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Journalistic Practice and the Cultural Valuation of New Media: Topicality, Objectivity, Network

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Journalistic Practice and the Cultural Valuation of New Media

Topicality, Objectivity, Network

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To

M. F.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements **3**

List of Illustrations **5**

Abbreviations **5**

Introduction - The Cultural Crisis of Journalistic Practice **7**

From the Economic to the Cultural Crisis of Journalistic Practice 10

Revising the Terminology: Cultural Studies and Journalism 15

Outline of the Study 23

1: Practice as a Model of Cultural Innovation **27**

Innovation through Practice? **29**

Raymond Williams and the Alterity of Practice 35

Pierre Bourdieu: The Logic of Practice, Habitus and Field 42

The Duality of Structure and the Transposition of Schemas 50

Innovation and Journalistic Practice: Three Dimensions **57**

2: From Correspondence to Topicality - Penny Papers in the 1830s **67**

The Unacknowledged Usefulness of a Daily News Medium **73**

The Cognitive Dimension of Daily Print **89**

The Schema of Topicality **100**

The Veracity of the Hoax 105

The Murder Mystery of Helen Jewett 112

Advertising the Herald 119

Dematerializing Information - From News Boats to the Telegraph 125

Summary **136**

3: Photography and the Schema of Objectivity, 1890-1920 ..... **137**

Photographs in Print: Blind Spots of the Debate **145**

Objectivity 146

Photojournalism 153

The Limits of Circulation: Photographic Practice in the 19th Century 156
Illustrated News Media in the 19th Century 163
The Schema of Objectivity in Photographic Reproductions............................171
The Material Dimension: Transposing Immediacy by Hand 172
The Scientific Dimension: Helping the 'Unaided Eye'..............................185
The Cultural Dimension: Photography and Journalistic Realism..............204
The Schema of Objectivity and Journalistic Practice 220
4: Transposing Journalistic Practice: Blogs and Social Media..........................233
News in a Convergent Media Environment..245
The Cultural Valuation of the Network as a Text-Based Resource 254
Two Schemas of Blogging as a Social Practice 267
Peer-Production and Blogs - Alternative Journalism.................................269
Blogging as a Practice of Self-Communication..282
Journalistic Practices after Journalism and the Privacy of Publicness 295
Conclusion 303
Bibliography..309
Anonymous Sources...309
Works Cited...310
Summary in English 331
Zusammenfassung...333
Curriculum Vitae...335
Erklärung 338

Acknowledgements

In the Berlin office of Sankei Shinbun, Japan's fifth largest newspaper, news was a material business. Every day, I would read through major German newspapers and select articles on the German economy, politics, current affairs and culture. Articles were copied on a standard Xerox machine into a uniform paper format and filed according to their subjects. While the Internet had simply optimized the use of the telephone and the preparation of copy, important information remained tied to paper. I thank Jun Kurosawa, chief correspondent of Sankei Shinbun (産経新聞) in Germany at the time, for being a great mentor at material data management and a friend ever since.

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List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Illustration of "The Killing of the Mammoth" with enlarged detail. *McClure's Magazine* Oct. 1899: 511. [p. 180].

Figure 2. Full page layout with illustrations. *McClure's Magazine* Oct. 1899: 509. [p. 181].

Figure 3. Illustration of "The Truth About the Mammoth" with enlarged detail. *McClure's Magazine* Feb. 1900: 352. [p. 182].

Figure 4. Illustration of Arthur Leslie. "What News Photography Has Recently Accomplished." *Anaconda Standard* 4 June 1899: 19. [p. 184].

Figure 5. Halftone illustration in Thompson, Vance. "The Invisible World." *Everybody's Magazine* Mar. 1906: 333. [p. 196].

Figure 6. Halftone illustration in Thompson, Vance. "The Invisible World." *Everybody's Magazine* Mar. 1906: 335. [p. 196].

Figure 7. Detail enlargement of the halftone illustration in Figure 5. [p. 197].

Figure 8. Detail enlargement of the halftone illustration in Figure 6. [p. 197].

Figure 9. Illustration from Lowell, Percival. "New Photographs of Mars." *Century Illustrated Magazine* Dec. 1907: 306. [p. 202].

Figure 10. Detail of frontispiece from Helen Campbell *Darkness and Daylight*, 1897. [p. 210].

Figure 11. "Nellie Brady—Age 7." Reproduced from Helen Campbell *Darkness and Daylight*, 1897: 183. [p. 213]

Figure 12. "Nellie Brady" Reproduced from Helen Campbell *Darkness and Daylight*, 1897: 184. [p. 213].

Figure 13. Types of Blogs [p. 287].

Abbreviations

AAS American Antiquarian Society, Worcester MA.

n.p. no pagination

n.a. no author given

Introduction - The Cultural Crisis of Journalistic Practice

In 1871, a Britisher observer noted that “America is before all the world the land of newspapers” (Macaulay, 1871: 120). In 2013, we might phrase that sentence in the past tense. In 1836, Alexis de Tocqueville noted that the “effect of a newspaper is not only to suggest the same purpose to a great number of persons, but also to furnish means for executing in common the designs which they may have singly conceived” (Tocqueville, 2002: 633). In 2011, the newspapers were late to voice the growing political unrest that spawned the Occupy Wall Street movement, which gathered its followers mainly in network media. In 1940, the sociologist Robert Park wrote that “news performs somewhat the same functions for the public that perception does for the individual man” (Park, 1940: 677).[1] In 2012, that news proliferated in blogs, online forums, in short message services, and social networks, orienting perception of the social world through the dynamic exchange of links and the contributions of millions to the smaller and larger debates of the day. News was no longer tied to paper, was no longer the exclusive domain of journalism - and this development is just the most visible component of the cultural crisis of journalistic practice at the beginning of the twenty-first century in North America and elsewhere.

The United States have traditionally claimed a “singular role” in creating modern forms of communication through fostering first the postal delivery system, later railroads and the telegraph to span the continent and bring dispersed communities in contact with each other (Starr, 2004: 19; John, 2010).[2] For a country founded in rebellion against the taxation of printed matter, the Stamp Act controversy of 1765 fostered a communal spirit among the colonists which was largely driven by

1. The German journalism historian Kurt Koszyk employed a similar organic metaphor to describe the social functions of media: “The blood circuit has the same importance for the human organism like media of communication have for the social organism, whose life functions are significantly hampered once they fail” (my translation of: “Was der Blutkreislauf für den menschlichen Organismus bedeutet, sind die Kommunikationsmittel für den sozialen Organismus, dessen Lebensfunktionen bei einem Ausfall erheblich gestört würden.” Koszyk, 1967: 169).

2. And it has to be noted that the U.S. still “have a leadership role in the development of Internet standards, communications software and related social practices, most recently those embedded within so-called social software” (Ito, 2008: 2).

newspapers.[3] The American Revolution can itself be regarded as the result of a journalistic enterprise. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, circulated as a pamphlet and reprinted all over the colonies, first created "a united but adversarial readership" from groups of scattered settlers and endowed them with a feeling of community despite their geographical separation (Hartley, 1996: 8). In the nineteenth century, the democratization of culture went hand in hand with a growing market orientation of media, which gave them independence from partisan interests and political manipulation.[4] News in the United States came to be distinguished by its "sense of fact" *and* "sensationalism," as the German journalism scholar Emil Dovifat noted in an early study of American journalism. Its model of revenue depended on attracting a large audience of general readers and in turn, attract advertisers through high numbers of circulation (Dovifat, 1927: 83-84).[5]

The newspaper and newspaper journalism are the most traditional media of public communication - and they seem to be failing in the new environment of online communications. The newspaper and the particular form of public communication it represents seem more and more an anachronism, not only in terms of the material connection of paper to news. The more important dimension of the cultural crisis of journalistic practice lies in the domain of its cultural valuation by audiences of journalistic products. Already in 1923, the sociologist Robert Park noted: "A newspaper is not merely printed. It is circulated and read. Otherwise it is not a newspaper" (Park, 1923: 274-75). While much of the current debate about the crisis of journalism foregrounds the failing business model of journalism in the digital age, few commentators achieve the same lucidity as Park when it comes to identifying the

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3. "The role of newspapers in the Stamp Act resistance," argues Paul Starr, "exemplified the seeming paradox that while the press contributed to Anglicization by transmitting British culture and opinion, it also contributed to Americanization by fostering a sense of the colonists' common situation" (2004: 66).

4. See Walter Lippmann's overly positive characterization of the popular American press: "The popular commercial press, because it is popular and profitable, has finally broken the ancient monopoly of intelligence, and has at least opened the way to much more substantial liberties" (Lippmann, 1931: 437).

5. My translation of "Zweierlei Ursachen bestimmen die Rolle der Nachricht in der amerikanischen Zeitung. Tatsachensinn und Sensationslust. Beide Ursachen sind nicht einander entgegengesetzt, sondern sie ergänzen sich." (ibid.).

cultural reasons for the crisis. The public function of the newspaper was never only to circulate identical copies of printed news but to create publics (and counterpublics , cf. Warner, 2002). Its purpose was to be read and circulated among audiences, to offer news, commentary and analysis of contemporary events in a way that members of the audience could first of all know what was happening and maybe even deliberate upon the reasons and consequences of such events and developments. The crisis of the newspaper as journalism's most traditional and influential medium seems to have ushered in a crisis of journalistic practice and its public valuation.

In part, the crisis is an effect of the way modern journalism was practiced first as a political and later as a commercial form of public communication. As Alexis de Tocqueville noted in 1836, a newspaper could only survive "on the condition of publishing sentiments or principles common to a larger number of men ... [who are] its habitual readers" (ibid., 636). The conjunction of "common" with "habitual" here is crucial to understand that the modern newspaper needed to habitualize readers to first of all *read* a newspaper on a regular basis on the assumption that diverse readers could find something in common through perusing the news. The modern newspaper differed from earlier advertisers or partisan sheets in that its revenue came from a varied audience of readers who no longer were associated through a common political viewpoint or through the confines of a locality. These readers were attracted to the paper by finding forms of community in which the experience of an individualized, chaotic and contradictory modern condition could be balanced and given meaning. In that sense, the modern newspaper's daily (re-)appearance had a "social continuity effect" in that it connected disjunct events through narrating the stories of the present (Gans, 2003: 71-73). In the dispersed and fragmented online space of communication such continuity is hard to achieve as individuals have begun to communicate in asynchronous patterns and among heterogeneous networks of personal contacts.[6] The cultural crisis of

6. The identity of the newspaper, because it is tied to a *national* reading public, appears outdated in a globalized media environment, see (Ang, 1996; Tunstall, 2008). James Carey speaks of a "new media ecology" and a "diaspora of the Internet" where "new social groupings are formed and organized," who "struggle over new patterns and forms of identity" in a globally connected world (Carey, 1998: 34).

journalistic practice is then also marked by the dispersion of attention to many more sources of private and public information, discourse and knowledge from around the globe. Community is still important for social identity but its sources are no longer demarcated by material or local boundaries of public communication.

