjoy Your Symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out*, (London: Routledge).

Žižek, S. (2003), *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity*, (MIT).

Žižek, S. (2006), *How to Read Lacan*, (London: Granta Books).

Žižek, S. (2008 [2009]), *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, (London: Profile Books).

Žižek, S. (2009), *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, (London: Verso)

APPENDIX I – SOLICITATION E-MAIL AND FOLLOW-UP

[Initial E-mail:]

Dear [name],

My name is Jesse, I am a PhD student from the Institute of Communications Studies, University of Leeds. I am conducting research into the Fourth Estate roles of news media and, in particular, discourses of journalism critique. I am looking to conduct some short (30min) interviews [general time frame] to discuss with news media professionals your feelings and attitudes towards certain notions of objectivity and bias, and the relationship between news media and the government. I feel my research would benefit a lot from your help due to your experience and position in the field, and also because [name of organization] is one of the key institutions I am looking at.

In the end, I hope my research will contribute to a better understanding of journalists' perceptions of these two areas, and hopefully notions of truth and power in media in more general terms. If you want more information about my research please see the link to my profile below. I should also let you know that you can withdraw from the research before, after and during the interview and the interviews can be conducted in anonymity if you so desire. Furthermore, if it is not convenient to meet in person, the interview could also be conducted over the phone.

[More specific information about my schedule], so if you are interested then please let me know your availability. If you feel you are too busy, which I fully understand, then I hope you could refer me to someone else in your organization also involved in political news that would be able to assist me. Thanks in advance for any help you can give! Cheers,

Jesse Owen Hearns-Branaman

Institute of Communications Studies, University of Leeds

[profile link]

[Follow-up E-mail (with initial email attached below it):]

Dear [name],

I am writing to follow up to an email I sent you [date] requesting an interview for my PhD project at the University of Leeds. I would just like to express again how grateful I would be if you could spare 30 minutes of your time to help me out with a quick interview.

Also, I should add if meeting in person is not convenient, then we could also schedule to hold the interview over the phone, at your convenience. Cheers,

Jesse Owen Hearns-Branaman

Institute of Communications Studies, University of Leeds

APPENDIX II – WEBSITE PROFILE

[This profile was supplied to journalists via a link in the solicitation email.]

I joined the ICS in September, 2008. I previously studied at the University of Nottingham in Ningbo, China, and San Francisco State University, California, USA, and have taught culture, media and communication studies at University of Leeds, University of Nottingham, Zhejiang University and Wanli University.

My research interests include poststructuralism, Marxism, news media, comparative media and comparative cultural studies. I have previously published in the *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies* [link] and the *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* [link], as well as presenting at many conferences, workshops and seminars on Jean Baudrillard, Herman & Chomsky's Propaganda Model, and news media production in the People's Republic of China. I am also associate editor of *PLATFORM: Journal of Media and Communcations* [link] since Spring 2010. I served as teaching assistant for the classes "History of Communications" (Autumn, 2009) and "Social Communications: Processes and Effects" (Spring, 2010).

My PhD project, under the supervision of Dr. Chris Paterson [link] and Dr. Paul A. Talyor [link], is titled 'The Fourth Estate in the USA and England: Discourses of truth and power'. My project consists of a historical materialist reading of the origins of the Fourth Estate functions and ideals of journalism in the USA and England. This involves the examination of the four underlying elements of the Fourth Estate (free speech & press, commercialization, secularization and professionalization), from a 'traditional' economically deterministic perspective.

This will be followed by a discussion of the ideology behind the Fourth Estate ideals, using an analysis of two discourses. The first is about Power, or the relationship between government and news media, while the second concerns Truth, that is, bias and objectivity in the news media. The theoretical framework underlying this section will compare normative theories of the news media, critical political-economic theories, and the post-Marxist, post-structrualist theories of Jean Baudrillard and Slavoj Žižek. Primary data will come from discourse analyses of news events in the USA and England as well as interviews with political news journalists on both sides of the pond.

APPENDIX III - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A2) Some journalists say that news is simply a mirror of reality. Do you think that is accurate?

A3) A scholarly perspective is that [quote] "because the institutions of news reporting and presentation are socially, economically and politically situated, all news is always reported from some particular angle". Do you agree?

A4) Here's a statement from a philosopher: News media is the site of [quote] "competing truth claims" where, in the end, "the best we can do … is to list the various competing 'truths' which are believed by the opposing sides" and "reason carefully about what the evidence suggests and reach our conclusions accordingly, always mindful that we could be wrong". Do you agree with that?

A5) Do you think that is how people read or watch the news? [Restate part of A4 if necessary]

B1/2) So now I want to talk about bias. Can you give a recent example of a news story that you thought was very biased? And why is that? How about one that was very un-biased? And, again, why is that? [Probe, if no answers] Because I am just wondering how you judge if a story is biased or not.