From the Economic to the Cultural Crisis of Journalistic Practice

The period between 1990 and the early 2000s is marked by a deep sense of crisis, especially in daily newspaper journalism, which still accounts for most jobs in U.S American journalism in general.[7] At first sight, this crisis stems from a crisis in the business model that traditionally supported news production as a creation of audiences through news content that makes the newspaper attractive for advertising. Stephan Ruß-Mohl, among many others, links the faltering business model of newspapers to the increased use of free online media among audiences and the dramatic decline in classified advertising (Ruß-Mohl, 2009: 22-32).[8] Dwindling circulation figures, loss of advertising revenue, and especially astronomical profit demands from shareholders and venture capitalists seem to herald an end of American journalism (Korzick Garmer, 2001: 12-21; McChesney and Nichols, 2010). Concentration in media ownership (Solomon, 1987; Noam, 2009) and journalism's "unholy marriage to capitalism" (McChesney and Foster, 2011) are regarded as a deathblow to its civic functions.[9] While news media used to balance their civic functions with their commercial objectives, e.g. by separating the management and editorial departments, Turow argues that the pressure from advertisers to reach more narrowly targeted audiences incurs a "shift in balance between society-making media and segment-making media" (Turow, 1997: 3). As smaller budgets cut back on the size of newsrooms and require journalists to serve print and online editions at the same time, less and less

7. According to Weaver et al. the majority of full-time journalists (70.5%) in 2002 was employed at daily and weekly newspapers, and news magazines. Daily newspapers alone accounted for 50.6% of all jobs in journalism in the U.S. in 2002 (2007: 2).

8. U.S. newspaper publishers rely on advertising for 87 per cent of their revenue, while German newspaper companies earn a little more than 50 per cent from advertising (in Japan only about 30 per cent) ("News Industry" 4).

9. See also Richard Cohen's critique of "corporate culture" and "corporate control" of television news (Cohen, 1997: 33).

resources are available for original reporting. This dynamic further diminishes reader expectations of quality and promotes roaming online instead of subscribing to one particular news medium on a long-term basis (Ruß-Mohl, 1992; Ruß-Mohl, 2009: 22-32). News across various media and platforms is more and more alike in its reliance on the same news sources like PR events,[10] press releases and the syndicated reporting of news agencies. This homogenization in commercial news media content as a result of declining revenue from advertising historically coincides with the rise of the Internet as a new medium of mass and private communication (Ryan, 2010: 161f.). The sheer diversity of online content draws attention away from what is nowadays called 'legacy media'.

But failing public trust in the news media is not just the result of the Internet becoming an enlarged resource of information. The subservience to partial reporting already began in the early 1990s, when a form of "media logic" turned many social institutions more or less into media institutions, as Altheide and Snow argued. Further intensifying the logic of the 'pseudo event' (Boorstin, 1962), public relations targeted journalism and emulated its methods of selection to attract media attention. Altheide and Snow declared that "organized journalism [was] dead" because "journalistic practices, techniques, and approaches are now geared to media formats rather than merely directing their craft at topics." Journalists were preferring subjects that were "themselves products of media" especially in television journalism (Altheide and Snow, 1991: ix-ix). Journalists gradually abandoned the "vernacular tradition" of muckraking and investigative reporting, as Bob Calo criticizes or were forced to do so through structural changes in their work routines. Since the watershed victory over Richard Nixon in 1974, which had revived the "cultural theme" of a "reporter as hero-of-democracy," mainstream journalism has jubilantly celebrated its public role while gradually losing public trust (Calo, 2011). The rise of partisan talk radio in the 1980s and the repeal of the fairness doctrine in 1987 have increased audience "polarization" in

10. In 2011, the ratio of journalists to public relations professionals was on a record high of one to four, possibly explained by many journalists changing careers after losing jobs at other news media (McChesney and Foster, 2011).

public debates while the new online forums further accelerate the "fragmentation" of the public into ideological camps (Barker, 2002; Ladd, 2012: 70f.). The "complacency" and lack of critical self-examination in mainstream journalism had become so pervasive in the 1990s, that journalistic media were slow to see the potential of the Internet as a new resource of public communication beyond an auxiliary channel of distribution, argues Aaron Barlow in *The Rise of the Blogosphere* (2007: xviii-xxi). As William Uricchio points out, newspapers and television chains were slow to adapt to an interactive environment, despite individual attempts to engage users in social media.

> While the [news] industry as a whole is investing considerable time and energy in thinking through its digital future, the conceptual framework seems decidedly entrenched in the old model of the print medium: a centralized source with a particular vision of the news and a particular house style radiates print as well as digital copies of its views (Uricchio, 2006: 79).

While journalism is painfully adopting to the new online environment (Pavlik, 2001; Pavlik, 2013), the general decline of trust in the news media provokes appeals to reform journalism from the ground up. Michael Schudson and Leonard Downie's manifest on the "Reconstruction of American Journalism" (2009) advocates a model for "quality journalism,", where philanthropic donations, government subsidies and commercial revenue should be combined to foster critical inquiry through joint research resources.[11] Schudson and Downie argue for "preserving independent, original, credible reporting, whether or not it is popular or profitable, and regardless of the medium in which it appears" (2009: 12). Robert McChesney and John Nichols advocate a similar model, that draws its inspiration from public service media in Europe (Starr, 2009; McChesney and Nichols, 2010). In order to counter the low public trust in the national news media, Meyer proposes a "certification" of journalistic quality to ensure the continued patronage of high-profile journalism by readers. In Meyer's terms, the open information space in digital networks demands new skills from journalists with "a new emphasis on

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11. Independent newsrooms such as ProPublica have already started to work in such a model, employing former editors and journalists of national newspapers. ProPublica states its mission as "an independent, non-profit newsroom that produces investigative journalism in the public interest." The motivation to build this new institution was that "[t]ime 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" ("About Us"). See also Paul Starr's diagnosis of the failure of the press to "cross-subsidize public service journalism" in the volatile internet market (Starr, 2009).

filtering, refining, *decorating and packaging* information.” Instead of producing more information, journalists need to focus on “processing” information and making it understandable to their audiences (Meyer, 2004: 230, emphasis added.) Meyer’s plea seeks to reform journalism within already established routines of production. But his assessment gives little importance to the fact that in a plural media environment, producers and consumers alike are engaged in these very same activities of “filtering” and “refining information,” with only slightly less emphasis on the “decorating and packaging” of information products. The problem is that he basically espouses the same model of journalism that is now in crisis.

The problem of ‘decorating and packaging’ applies especially to news, which is the newspaper’s primary “consumer good.” As Lance Bennett remarks,

> in order to sell audiences to sponsors, the news must be ‘sold’ to the audience in the first place. (...) Much of what passes for diversity in mass media news is largely a matter of packaging designed to deliver a product on the market (Bennett, 2001: 4).

The reliance on advertising as a principal source of revenue also creates an increasing textual hybridity of commercial and journalistic forms of presentation. As Benson argues, journalists are led “to conceive of ... readers more as consumers than citizens” (Benson, 2010: 195f.). In order to use the potential of network media in this moment of crisis, “journalists will need to … loosen their monopoly on the public sphere,” Benson demands (199). The provision of news to a general audience is typically regarded as a condition to participate in public discourse. Although the interaction with news is based on a consumerist relationship, it is said to furnish democratic participation[12] and give journalism a role of ‘civic leadership’ in public discourse (Rosen, 2003).

The example of news as journalism’s prime object brings together principal elements of the institutionalized ideology that legitimizes journalism as a privileged form of public communication. News is a particular product circulated by journalism; it is also a narrative and a textual genre that assigns a particular subject position to its

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12. For the continued romanticism of news as a textual genre and democracy as a political system see, for example, Daya Kishan Thussu’s recent study of *News as Entertainment*, that ironically argues that “news is not merely a media product but a vehicle for engagement in the democratic process” (2007: 2).

audience - that of the informed reader. But news is perennially hard to define: its contents may apply to reports of political debates, to sensationalist news of crimes, to entertainment or any other form of public information shared on a topical basis. In his *History of News*, Mitchell Stephens proposes to define news as a "new information about a subject of some public interest that is shared with some portion of the public" (Stephens, 1988: 9). Stephens avoids to define news in terms of particular professional routines exercised by journalists or in terms of the media in which news is communicated, which is a flaw because news produced as a consumer product is structurally different from news shared orally in a discrete local setting.

Any subject may become news at some point. What distinguishes news as a journalistic text is that the selection of subjects is guided by 'news factors' such as frequency, conflict, prominence of actors, or violence (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). Events are more likely to be selected and presented as news the more factors apply to them. Beyond the selection of newsworthy events, the form of news also has distinctive narrative elements or structures that try to give coherence and logic to chaotic events as they unfold. Narrative seems to account for textual similarities of news reports, a discernible journalistic style, but Michael Schudson cautions that narrative should not be seen as a causal factor for how news is made:

> Journalists make news. But they do not make it up. News is socially constructed, but it is constructed out of Something … . Journalists respond to events that they often have not anticipated and do not understand. Their task is to fit those events into comprehensible categories and to narrate them in comprehensible ways, to tame them, to socially reconstruct them (Schudson, 2007: 253).

Narrative serves as a basic structuring pattern to give meaning to events, yet the dynamic of events may trigger different narrative structures at different times of reporting. John Langer argues that news as a narrative form "conventionalizes" unforeseen events and "rewrites history for immediate popular consumption" (Langer, 1998: 20-21). Events are not only selected by their newness but by their peg or angle, which allows journalists to apply an existing narrative frame and to focus attention on particular issues for some time: "To ask 'Is this news' is … to ask 'Does this mean anything?'" (Schudson, 1986: 84). This meaning is derived not only from the continuity

of events but from the continuity or topicality of other journalistic narratives at the time of reporting (See also Schudson, 1989b: 276-79). To put the point differently, journalistic news delivers the context in which it is to be understood in every new update or installment of a story. This has the effect that "the temporality of journalistic practice, which assigns value to news according to how new it is … favors a sort of permanent amnesia," as Bourdieu once remarked (Bourdieu, 1998: 72). Narrative frames need to be reflexively developed in reaction to or in anticipation of events whereby ascertained facts are shed once new facts can be temporarily asserted.

The problem with wider definitions of news as 'new information on a subject of public interest' or as 'narrative' is that they lose any specific association with journalistic practice. In network communication the production of news is no longer the privileged domain of journalistic media or journalists but applies equally well to an individual blogger publishing topical information. Either news is a particular generic form of text produced in journalistic practice, or it is a general topical publication of any kind. Because both definitions seem equally valid I want to argue that the cultural crisis of journalistic practice is grounded in the ongoing transposition of practices of public communication from the domain of professionals to the domain of individuals. While news is still produced by journalists for journalistic media, network communication allows any individual to become a news producer for a general or specialized public. Such a comparison can be established, I argue further, on the level of practice by circumventing classical criteria of *journalism*'s public importance such as reach, circulation or quality. Because these criteria are results of the particular way in which journalism has been institutionalized as a commercial, market-oriented enterprise, they obscure that on the level of practice public communication by journalists and individuals shows a number of structural similarities. These similarities significantly questions the exclusivity of journalistic practice as a form of public communication and thus usher in its cultural crisis in the present.

Revising the Terminology: Cultural Studies and Journalism

In his *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu wrote that a crisis situation

questions the "relationship between language and experience." When experiences are no longer adequately described by conventional terms, the security exerted by convention or habit turns into its opposite: convention keeps from acknowledging and understanding how change occurs or what the best response to a crisis would be. In crises, Bourdieu wrote, "the everyday order (*Alltäglichkeit*) is challenged" because it exposes the very taken-for-granted elements of this order as provisional rather than enduring (Bourdieu, 1977: 170). The current crisis in journalism also challenges conventional understandings and associated terminologies. The terms in which the crisis is discussed are derived from a particular institutional form that defined oppositional pairs such as private and public, journalists and audience, production and consumption. The current crisis illustrates how terminology frames the problem in decisive ways, allowing to restate John Dewey's observation that the public has "no symbols consonant with its activities" (Dewey, 1927: 142). While we can *observe* the proliferation of journalistic practices in online media by lay individuals, we lack a conceptual *understanding* in what way such forms of communication may be public or journalistic.

The crisis thus questions many established categories that have traditionally guided inquiry into journalism. Barbie Zelizer, for example, criticized the overt focus in journalism studies on political 'hard news' which ignored the plurality of journalistic practices: "For as the practices, forms, and technologies for news gathering and news presentation increase in variety, demeanor, and number, the existing body of scholarly material shrinks in relevance" (2004: 6). Many studies of news production further perpetuated "an implicit normative functionalism" by assuming that the media's *only* function is to objectively inform citizens of political debates, as Michael Schudson argued (1991: 156). Despite the heterogeneity of journalistic forms and media, political journalism was regarded as the most important and most interesting form of journalism. With the extension of the sphere of circulation and production to the online environment, divisions between journalistic and non-journalistic news are even harder to make as the range of topical information comes to include private news sites, news feeds, blogs, and social networking sites.

Such forms of online communication are neither *only* private nor public but somewhere in between. Because traditional notions of public and private no longer seem to apply, a host of neologisms seeks to describe and understand the social consequences of online communication.[13] Blogs, for example, have mostly been identified as "personal diaries found on the Web," emulating the 'log book' in nautical navigation, which holds key data of a ship's journey taken at regular intervals (Rettberg, 2008: 17f.). The conception of the blog as a form of online diary has powerfully aligned this form of publishing with a private function. Yet, Meikle cautions that "diaries point inwards towards their author, but blogs most often point outwards, towards other blogs, other resources, other writers" (2009: 86f.) Blogs thus occupy an awkward position between a private and a public medium of communication.

The blog illustrates how a practice of news publishing has been *dissociated* from an institutional context of production and establishes, what Christoph Neuberger has called, a "functional equivalence" between mainstream media's news production and individualized publishing media (Neuberger, 2009). Both media forms, for the first time in history, can be accessed through the same communications technologies and are supported *within the same network.*[14] Weblogs can be regarded as a new infrastructure where the former audience is actively involved in taking the discussion into their own hands (Bird, 2003: 182-85). As an alternative publishing medium, the weblog can be regarded as a journalistic tool, blogwriting then appears as a "(semi-)journalistic practice" (Schmidt, 2007: 1414), that dissolves classical notions of what an audience or a producers is.

From a cultural studies point of view, such an identification of blogging as an alternative practice of communication ties in with a prominent body of research on journalism as popular culture, entertainment, and its 'active audiences'. Curran and

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13. Such neologisms typically associate a technological feature with a social behavior, e.g. the term "netizen" for political activists organized through network communications (Hauben and Hauben, 1997), "neteracy" as the *literacy* of network relations (Barlow, 2008: 20f.), and "prod-usage" (Bruns, 2008) as the convergence of production and consumption.

14. Cf. Castell's argument in *The Rise of Network Society* that "mass communication in the traditional sense is now also Internet-based communication in both its production and its delivery" (2010: xxvii). In reverse, one might add, private online communication now is also a form of public communication.

Sparks argue that journalism research, because it is "interested only in the political role of the press", has treated entertainment as "irrelevant" (Curran and Sparks, 1991: 216). Margreth Lünenborg has pointed out that entertainment has always been an "integral part" of modern journalism. The tradition of the Enlightenment has privileged political journalism in its function to inform and create politically competent citizens but *both* entertainment and information were "historically constitutive" components of modern journalism (Lünenborg, 2005; Lünenborg, 2007: 68-70). The newspaper expanded the potential audience for cultural products *and* political discourse by promoting popular culture, by offering advertisements and other daily resources of practical information.[15]

The normative and political focus of journalism studies further ignored the role of the 'active audience' in creating the *meaning* of media texts. As Dahlgren argues, "storytelling … is a key link which unites journalism and popular culture" because the narrative frames used in journalism require audiences to be culturally competent readers. Journalism thus integrates by activating and shaping cultural memory and identity (1992: 14f.). In order to understand media messages, audiences need to actively "decode" them, as Stuart Hall famously wrote (Hall, 1980b). Decoding was itself an act of interpretation, where 'signifying practices' integrated media messages into the social world of audiences. The heterogeneity and potential adversity of such practices was regarded as a source of cultural resistance against the ideological hegemony of mass media (Hall, 1997). Reader-response theory developed the argument that texts were polysemous, implying that any text had different meanings for different audiences.

Janice Radway wrote that readers did not merely "swallow" texts but were actively involved in producing the meaning of a text. Comprehension, Radwy argued, is "a process of making meaning, a *process of sign production* where the reader actively attributes significance to signifiers on the basis of previously learned cultural codes" (Radway, 1984: 7, emphasis added). In *Understanding Popular Culture*, John Fiske expanded this argument by stating that "every act of consumption is an act of cultural production, for consumption is always the production of meaning" (Fiske,

15. See also (Mukerji and Schudson, 1986) for the development from historical studies of popular culture(s) to the sociology of mass culture and beyond.

2006: 35). Because the popular text must be relevant to different readers in different contexts, polysemy becomes a requirement for the popularity of the text. This applies as much to news and information as it does to texts produced by the culture industry. Fiske wrote:

> All the culture industries can do is produce a repertoire of texts or cultural resources for the various formations of the people to use or reject in the ongoing process of producing their popular culture (ibid. 24).

In *Television Culture,* Fiske developed this argument in terms of a 'semiotic democracy.' In opposition to 'writerly texts' like avant-garde literature, 'producerly texts' like television programs "rely on discursive competencies that the viewer already possesses." Readers were addressed as "members of a semiotic democracy," invited to bring their own interpretations to the text and thereby constitute its social and cultural meaning (Fiske, 1995: 95). The production of signs, in Radway's words, is first of all an 'attribution of significance', while in Fiske's admittedly optimistic argument, the productive side of popular culture goes beyond polysemy. It involves the creation of new signs and the subversion of dominant interpretations of texts.[16]

This line of research emerged partly from British Cultural Studies' pluralistic approach to cultural and 'signifying practices' where audiences became identified as active (co-)producers of popular texts. The concept of 'active audience' was both an escape from ideological hegemony and a research paradigm which complicated the role of the media in society. As Hepp argues, this research in cultural studies saw the intertextuality of popular texts not only as a product strategy, but as a feature which, on the side of audiences, allowed popular texts to connect in "multi-layered" ways to everyday experiences (138). The very popularity of certain texts was not seen as an effect of the successful manipulation of consumer tastes, but as the result of multiple readings, interpretations and creative appropriations of texts by audiences.[17]

In this view of journalism as popular culture, entertainment contributes to a process of "cultural dehierachization," by lowering the barriers of access to culture and

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16. See also (Hepp, 2010) on the revisionism debate in the early 1990s in cultural studies concerning this active role of audiences (140-150).

17. For an overview of research on historical "active audiences" see also (Bird, 2008).

extending its audience (Fluck, 1998: 17). Popular culture's function is to offer imaginary constructs (as image, text, movie, or narrative structure) in which dominant "schemata of interpretation" can function as "symbolic" attempts to cope with real life's struggles, without having to bear its real-life consequences (Fluck, 1979: 45). The emergence of a new medium then is connected to the social uses it can be put to; its newness being described in its ability to articulate imaginary identities, its broadened access and expressive potential, apart from its technological innovation (Fluck, 1998: 19). New media are often endowed with the hope that they will "create wealth, rejuvenate local communities, and empower the citizens," which reflected "central themes in the American Dream" (Curran, 2010: 29).[18]

The emergence of network media, which give individuals a chance to communicate their views, interpretations and opinions in public, connects to central arguments on the polysemy of popular culture and the 'active audience'. In such a perspective, the many blogs found online can assume to become a "networked fourth estate" (Benkler, 2011b), presenting an alternative to a journalism in crisis. In a practical sense, media like blogs represent a genuine form of cultural production, in Fiske's terms, with the crucial difference that such production no longer remains opaque within rather limited spheres of circulation but can be retrieved in a global public network of communication. Network media such as blogs also give practical relevance to such theoretical and phenomenological arguments on the imaginary dimension of a text and the subject positions it creates. The propositions on behalf of 'active audiences' seem to reaffirm, however, that there is a fundamental distinction between what dominant cultural institutions do and what audiences do when they produce texts. By regarding blogs or network media as merely alternative, audience-focused media, the dominance of cultural institutions for providing the texts remains unquestioned and reaffirms these institutions' own rationalities.

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18. Carey reflects that American futurology particularly aligns technological progress with social utopias, a theme that was powerful already in the 1980s when satellite transmissions reconfigured the conception of a national audience (Carey, 1980). This theme continued in the early Internet as part of a global communications structure (Carey, 1998). On the role of technology, technological criticism and social progress in America see also (Jamison, 1998).

Marshall argues that cultural studies has "tended to promote a readerly approach to critical investigation and developed our skills of media literacy" (Marshall, 2004: 11). While active audiences are regarded in their capacity to *interpret* polysemous texts in multiple ways, polysemy cannot account for the actual *production* of cultural texts within routines and media similar to those of dominant cultural institutions. But network media create a situation in which not only journalistic products (e.g. news as a generic form of text) are offered for reception in a new medium, but in which entire routines of communication are appropriated by audiences as practice. This transposition of practices from the professional domain of journalism to the private domain of individuals needs to be regarded as the background for the cultural crisis of journalistic practice. While cultural studies continues to favor a 'readerly approach' to media texts and foregrounds the text as a polysemic, yet primarily semantic unit, the current crisis in journalistic practice reconfigures the function of the text itself in social interaction.