B3) What determines the range of opinion we find across the news media?   [Probe] How about ownership? [Probe] How about audience?

B4) Another scholarly perspective is that "the news media of a particular society … tend to construct accounts of events that are structured and framed by the dominant values and interests of that society, and to marginalise (if not necessarily exclude) alternative accounts". What do you think?

B5) And others, like Noam Chomsky, say it is usually the range of opinions of the political and economic elites that forms the range of opinion in media. What do you think?

B6) There is one prevalent view, especially in America, that journalists, because they are educated and middle class, support the more liberal political parties and thus have an inherent Liberal Bias. Do you agree?

C1) Can you tell me some good and bad aspects of the following methods that journalists say they use to maintain objectivity. Using direct quotations?

C2) How about writing or presenting in an inverted pyramid to present the most important facts first?

C3) How about using at least one source from each side, like 'he said, she said'?

D3) What limits do you see existing for doing journalism the best way it needs to be done? [Probe] How about government interference?

E2) Former BBC correspondent turned Tony Blair media advisor Lance Price [For UK Journalists: "Do you know Lance Price?"] wrote that, for political and commercial reasons "journalists enter into all manner of secret alliances with politicians ... surrendering any claim to genuine independence and often bolstering rather than scrutinising those in government or aspiring to government." What do you think of that?

E4) American investigative journalist I.F. Stone said that all governments are run by liars and nothing they say should be believed. Do you agree?

APPENDIX IV – LIST AND STATISTICS OF NON-ANONYMOUS INTERVIEWEES

	Name	**S**	**Secondary education**	**Age range**	**Exp**	**Employer**	**Role**	**Former role(s)**
AB	Aaron Blake	m	BA Journalism & BA Pol. Science	20-35	5	*Washington Post*	Pol. blogger	
AK	Anne Kornblut	f	BA English	35-45	15	*Washington Post*	Pol. csp.	
AM	Andrea Mitchell	f	BA History	55-65	40	MSNBC, NBC News	Foreign affairs csp., host	Political csp.
AS	Andrew Sparrow	m	[unknown]	35-45	20	*Guardian*	Website pol. csp.	Political csp.
BS	Bill Schneider	m	PhD in Pol.	65+	30	n/a [last at CNN]	[fellow at think tank]	Pol. analyst, producer
CT	Chuck Todd	m	none	35-45	20	MSNBC/NBC News	Chief White House csp., pol. director, host	
DH	David Herszen-horn	m	[unknown]	35-45	15+	*New York Times*	Congressional csp.	
JJ	Joey Jones	m	BA History & English, MA Broadcast Journalism	35-45	15	Sky News	Pol. csp.	
JL	Janie Lorber	f	BA History	20-35	4	*New York Times*	Pol. blogger	
KD	Karen DeYoung	f	BA Journalism & Comm.	55-65	35	*Washington Post*	Diplomatic csp., associate ed.	Westminster csp.
MR	Miranda Richard-son	f	BA Journalism	25-35	10	Sky News	Pol.l csp.	
MW	Michael White	m	BA History	65+	45	*Guardian*	Associate ed. at Westminster	Pol. ed., pol. csp., DC csp.
NW	Nick Watt	m	[unknown]	35-45	15+	*Guardian*	Pol. csp.	
SC	Sean Curran	m	BA Law, MA Mass Comm.	35-45	20	BBC News	Parliamentary csp.	
SS	Steve Scully	m	BA Comm. & Pol. Science, MSc in Journalism	45-55	25	C-Span	Political editor, White House producer, host	Political csp., business csp.
WP	Walter Pincus	m	BA [unknown]	65+	55	*Washington Post*	National security csp.	CIA csp., DC csp.

APPENDIX V - INTERVIEW DATES AND LIST OF QUESTIONS ASKED

Date	Code	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	B1/2	B3	B4	B5	B6	C1	C2	C3	D3	E2	E4
8-27	AB	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
9-02	AK	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
8-23	AM	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7-16	AS	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7-12	BBC1	x	x	x	x		x				x					x	x
7-19	BBC2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		x	
8-26	BS	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8-25	CT	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
9-02	DH	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x				x	x	x
7-22	TIM1	x	x	x	x	x	x				x						
7-06	JJ	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x				x	x	x
8-27	JL	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8-11	KD	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7-20	MR	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7-05	MW	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7-19	NW	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7-07	SC	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7-06	SKY1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8-31	SS	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8-25	WP	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Total		20	20	20	19	19	20	16	14	17	19	16	16	16	16	19	17

APPENDIX VI - PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: The Fourth Estate in the USA and England

Name of Researcher: Jesse Owen Hearns-Branaman

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the letter / e-mail explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

3. I give permission for my name, position, affiliation and professional history to be used in this research (*optional*).

4. I agree for the interview to be recorded electronically

5. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research.

6. I agree to take part in the above research project.

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Researcher   Date   Signature