The emphasis on *journalistic practice* instead of *journalism* allows to regard the crisis as a crisis of cultural valuation of media of communication. Blogs and network media are here not regarded as alternatives to mainstream journalism but in their *structural similarity* to established journalistic practices. This shift in perspective foregrounds how new media are valued by audiences and producers alike for specific forms of communication, in the present and the past. Instead of accepting the dominance of a given structure of public communication, the question needs to be posed how such a structure could assume dominance in the past, if its seemingly exclusive practices could be transposed to different domains of public communication in the present. This questions the association of journalism with a particular political function and asks how the present period of media change can be understood in its similarities to previous media changes. Although journalistic practice has constantly evolved into new media of communication, the network environment poses a particular challenge for reasons that are to be sought in the very process of institutionalizing journalism as a function of the commercial press. The present study thus follows a non-teleological approach to the introduction of new media in journalistic practice. The aim is to offer an

interpretation of the present crisis that accords central importance to the cultural valuation of new media in journalistic practice - both today and in decisive periods of change in journalism's own institutional history.

The non-teleological perspective on the historical development of journalistic practice is inspired by a strand of research that is known as 'media archaeology,' which questions narratives of progress sees the emergence of new media in terms of a transformation of social practice. Media archaeology looks at moments when media are still new. Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey Pingree summarize this research agenda in a passage worth quoting at length:

> [W]hen new media emerge in a society, their place is at first ill defined, and their ultimate meanings or functions are shaped over time by that society's existing habits of media use (which, of course, derive from experience with other, established media) ... . The 'crisis' of a new medium will be resolved when the perceptions of the medium, as well as its practical uses, are somehow adapted to existing categories of public understanding about what that medium does for whom and why (Gitelman and Pingree, 2003: xii).

The present media change exemplifies very well how both a crisis of established media and an uncertainty about the social uses of new media create an 'ill defined' identity in public perception. Blogs are neither only diaries nor alternative journalistic outlets nor communication platforms but converge many uses of publishing, communication and interaction. But what applies to the present, applied equally to previous innovations in media. As Uricchio points out, media archaeology questions the "taken-for-grantedness of the narrative of the medium's progress" (29). Media development was contextualized within specific cultural, social and historical conditions around the time of emergence a new medium, exploring technologies and practices that had merely transitional relevance to the histories of dominant media forms. When a new medium emerges, Uricchio continues, "technological possibility finds systematic deployment as media practice." These moments of innovation are especially interesting for media history because they are "usually accompanied by rich discursive evidence regarding perceived media capacities" (30-31).[19] Regarding "media as social practice" (ibid.,) opens the analysis of media history towards transitory and ephemeral media forms, where the

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19. See also Gitelman und Pingree look at new media "when such media are not yet accepted as natural, when their own meanings are in flux" ().

newness of a given 'new' medium is always regarded in distinction or as extension of previous practices of communication.

Lisa Gitelman argues that "the introduction of new media […] is never entirely revolutionary: new media are less points of epistemic rupture than they are socially embedded sites for the ongoing negotiation of meaning as such" (Gitelman, 2006: 6). In her definition, then, media are "socially realized structures of communication" defining communication as a "cultural practice". Although Gitelman acknowledges (yet eschews) media archaeology, she underlines the relevance of practice for her argument to account for the newness of a given medium within established cultural schemas. In other words, the newness of a medium can be experienced as a rupture within a dominant order of the same class of media, yet its valuation as a new practice comes from its analogy to existing practices in other realms of culture. Media archaeology as a method thus attempts to read "the 'new' against the grain of the past, rather than a telling of the histories of technologies from past to present" (Lovink, 2003: 11).[20]

Outline of the Study

From the perspective of media archaeology, the present cultural crisis of journalistic practice serves as the starting point to revise the entrenched narrative of journalism as a privileged form of public communication. On one level, the study explains the transposition of journalistic practices in terms of their current manifestations through the example of the blog as a paradigmatic new medium (chapter four). This explanation, however, is based on a new interpretation of two formative stages of modern journalism, where key elements of journalistic practice were defined in institutional terms. By analyzing crucial transition periods in journalistic practice, the present study attempts to highlight how certain practices of present-day journalism emerged out of struggles to define new media in the past. The study does not offer a genealogy of consecutive transformations of journalistic practices but concentrates on two case

20. Among the classics of media archaeology are Siegfried Zielinski's *Audiovisions* (1999), Lev Manovich *The Language of New Media* (2002) and Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer* (1991). The only overview of the field and its genealogical lines of inquiry has been prepared by Parikka *What is Media Archaeology* (2012; Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011).

studies in media change which are significant for modern journalistic practice.

Because this study addresses both contemporary and past ‘new’ media, its methodological framework needs to address contingent definitions of audiences, news and news media. Chapter One will first outline in what way a “practice-based approach” connects to cultural studies and sociology in general, and how it can account for cultural innovation. Central to that argument is the “cultural valuation” of new media, as it is negotiated in social practice. Journalism will be defined as a structure of public communication that needs to be enacted by audiences and producers alike. This general definition will allow to compare both the institutionalization of journalism (chapters two and three) and the transposition of some of its most characteristic practices (chapter four) within the same analytic framework.

The first case study, will go back to the formative period of modern commercial journalism in the United States, which is commonly dated to the penny press in the 1830s. Although the connection between the penny press and blogs has often been drawn, the study will highlight how contingent practices of publishing news at the time were institutionalized as key elements of modern journalism. Serfaty has argued that the penny press and today’s blogs “connect with pre-existing journalistic practices” (Serfaty, 2011: 307). The pennies and blogs are seen as similar in their innovative appeal because of their “the low cost of entry,” as Serfaty argues. In this study, however, I want to argue that the small price of the pennies was the *condition of instating a structure of journalism*, a structure which is now in crisis. The parallel between the pennies and blogs must accordingly be drawn on on a different level. The significance of the penny press for the current crisis of journalistic practice is, I want to argue, the exact opposite of what Serfaty believes. The ‘schema of topicality’ developed in the penny press marked a decisive turn away from private forms of communication that were still a dominant source of news before the penny press. Through this schema, journalistic practice began to *distinguish* itself from other communicative practices and laid the ground for a structure of communication that assigned a particular position to its audience. The ‘schema of topicality’ turned the newspaper into a ‘useful’ daily resource

of information for audiences by establishing its news practice in a material, cognitive and social dimension.

The second case study concentrates on the introduction of photography in news media, primarily in popular magazines, around the turn of the twentieth century. The significance of this phase is that the debate about how "objective" certain types of illustrations were, prefigured the adoption of objective standards in journalistic practice. Here again, material,cognitive and social dimensions shaped a popular understanding of photography as a new medium. The "schema of objectivity" emerged first in connection with the reproduction of photographs in news media before it was transposed to legitimize journalistic practice. The particular historical circumstances of the emergence of topicality and objectivity as schemas of journalistic practice offer important insights to regard the structural crisis of journalistic practice in the present. In light of the findings of these two case studies, the last part offers an explanation of the cultural crisis of journalistic practice through its focus on the blog and a redefinition of news-based communication in a convergent media environment. Starting from an analysis of the text-based logic of early internet applications, the schemas of 'peer production' and 'self-communication' are introduced as two different valuations of network technologies. This transposition of journalistic practices creates and sustains new social practices of communication and interaction.

1: Practice as a Model of Cultural Innovation

Journalism is a form of practice that has been institutionalized in the same period as modern communications media. As John Hartley once famously wrote, journalism is "*the* sense-making practice of modernity (the condition) and popularizer of modernism (the ideology)" (Hartley, 1996: 33, emphasis in original). To a reader of newspapers in the eighteenth century it was common to see a list of recipients having mail waiting at the post office. Today, we take for granted that news about events in remote regions instantly appears on websites. There is no internal reason for such a selection of newsworthy reports, only that in both cases journalism (or journalistic practice) establishes a relation between the present of its audience and other geographically or temporally remote areas of the world, society or knowledge. Broadly speaking, this practice consists in the periodical communication of topical news to a larger public. In a period spanning almost 200 years, the practice has changed in all of its principal elements: its definition of topicality, its concept of public, and most visibly, its media of communication. Despite these changes, journalism still recognizable as a *structure of public communication* that is upheld, revived and transformed *in the practice* of its day-to-day operations. The aim of this first part is to explain theoretically, why practice can be a model to understand this cultural innovation that has been characteristic of journalism as an important form of public communication.

If journalism is defined as an institution here, this does not mean that there are particular social bodies that have exclusively practiced journalism over a long time. The institutions that supported journalism vary as much as the news that was published in the last 200 years. What is more important are the institutionalized practices, which, despite their large variance, can account for the long-term development of an institutional form such as journalism. In a general way, an institution is marked by the extended time horizon in which it has stabilized certain forms of practices and

legitimized practices as distinguishing a particular group of actors.[21] John Searle argues that an institution "can continue to exist after its initial creation and indeed even after all the participants involved have stopped thinking about the initial creation" (2005: 14). In a similar vein, Anthony Giddens proposed that "institutions may be regarded as practices which are deeply sedimented in time-space" (1979: 80). Their origins may be obscure and forgotten, but practices of contemporary institutions show similarities to previous practices, some of which are regarded as foundational for the profession, like interviewing, gathering facts, sending out reporters to the scene of an event and so on. Journalism or 'the press' then is often used as a metonymic substitution for an array of practices that identify a particular profession and above all, a structure of public communication.

The practice-based model of cultural innovation proposed here takes apart this institutional structure to stir up its 'sedimented' elements and question the logic of their primary association. Such a procedure is warranted because the present crisis of journalism is centrally a cultural one, where journalism is gradually becoming less distinguished from other forms of public communication and where journalistic media are no longer valued by audiences as exclusive public communicators. To define journalism as a structure of public communication, rather than in terms of a particular professional routine, an institutional form or a normative public function means to concentrate on the constitutive relation between journalistic producers and addressed audiences at the heart of journalistic practice. Instead of 'adding' an audience-focus to a producer-centric paradigm, the relation between audiences and journalism is here regarded as constitutive of what counts as journalistic in a given era of modernity. This relation is practically established through journalistic media, in each installment of a story, in each publication of a periodical, in each airing of a news show, and thus revives and reaffirms a social structure.

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21. Michael Schudson emphasizes that "social institutions not only preserve and pass on ... the culture they certify but they act as gatekeepers in the certification process itself" (Schudson, 1989a: 171). The simultaneous preservation of cultural practices over time as well as the certifying function of institutions will be discussed further down in relation to Bourdieu's theory of fields.

Innovation through Practice?

At first glance, practice seems to account primarily for the *stability* of social structures over time. The more frequently some action is practiced, the more it establishes its own routine, becomes a habit, an unquestioned, self-evident pattern of action. But practice achieves such a stability only through permanent innovation, through minute variations of a pattern that remains recognizable throughout. In this view social structures can only continue to exist over time if they are stabilized and innovated through practice. Journalism can be conceived as a structure of public communication which is enacted in historically distinct journalistic practices. While the practices may vary largely, they all instantiate a structure of public communication identified as journalism in the long run. Individual journalistic practices here stand in a similar relation to this social structure like an individual issue of a newspaper is related to all others preceding and following it. While issues and their content vary from day to day, the sequence of issues creates a tradition, a newspaper style, a preferred audience; in short, it creates a durable social structure between audiences and journalistic producers that is revived with every new issue.

> Each issue of a periodical responds to a particular moment, orienting content towards the perceived interests of its readers, while restating its underlying identity. In this way, the abstract identity of the periodical, imperfectly manifested in each individual issue, is a negotiated, consensual structure into which new content could be assimilated as a version of the familiar. (Mussell, 2012).

Because this structure is 'consensual' producers need to take into account what perceived interests or needs of its audiences might be worthy of journalistic representation. The imperative to innovate not only the content of news but also the forms of news thus lies at the core of the stability of a social structure like journalism. Different journalistic practices of any modern decade continuously *enact* and thus innovate a structure called 'journalism' by adapting practices to changing external conditions. In a nutshell, journalism's pivotal position as "the sense-making practice of modernity" is the permanent cultural innovation of its content and forms of communication. Adopting Marx's famous dictum about modernity (via Berman, 1988), journalism is dissolving 'everything solid into air' through the topical newness it

confers on both recent events and forgotten cultural knowledge. There is no inherent limit to what can become the subject of journalistic news, except that it must appear in some relation to the present of both is publication and the present of its audience. Journalism's attention to change is then crucial to determine the value of news and also as a core ingredient of a practice that needs to establish relevance for itself in every new issue, article or communication. The long-term existence of a structure as journalism as thus the result of *permanent* cultural innovation negotiated and adapted in discrete journalistic practices.

This perspective solves a dilemma in studies of journalism between having to explain the continued existence of a particular structure of public communication across various media and time periods while having also to account for individual instances resisting the rationalization of perceived long-term trends. Studies of journalism necessarily depart from the topical matter that journalism has left over, and often risk to accord importance to historical details only because they are patient enough and long forgotten. But beyond the fascination with the individual present of forgotten times emerging from the archives of journalistic media, it is much harder to distill an overarching analytical framework from the plethora of news. Such a framework is, however, necessary to establish a common comparative basis to analyze how journalistic practices change when the media of journalism change. The dimension of change applies to the content of journalistic communication, its forms and media, and its relation to audiences. The model of cultural innovation through practice developed here is recuperated from different practice-based research traditions in cultural studies and sociology.

From a cultural studies point of view, journalism as a structure of public communication contributes - like literature, art, film or music - to the "maintenance of society in time" through offering shared experiences and modes of representation, as James Carey argued (1989: 19). Journalism and the media it uses serve as "a framing and organizing device for ... experience" (Bird, 2003: 17). In regard of the long development of modern means of communication, some of which no longer exist or are

no longer used, Carey makes the central observation that "communication simply constitutes a set of historically varying *practices* and reflections upon them." For him, the central aim of cultural studies is to understand the role and conditions of communication for creating "meaning ... as a constituting activity whereby humans interactively endow an elastic though resistant world with enough coherence and order to support their purposes." In view of this practical focus on the constitution of meaning, Carey underlines that "communication is at once a structure of human experience–activity, process, practice–an ensemble of expressive forms, and *a structured and structuring* set of social relations" (1989: 84-86; emphases added.). This paradoxical formulation establishes a core tenet of practice theory and restates a central object of inquiry in sociology: how are social actors *enabled and restrained* through structures. Communication as a practice is both structured action as it unfolds and a structuring pattern for subsequent actions. In each period, communication is realized in historically distinct technologies, accorded different social relevance or is culturally valued in varying ways.

Admittedly, Carey does not further explore the conditions upon which certain forms of communication achieve dominance over others. He does not offer "a detailed model of the structured patterns through which we live with, and even accept, the concentration in media institutions of the power to define reality" (Couldry, 2003a: 19). While communication is a general cultural practice, public communication has established distinct practices that have over the course of modernity differentiated forms of advertising, from political campaigning and especially journalism. Because journalism supposedly stands above the partial interests motivating advertising or campaigning, its modern sense as a vital form of public communication is deeply entwined with giving an impartial account of a society's present reality. The public acceptance of the dominance of journalism relies in no small measure on this purported public function and its concomitant forms of presentation. Journalism thus establishes a particular 'performative discourse' on reality, in which the practices it employs are intended to obfuscate the mediation it creates. Marcel Broersma consequently argues

that the question of whether or not journalism is describing the truth about the social world should be replaced by studying the performativity of journalism itself that legitimizes its own claims to authority.

> It does not make much sense to study journalism as either reflecting or distorting reality. Journalism is in the business of meaning-making. In the past centuries it has been remarkably successful in obtaining an authoritative position in society that enables it to impose its constructed truths on the public. That is why we should regard journalism as a performative discourse that strives to persuade the public of the truthfulness of its accounts. It it succeeds, it transforms an interpretation into reality upon which citizens, and by extension politicians and other elites, can act. Journalistic discourse derives its power from its ability to simultaneously *describe* and *produce* social phenomena (Broersma, 2013: 33, emphasis in original; see also Broersma, 2010).

It might be a bit too strong to argue that journalism 'imposes' its truths on the public, but effectively journalism needs to create a public for its interpretations of reality - however problematic or fluid that terrain may appear. The central link between the public importance of journalism and its assumed relevance for audiences are that both the practices of journalistic production and the practices of journalistic consumption are temporally patterned, as in the habit of 'keeping up with the news' on a regular basis either at home or at work (Boczkowski, 2010; Couldry, 2012: 53). The continuous production and reception of news creates a structure of public communication that is revived and modified in each new episode, news story or serial, in each new contact between journalism and its audiences. Because this structure is habitually revived on both sides, it makes sense to foreground the dimension of practice as an analytic model of cultural innovation, as change and stability meet on the ground of practice to structure social actions.

The serialized regularity of journalistic practice is a key to recover the minute variations of a practice as they occur over time in order to see media change in a contextualized and comparable form. Stephen Turner has cautioned that practices are not "causes" of social change (1994: 14-27) or "objects" but serve as "explanatory constructions that solve specific problems of comparison and unmet expectations" (ibid., 123). Such a problem of comparison is posed by dealing with both historical and contemporary media changes in this study. Because media change must necessarily imply a before/after-construction, the criteria of comparison have to be

applicable across all phases studied. These criteria are found in practice theory as a social theory of action rather than in any media- or epoch-specific terminologies as they are current in journalism studies. Beyond the self-evidential notion of practice as something that is simply done, practice is central to the reproduction *and* innovation of social structures. The approach offers a new framework to study media change in a cultural perspective without having to use *ex ante* a narrative framework or long-term logic to rationalize the development of modern journalism. Because there is as yet "no unified practice approach" (Schatzki et al., 2001: 1-8), a model of practice to explain cultural innovation needs to be developed out of different disciplinary legacies in sociology and cultural studies.

In general, practices form "an emergent level of the social," as Andreas Reckwitz argues (2003: 289).[22] In practice-based approaches to social structure, individual actions are neither reduced to the efficiency of structures imposing norms and values on individuals (model of *homo sociologicus*) nor to the intrinsic motivations of individual actors (model of *homo oeconomicus*). In varying shades and emphases, practice theories foreground the dual dependency of structure and actors with a marked focus on the "'everyday' and 'life-world'" and the "shared knowledge" used in the "symbolic organization of reality" (Reckwitz, 2002b: 244-46). Practice theories foreground first, the "internal logic" of actions as they unfold, and second, the "materiality" of social actions, involving tools, artifacts and media. The internal logic of actions is seen as a set of assumptions, or "bodily-mental routines,"[23] acquired over time through repetition (Reckwitz, 2003: 256). Practices are marked by the continuous repetition and performance of certain actions, in which the conditions that make a practice possible are reproduced.

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22. Theodore Schatzki, whose theory of social practices is based on a Wittgensteinian conception of the social-mental dimension of language usage, argues that "practices [are the] principal constitutive elements in social life." Despite the differences between theories (and theorists) of practice, most agree on the "idea that practices are the site where understanding is structured and intelligibility (*Verständlichkeit* and *Bedeuten*) articulated (*gegliedert*)" (Schatzki, 1996: 12).

23. The body as a bearer of practice is dominant in ethnographic studies of practices, including media practices. See for example, John Postill's definition of practice theory as "a body of work about the work of the body" (Bräuchler and Postill, 2010: 11). For an overview of practice-based approaches and their varying emphases on the body see also (Schmidt, 2012).

Due to this reflexivity, practices need to adapt to changing external and internal conditions in order to exist over time, implying the continuity *and* variation of social structure. Practices are characterized by a tension between "routine" and "unpredictability" because the modification of a practice in a new setting may always require its adaptation in unforeseen ways (Reckwitz, 2003: 290). As Alan Warde argues, "[t]he concept of practice inherently combines a capacity to account for both reproduction and innovation" (Warde, 2005: 140). The effect of this reflexivity can be seen with regard to material artifacts, which are either constitutive of certain practices (as in religious rituals), or that are continuously invoked in the execution of a practice. Reckwitz underlines that "social change is thus more than exclusively a change of cultural codes, but depends also on a change of technical media." Once a medium or a material artifact ceases to be available, it incurs the "impossibility of maintaining a certain social practice" (Reckwitz, 2002a: 212-13).

The aim of this chapter is to show how practice can serve as a model of cultural innovation, which integrates an analysis of journalistic texts, with their modes of production and distribution, and their social, cognitive and cultural functions for audiences, both in historical and contemporary perspective. Apart from the introductory remarks about practices in social theory, a theory of cultural innovation based on practice is also relevant to cultural studies, which implicitly have always maintained a privileged position for the practical dimension of creating meaning. In order to develop the model here the starting point will be the founder of cultural studies, Raymond Williams. At the center of Williams' thinking about culture was always the study of communication and media, both historically and theoretically. Williams exhibited a keen but often overlooked fascination with the alterity of practice and its potential of resistance against dominant cultural orders. In a sociological strand, Pierre Bourdieu developed a theory of practice out of ethnographic observation. In his view, practice explains predominantly the stability of social orders and the stable position of social actors. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* further elaborates Williams' still vague notion of practice. While Williams and Bourdieu are interested in explaining the stability of social

structures over time, Anthony Giddens' *theory of structuration* seeks to overcome the rigidity of Bourdieu's *habitus* concept by arguing that social structures continue to exist *only* if they are practically enacted by knowledgeable agents. This radical notion of practice is useful to understand how practice involves the continued valuation of resources for particular purposes through cultural schemas, a point that William Sewell emphasizes in his theory of structure and agency. These concepts of practice will be presented as constitutive parts of a model of cultural innovation, without necessarily contributing to the development of yet another theory of practice. But because the concept of practice seems to resist theoretical formulation through its quotidian usage and appears overly specific in the accounts that follow, a discussion of the individuality of previous practice approaches needs to precede the analytic synthesis at the end of this chapter.

Raymond Williams and the Alterity of Practice[24]

"The media were never really seen as practices. [...]
All media operations are in effect desocialised"
(Williams, *Television*: 127).

In the works of Raymond Williams, from *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961) to *Television* (1974) and *Culture* (1981), the media play a central role in his theorizing on culture and modernity. Three aspects of Williams' writings are especially relevant to a study of media practices within cultural studies: 1) his inclusive concept of culture, which accounts both for dominant institutions (arts, press, cultural industries) as well as the multitude of cultural practices that shape the experience of everyday life; 2) his concept of communication, as both an individual practice and an industrial nexus of production; and 3) his theory of cultural development, in which residual and emergent cultural practices challenge and potentially renew dominant cultural orders.

Following his dictum that "culture is ordinary" Williams argues that culture is always "both traditional and creative." Culture is both a "whole way of life" and

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24. Parts of this chapter have appeared before in (Raetzsch, 2011b).

encompasses all “processes of discovery and creative effort” by individuals (1993: 6). Williams is especially concerned with the question of how common meanings are generated both on the national level and on the level of individuals and small groups. He does not qualitatively oppose working class culture and fine art, or folk culture and metropolitan elite culture; for Williams, all these cultural spheres are fields of ‘creative effort’. This inclusive perspective on culture often confronts him with a problem of descriptive register, between formulating a general theory of culture and acknowledging at the same time the unsystematic nature of quotidian cultural practices. Although “practice” is not a central analytical category in Williams’ work, it often appears as a recurrent reference point.[25] Conventional phrases like “in practice” or “practically” are frequently used throughout his early works. In *Culture and Society*, for example, he dismisses the scholarly inquiry into the origins of language on the grounds that language is “an activity rather than a mere deposit.” He emphasizes the living aspect of language in day-to-day interactions and concedes that “*in practice*, language does operate as a form of social organization” rather than a set of items with fixed meanings (1963: 267, emphasis added).[26]

Trained as a literary historian, Williams is acutely aware of the etymological shifts of words over time, which are for him not just signs but “condensed social practices, sites of historical struggle” (Eagleton, 1989: 8). Within a single culture, contradictory and multiple meanings of words coexist, their level of popularity or currency merely reflecting the dominance of certain power relations at a given time. Language itself is contested and ambiguous, carrying the traces of past meanings into the present. Against the specialist discourse of linguists, everyday language embodies the heterogeneity of human experience, forming a pool of residual alternatives to dominant modes of

25. This emphasis on the dimension of practice is further elaborated in the later essay “The Uses of Cultural Theory” (1986): “I am saying that cultural theory is at its most significant when it is concerned precisely with the relations between the many and diverse human activities [in the arts and society as a whole] ... , and especially when it explores these relations as at once dynamic and specific within describably whole historical situations which are also, *as practice*, changing and, in the present, changeable” (Williams, 1986: 20, emphasis added).

26. In a similar rhetorical figure, Williams uses practice as a critique of ideology, as in his example of the “ethics of service.” Ideologically, service is presented by the ruling class as virtuous, although the idea of service “*in practice* ... serves, at every level, to maintain and confirm the status quo” of power asymmetry between those being served and those serving (1958: 315, emphasis added).

thinking. “Ordinary language use was a crucial evidence for Williams of both hegemonic success and pre-emergent counter-hegemonic potential,” writes Paul Jones on Williams’ etymological study *Keywords*, which was conceived originally as an appendix to *Culture and Society* (Jones, 2009: 1-3). In *Keywords*, the entry on “theory” tellingly explores “practice” as its classical counterpart. According to Williams, the opposition of theory and practice occurred first in the 17th century, before the semantics of theory shifted towards “a scheme which explains practice” in the 18th century. Eventually, practice came to be used in a sense of

> repeated or customary action, ... in which the theory/*practice* relation is often a contrast between one way of doing a thing and another, the theoretical being that which is proposed and the *practical* that which is now usually done.

This coupling of theory and practice has had the effect that “*practice* which has become conventional or habitual can be traced to ... a base in theory.” A crucial connection between theory and practice is worked out in the Marxist definition of *praxis*, “where *praxis* is *practice* informed by theory.” This definition attempts to “unite theory ... with the strongest sense of *practical* (but not conventional or customary) activity: *practice as action*” (Williams, 1979a: 266-268, original emphasis). The Marxist definition of “practice as action” and the more general notion of practice as ‘customary action’ inform the use of the term in Williams’ later work on culture.

The dialectic of practice is reflected in Williams’ concept of culture as “a whole way of life” where he seeks to unite cultural theory with the heterogeneous *praxis* of creating cultural forms. Williams’ writings show a constant oscillation between a theoretical and historical account of the development of culture toward democratization. In *Culture and Society* (1958) Williams reviews the shifting definitions of the concept of culture in the modern age, a project inspired by his teacher Frank Raymond Leavis. Although Williams rejected Leavis’ “conservative definition of culture” as “national culture” he followed his dictum of “practical criticism.” Only now, Williams expanded this criticism from the interpretation of literature and sought to apply it to “real life” (Hall, 1990: 14-15). Accordingly, the formulation of the discipline cultural studies in the 1950s and 60s started with doing the “the rounds of the disciplines” in the

humanities (Hall, 1990: 16). In cultural studies, the media were from the beginning studied "as a major cultural and ideological force" (Hall, 1980a: 117). The members of the *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* in Birmingham sought to "translate knowledge into the practice of culture," as "a practice to bring together theory and practice" (Hall, 1990: 18).

In *Culture and Society*, Williams traces the emergence and changing concept of the term culture back to the industrial revolution in Great Britain in the 18th century. His starting point is that a "theory of culture" can be regarded "as a theory of the relations between elements in a whole way of life" (Williams, 1963: 11-12).[27] In response to the immense social changes incurred by democratization and industrialization, culture as a "historical formation" accounts for the "new kinds of personal and social relationship …, both as a recognition of practical separation and as an emphasis of alternatives" (17). Williams is dissatisfied with the Marxist emphasis on material resources and means of production as the only sources of power in society. Economic determinism ignores that a "consciousness of a whole society is always more diverse" (273) at any given moment. Although "economic elements" play a role in the production of culture, "the difficulty lies in estimating the final importance of a factor which never, *in practice*, appears in isolation" (271-72, emphasis added.).[28]

Williams' conclusion in *Culture and Society* emphasizes an inclusive concept of culture as the process to find common meanings in society. Culture bridges the social inequalities created by industrialization and democratization (education) in modernity. The media are important for creating an inclusive society, but are barred from such a contribution by the structural asymmetry between senders and audiences in mass

27. Critically, Terry Eagleton argues that Williams' "empty anthropological abstraction of 'culture'" ignores the ideological uses of the concept in the tradition he describes: "[I]n the very act of 'placing' a tradition, [Culture and Society] placed itself within it; its cross-breed of labourism and literary idealism was the product of the very history it critically assessed. The solution it tendered was thus, precisely, the problem" (Eagleton, 1976: 11).

28. As Stuart Hall clarifies, culture is regarded as a *praxis* that is composed of all social practices: "Culture is not *a* practice (...). It is threaded through all social practices, and is the sum of their inter-relationship" (Hall, 1996: 34). Relating Williams' concept of culture as a 'whole way of life' to practice means to foreground how individual 'experience' is tied to collective, social actions: "In experience, all the different practices *intersect*; within 'culture' the different practices *interact*" (ibid., 38, emphasis added). As societies change, experience may question practices and vice versa; culture thus represents a "process" that is instantiated by a historically varying "set of practices" (Hall, 1997: 2).

communication–the media work only in a mode of “transmission.”[29] In the mass media, the technological asymmetry of production establishes a cultural division between passive audiences and active producers. Such assymetries are reflected on the conetnt side by portraying masses as mobs, or stereotypes like “the man in the street” becoming a powerful “collective image” void of any empirical reality. Williams cautions that the practice of speaking of masses in the media expresses only “ways of seeing people as masses.” Yet such images have the powerful social effect that “masses are always others” (289). Such biased representations, according to Williams, run counter to the inclusiveness culture should offer to any individual.

The story of the emergence of mass media in the twentieth century is tightly connected to the co-emergence of a mass market of customers for advertising.[30] For Williams, the mass media exclude the dimensions of “reception and response,” and therefore cannot reflect the “whole experience” of life. Without “reception and response,” their communication is necessarily incomplete. By contrast, a “real theory of communication,” he concludes, “is a theory of community” (1958: 301), by which he simply means that it is a two-way social process rather than one-way transmission.[31] Communication in a general sense is separate from *communications,* which Williams defines as “the institutions and forms in which ideas, information, and attitudes are transmitted and received, … the process of transmission and reception” (Williams, 1971: 17). Williams regards mass *communications* as the commercial exploitation of a basic human trait. The only “practical use of communication is the sharing of real experience” and it seems like a “perversion” to use this fundamental need as a commercial imperative (32). Although the mass media have gradually expanded the audience for cultural material, “ownership and control of the means of communication

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29. On the emergence of different kinds of asymmetry in the means of cultural production see also *Culture* (Williams, 1981: 99-112).

30. Concerning the structural dependence of modern media on advertising and its effects on content see also (Williams, 1979b).

31. In both his study of television and *Communications*, Williams devotes ample space to in-depth statistical and qualitative analyses of the content of TV programming and newspaper articles. Along with his advice on policy and regulation, Williams argues for a change of media representations within the mass media themselves and does not opt for propagating alternative media outlets (Williams, 1974, 1971).

have narrowed" (33) within the same development.

The theme of communication in culture reappears in *The Long Revolution* (1961) where the spread of literacy, education, and communications is regarded as integral to the cultural revolution of modernity. In the course of the cultural revolution, the "extension of communications" affects the whole way of life to become part of "our most significant living experience," Williams writes (1961: xi-xii). Communication, as already introduced in *Culture and Society*, is further elevated to a central position in the creation and development of culture. In his discussion of the "The Creative Mind" Williams defines communication "in terms of a general human creativity" which is not restricted to specialist discourses in the media or the arts. Communication is a general practice of creating representations of experiences. The artist serves as a model of communication for Williams as someone who illustrates "the process of making unique experiences into common experiences" (1961: 38). A means of communication then

> organizes and continues to express a common meaning by which its people live. The discovery of a means of communication is the discovery of a common meaning, and the artist's function, in many societies, is to be skilled in the means by which this meaning can continue to be experienced and activated (31).

In summary, "the 'creative' act, of any artist, is ... the process of making a meaning active, by communicating an organized experience to others" (32). While creativity is a general human practice its institutionalized forms dissociate the practice from the domains of everyday life. Institutionalizing art as a privileged and prestigious form of cultural expression is the reason that artistic production is seen as separate (and superior) from ordinary life.

> The abstraction of art has been its promotion or relegation to an area of special experience ... , which art *in practice* has never confined itself to, ranging in fact from the most ordinary daily activities to exceptional crises and intensities... (39, emphasis added.).

The opposition of art and ordinary life, or the "dismissal of art as unpractical" (37), is hence a false one: creative, non-productive, non-utilitarian work can be found in popular culture, hobby activities and everyday life as well. Williams states, "there are, essentially, no 'ordinary' activities, if by 'ordinary' we mean the absence of creative interpretation and effort" (37). What makes the artist, like a writer or painter, a focal

point for Williams' exploration of the dynamics of culture, is that the artist is in a privileged position to access and "activate" cultural memory and to reassemble it into new forms.[32] But the institutionalization of artistic practices obscures that such creative activities are part of ordinary life as well.

Williams argues that institutions rely on a "selective tradition" by appropriating and incorporating "actively residual" elements of history to legitimize their power in society and become dominant (Williams, 1977: 122-23). This selection is necessarily reductive and partial. In order to avoid admitting the dominance of cultural institutions as agents of cultural development and find a more dynamic concept of culture as a process of "activating meaning," Williams proposes to distinguish between dominant, residual and emergent cultural elements. Institutions, such as universities, museums, or media companies represent a dominant cultural formation at a given moment of a culture's existence. By contrast, Williams describes the residual element of culture as something which "has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process ... as an effective element of the present" (122). The residual is detached from the present but may have an "alternative or even oppositional relation to the dominant culture." The emergent, then, is to be distinguished from the residual by its radically oppositional, and not merely alternative relation to the dominant order. The emergent produces "new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships" (ibid.) To grasp the vitality of culture, Williams points out that "*no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice*" (1977: 125, original emphasis).[33]

In a general sense then, Williams regards the domain of practice, as found in residual and emergent cultural elements, as a potential source of opposition (or innovation) to dominant culture. Popular culture is one example of such a residual or

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32. In *Marxism and Literature*, Williams points out that creativity is required in general as well as specialized activities: from "the relatively simple and direct practice of everyday communication" to the classic fields of "creative practice" in the arts, where creativity relies on the "activation of a know model" of characters, settings and plots (1977: 206-11).

33. The opposition of residual and emergent cultural elements is an attempt to perceive of the Marxist dichotomy between base and superstructure in more dynamic and less deterministic terms: "By 'residual' I mean that some experiences, meanings and values which cannot be verified or cannot be expressed in the terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and *practised* on the basis of the residue—cultural as well as social—of some previous social formation" (1973: 10, emphasis added).

emergent cultural form which can be defined in terms of its "*difference* from common culture." In popular culture, the "legitimation of cultural practice is a result of struggle and not merely growth" (Kruger, 1993: 61). Because the "dominant culture provides the norms in relation to which all other cultural production evaluates or describes itself" the popular can pose "significant challenge to such power" (Shiach, 1989: 17). Early studies of British working class culture (Hoggart, 1973) and the popular arts (Hall and Whannel, 1965) emphasized that the scope of popular cultural forms offered entertainment also as a form of "imaginative experience" (20) in which social hierarchies could be surpassed.[34]

Williams addresses many of the questions that are vital to understanding the cultural crisis of journalism as well. The difference he introduces between institutionalized communications and everyday practices of communication parallel the seeming antagonism of journalistic practices in new media and the audience-related media practices in network media. On the level of practice, the forms of communication are far more diverse than in the limited, institutional frameworks that characterize journalism itself. While dominant institutions can claim to address large audiences, the practices of communication as "sharing experiences" and "activating meaning" are part of any social interaction. The 'selective tradition' by which institutions legitimize their own claims to power stand in opposition to the unruly domain of cultural practices in emergent or residual cultural orders, which are regarded as a potential source of resistance and innovation.

Pierre Bourdieu: The Logic of Practice, Habitus and Field

Williams shares a number of concerns with Pierre Bourdieu in his "attempt to theorize human sociality in terms of the strategic action of individuals within a constraining but

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34. In many of the studies of popular culture of the 1970s and '80s, the popular (as inclusive culture) is tellingly set in opposition to dominant cultural orders (seen as exclusive domain of commercial, cultural production). These popular forms of culture are regarded as resisting not only one-dimensional modes of explanation but are also, through their plurality and unpredictability, identified as a form of 'practice.' See for example, Michel de Certeau's study of the *Practices of Everyday Life* (1984), which details many forms of resistance to dominant ideologies of consumerism, in which the "devious ... ways of using" are explored as a counter-hegemonic strategy of consumers or alternative cultural producers (Certeau, 1988: xii-xiii).

nonetheless not determining context of values" which are assumed as dominant in a given era (Milner, 1994: 66). Williams coins the term "structure of feeling" to describe this experience of a particular era (1977: 128f.). For Bourdieu, it is the *habitus* that acts as a "durable disposition" of individual actors and groups. Habitus is "much more abstract" than Williams' "pattern of felt experience," Milner argues (67), yet both authors share a common humanist ethos, in which the analysis of power structures is complemented with a perspective of social agents living within such structures.

On the ground of their common ethics, Williams and Bourdieu differ sharply from Michel Foucault, whose framework of "discursive practices" focuses primarily on the "micropolitics" of those societal institutions, which are *prima facie* concerned with disciplining and 'subjecting' individuals, e.g. the clinic, prisons, or universities (Milner, 1994: 64f.). Foucault is interested in "specific politics" of practice as a domain of action (Veyne, 1997: 154) only to uncover a discourse of "normalization" through which power achieves legitimacy. Foucault's selection of discursive practices privileges those that regulate power and thereby constitute modern subjects (Hörning and Reuter, 2008: 114).

For Bourdieu and Williams, the experience of living in a given society is not sufficiently described through its regulatory and prohibitive regimes or its economic structure. Even though social structure restricts individuals, such structures also enable actors to act in the first place. In a review of Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Williams lauds Bourdieu for placing social structures and agents in a reflexive relation to each other. In Williams' words, Bourdieu's central concept of *habitus* is "by definition not an individual phenomenon" because "it is internalized and operationalized by individuals but not to regulate solitary acts but precisely interaction." As an individual disposition towards the social environment, habitus brings together "a logic derived from a common set of material conditions of existence to regulate the *practice of a set of individuals* in common response to those conditions" (Garnham and Williams, 1980: 213, emphasis added). In general, *habitus* tries to explain how individual social actors, living in comparable conditions, can develop similarities in

their way of life, social behavior, and cultural preferences as a long-term effect of inculcation through interaction with others. In Bourdieu's and Williams' time, this approach attempted to regard the formation of classes in cultural and sociological terms, bypassing or overcoming a unilinear economic determinism that had characterized early Marxism.

Bourdieu's approach to practice starts out on a critique of ethnographic method and Lévi-Straussian structural anthropology, which suffered from a "detemporalizing effect" in describing social practices. Because structuralist accounts tended to "ignore time … and reify practices" they fit the latter into rigid pairs of symmetric oppositions, as in Lévi-Strauss' *Structural Anthropology* (1958). Yet, in social interaction, Bourdieu argues, practices are "defined by the fact that their temporal structure, direction, and rhythm are *constitutive* of their meaning" (Bourdieu, 1977: 9). Bourdieu's aim then is to "restore to practice its practical truth" (8), that is, to *think about practice from within practice* by assuming a perspective of those actually performing it. For Lévi-Strauss, social relations represented the "raw materials out of which the models making up the social structure are built" (Lévi-Strauss, 1963: 270).[35] Against such an abstraction, in which the model comes to stand in for the structure it seeks to explain, Bourdieu wants to embed the perspective of those actually performing social actions in his account of social structure.

Similar to Williams, Bourdieu cautions that the "practical functions" of language are not sufficiently described as the mere "execution" of predefined rules (1977: 24). Practical use of language differs greatly from linguistic models of languages, yet for many linguists of his time, such exceptions from rules merely affirmed the general validity of their rules.[36] In ethnography, the legacy of Saussurian linguistics analytically

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35. Compared to the French original text, this translation seems less direct. Lévi-Strauss writes: "Les relations sociales sont la matière première employée pour la construction des modèles qui rendent manifeste *la structure sociale elle-même* (Lévi-Strauss, 1980: 305-306, emphasis added), which suggests another reading of "models making social structure itself manifest."

36. As John B. Thompson notes in his "Introduction" to Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power*: "By taking a particular set of linguistic practices as a normative model of correct usage, the linguist produces the illusion of a common language and ignores the social-historical conditions which have established a particular set of linguistic practices as dominant and legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1991: 5).

ignored the ‘practical truth’ of interactions as they unfolded.[37] By contrast, a merely “phenomenological” method of looking at practices conceded *all* rationality to agents themselves to explain their motivations for actions. According to Bourdieu, both perspectives are limited to explain how practical activity is the product of a social and an individual reality. Instead, he wants to foreground the “dialectical relations between the objective structures … and the structured dispositions within which those structures are actualized and which tend to reproduce them” (1977: 3).[38]

This dialectical relation is what the concept of habitus seeks to explain. Defined as a “cultivated disposition” (15) of individuals or groups, an actor’s habitus serves as a “generative scheme” for practices[39] and is acquired over time through repeated interactions. Because habitus is inculcated through repeated social interactions, it serves as a restriction of possible further interactions rather than as a blueprint of creativity. Habitus “enabl[es] agents to generate an infinity of practices” (16) without having to be explicated by individuals. As an individually acquired social and cognitive disposition towards the social world, it remains strangely opaque to the individual as a generative scheme of actions. The habitus, is “history turned into nature” (78),[40] writes Bourdieu, that serves as “a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which ... functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions.” Its social effectivity lies in the fact that habitus “makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes” to solve problems (82-83). The heterogeneity

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37. Geertz criticizes that “extreme subjectivism is married to extreme formalism” when an ethnographer’s account of a culture is cast in a systematic language of rules of behavior, taxonomies, and systems. This way of description means to “reify” a given culture as a static object (Geertz, 1973: 11).

38. In a later essay, Bourdieu sums up his research project originating in the *Theory of Practice* as follows: “[O]n the one hand, the objective structures that the sociologist constructs, in the objectivist moment, by setting aside the subjective representations of the agents, form the basis for these representations and constitute the structural constraints that bear upon interactions; but, on the other hand, these representations must also be taken into consideration particularly if one wants to account for the daily struggles, individual and collective, which purport to transform or to preserve these structures. This means that the two moments, the objectivist and the subjectivist, stand in a dialectical relationship (…)” (Bourdieu, 1989: 15).

39. For Bourdieu, practices are “produced by the habitus,” and function as a “*strategy-generating principle* enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations” (1977: 72, emphasis added).

40. Habitus is thus too familiar, in fact, too much part of one’s own nature, that is ceases to be perceived as an external influence, similar to Geertz’ description of common sense as “one of the oldest suburbs of human culture” (Geertz, 1992: 225).

of practice, that Williams implicitly posits in opposition to dominant cultural forms, is here based on the habitus as a "generative scheme" of action. But the proclivity to adopt a certain (social, cultural, or political) practice is in turn related to the formation of habitus in the socialization of actors into their respective social classes or groups.

Bourdieu overdetermines habitus somewhat tautologically as "*structured* structure," describing it as the *result* of formative conditions, and "*structuring* structure," where it generates a multitude of seemingly disparate practices (72, emphases added). But if practices are generated by the habitus while simultaneously reproducing the conditions that made them possible, no form of social change would ever generate *new* social practices. Bourdieu's concept of practice is based on an inescapable co-dependence of social structure and individual practice, yet it cannot theoretically explain social change. As Paul DiMaggio remarks in an early review of *Outline*, Bourdieu's "theoretical stance is sufficiently ambiguous to excuse almost any inconsistency" (1979: 1467). Bourdieu's theory of social fields has a similar disadvantage, by underlining primarily the *stability* of social structures, rather than change. But since his theory of fields is most narrowly concerned with the stabilization of certain practices in distinct spheres of cultural production, it is worth sketching its basic outline.

Apart from his book *On Television* (1998), Bourdieu has published only little on journalism as a field of cultural production, preferring to illustrate his concept of fields by referring to art and literature (Bourdieu, 1993, 1996).[41] The concept of field rests on the assumption that social actors "do not act in a vacuum" (Johnson in Bourdieu, 1993: 5) but are embedded in hierarchical social relations. Actors strive to take positions in this hierarchy, especially in professional networks. Bourdieu defines fields, such as the economic, the political, or the cultural field, as sites of struggle between "a field of positions and a field of position-takings" (1993: 34). Within each field actors struggle to

41. See also (Bourdieu, 2008) for an an exemplary study of the "institutional mechanisms" in French publishing that in part explain the logic of a (limited) field of positions within a bounded realm of cultural production.

attain or defend positions, and the rules which ratify their suitability for positions are regulated by the habitus of already established position holders. But changes in the positions taken by new actors always effect the overall structure of a field. Bourdieu emphasizes that a field of social actors is “relatively autonomous” (33) in legitimizing actors as members, but is structurally homologous to other fields.

The journalistic field is a special kind of field within cultural production. Since journalism is in contact with many other fields, journalism has a direct “valorizing” effect on them.[42] By reporting news about political ideas, persons, products, cultural objects or events, journalism can bestow authority through addressing the public. An orientation to a mass market makes journalists prefer those news items, which are most suitable to attract audiences and advertisers alike. Compared to the artistic field, which becomes more autonomous the more it “produce[s] for other producers” (Bourdieu, 1993: 39), the journalistic field can approach autonomy only by creating an audience from a mass market to finance its own production routines. More than other fields of cultural production, the journalistic field is “permanently subject to trial by market” (1998: 71). Once the field fails to address audiences, fails to be a valued on a market, its operation of bestowing authority on other fields is also in danger.

Bourdieu presents the concept of field as a form of “radical contextualization” of cultural products within the historical circumstances of their production (Johnson in Bourdieu, 1993: 9). He emphasizes that institutions as parts of fields have a legitimizing function as to what counts as art or proper science and thus exert power over which positions are granted to which actors. “The work of art,” he claims, ”exists as such only by virtue of the (collective) belief which knows and acknowledges it as a work of art” (35). Artworks are symbolically recognized by the field, that is, by actors defending or striving for positions of power within the field (37). When new practices stand in contrast to the orthodoxy of a field, their challenge of the dominant view is actually a

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42. Bourdieu claims that the journalistic field is set apart from other fields by its function of “valorizing what has most value in external markets.” By reporting on selected, newsworthy events in other fields, like the political or social field, journalism “affects the internal relations within the [other] field” (Bourdieu, 2005: 44).

struggle to impose another dominant view within that field.[43]

Fields as aggregates of positions and position-takings bestow "symbolic capital" on their members, or recognition of their contribution to the continued existence of a given field (1993: 30). Capital is generalized by Bourdieu to become a resource of social actors. In *Outline*, he argued for a "general science of the economy of practices," where economic and non-economic practices all serve the "maximizing of material or symbolic profit" (1977: 183). The cultural field profits from the preservation of cultural memory in the form of art works and written texts. It exerts power by "partial or total monopolizing of the society's symbolic resources" through the institutionalization of certain "decoding techniques," which are determined and executed by the members of the field (187). Symbolic capital is the power to determine what is a legitimate sense-making practice within a field and what is not.

A similar logic applies to the journalistic field. New practices in the journalistic field can be regarded as a way to reinvigorate the field while keeping its basic structure of positions intact. Since journalists operate on the margins between their own professional field and other specialized fields, they in no small part determine the value of what is new in relation to the demands of their audience. Due to its day-to-day operation, the journalistic field's focus on "news" as its output equally demands a "permanent renewal" of its own operations. The field of journalists is legitimized mainly from two sides: the peers who work in the same field, who share the same habitus and can bestow "symbolic capital" on journalistic products, and "the public at large" of readers, who are also customers for advertising (Bourdieu, 1998: 70-73). In turn, the journalistic field cannot exist only as a field of 'producers,' as in art, because its products do not exist independently of being communicated to and among audiences.

With his concept of field Bourdieu focuses on the stabilizing aspect of the habitus and its extension in time. He highlights how individual fields can continue to exist, even if key actors change. Here again, the emphasis is on stability rather than change, and it

43. For the field of literary production Bourdieu notes that it "is the site of struggle in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the writer and therefore to delimit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the writer" (42).

is surprising that Bourdieu avoids to formulate a theory of how some fields can disappear and new ones are established. Scott Lash criticizes that Bourdieu can elucidate structural dynamics of specific fields of cultural production, but cannot account in general for social change because he reduces agents' reflexivity of their own position to only *one* field (Lash, 1993: 210). As will be argued in chapter two, the field of newspaper editors in New York during the 1830s was challenged by printers publishing penny papers who had little or no background in journalism. Although the pennies did not originate in the field of established journalism, they eventually changed what counted as "symbolic capital" within that field by expanding instead of limiting the readership of news. The field dynamic described by Bourdieu explains one aspect of how change effects social structure, but such field dynamics are insufficient to explain the emergence of a new medium like the penny press. Innovation in respective fields hinges on a lot more than the irritation of positions taken by newcomers. Although the relation between journalists and their audiences is introduced as a constitutive component of the journalistic field, Bourdieu does not further elaborate the point. "Bourdieu's own view of the field [of cultural production]," writes Bridget Fowler, "is still too over-simplified and is based on a narrow conception of art-worlds" (1999: 114).

Williams and Bourdieu are both interested in the question of how cultural and social orders achieve stability and continuity in time. Williams' notion of practice remains general in way (in terms of a Marxist integration of theory and practice).[44] Yet, as his example of communication(s) and the 'activation of meaning' in art show, he is acutely aware that beyond dominant cultural institutions, practices of meaning production exist in many more forms of interaction, which can constitute emergent cultural orders. Refining Williams' general notion of practice through an ethnographic focus, Pierre Bourdieu sees the realm of practice as a structured and structuring form of

44. Nick Couldry criticizes that Williams' approach to culture as a unifying ideological construct risks to exclude those currents within cultural development that seek to escape such a unity, such as subcultures. Couldry writes that "Williams always formulates the problem of cultural theory in terms of possible unity and coherence at the level of a whole 'culture'" (Couldry, 2000: 46). In view of Williams inclusive concept of culture such a criticism is certainly not beside the point but the acknowledgment of dominant cultural elements and challenging, 'emergent' cultural forces, which is pervasive throughout Williams' work, certainly make a striving for a unified cultural theory pardonable.

social interaction, in which the habitus generates schemes of action. Bourdieu uses the logic of practice to point out that practice can be neither inferred exclusively from individual accounts of agents nor from the social structures in which these agents act. The concern with stability of social orders in both authors, however, marginalizes social change. If practice is so vital to attain stability, how is it possible to charge practice with accounting for the adaptation and innovation of cultural and social structures? Without such a modification, the hermetic nature of Bourdieu's habitus excludes any notion of innovation, which is necessary to explain the power of social orders to adapt to changing environmental conditions, whether they are social, economic or cultural. The key to explain innovation as an *inherent property* of practice is to model the relation of actors and social structure in even a more reflexive way than what Bourdieu can account for. If Bourdieu helps to explain how social structures, such as fields, achieve stability over time, Anthony Giddens' "theory of structuration" offers a model to account for the capacity of structures to change.

The *Duality of Structure* and the Transposition of Schemas

Giddens and Bourdieu share the common critical stance towards structuralism on the ground that it excludes social actors' "practical consciousness" in everyday interactions. While Bourdieu starts out from the divide between subjectivism (focus on actors' competence) and objectivism (focus on structure), Giddens' 'theory of structuration' attempts to rethink social structure from the vantage point of actors' "practical consciousness."[45] Similar to Bourdieu, Giddens criticizes Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology by positing that structures do not exist independent of social relations (1979: 63-64). He further dismisses that structures, as constitutive parts of social systems, have their own teleology and contends that "social systems have no purposes, reasons or needs whatsoever; only human individuals do so" (7). A further similarity between Bourdieu and Giddens is that the latter does not privilege either "the

45. Giddens maintains that "practical consciousness" and "contextuality of action" are two dimensions totally absent from structuralism, which privileges the signifier as part of a textual system at the expense of the signified in practical action (1987: 214-15).

experience of the individual actor“ or “societal totality”[46] in his model of social structure. Giddens’ primary research object are “social practices ordered across space and time” with the basic assumption that “human social activities … are recursive.” Social practices, in his words, are

> continually recreated [by social actors] via the very means whereby they express themselves *as* actors. In and through their activities agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible (1984: 2).

The reliance of agents on structures, the “mutual dependence of structure and agency” (1979: 69), is captured in Giddens’ concept of the ‘duality of structure’, which underlines “the recursiveness of social life, as continued in social practices.” Recursiveness refers to the way that human agents structure their lives through repeated actions in fairly stable temporal and spatial patterns. Giddens argues that such patterning of actions in time and space provides a fundamental sense of “ontological security” (1984: 375. Cf. Moores, 2005). Social practices as repeated actions contribute to the same sense of security because they support durable social structures, which are “both medium and outcome of the reproduction of practices” (1979: 5). Only in their concrete “instantiation,” in their enactment by actors, do structures achieve “time-space presence” (1984: 17). Because structures do not exist independently of actors but need to be reproduced through practices, Giddens maintains that the ‘duality of structure’ serves as a model to explain social integration *and* innovation. In the words of Joas and Knöbl, the ‘duality of structure’ brings together structures and actors in a radically reflexive relation to each other. The concept

> convey[s] the notion that while structures have a constraining effect, they make action possible in the first place, and while they appear to be solid constructions merely reproduced by actors, they are in fact constantly transformed by them (Joas and Knöbl, 2009: 295).

Giddens builds on the premise that human actors are “knowledgeable” about the conditions in which they act and can formulate the objectives of their actions; they possess “discursive consciousness” (1979: 5). On the other hand, “practical consciousness” encompasses “tacit knowledge that is skillfully applied in the enactment of courses of conduct, but which the actor is not able to formulate discursively” (57).

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46. In *The Constitution of Society*, Giddens maintains that structuration theory reformulates “the dualism of the ‘individual’ and ‘society’” as the “duality of agency and structure” (1984: 162).

Discursive and practical knowledge "situate" actors (73) between what can be discursively represented and what remains part of unspoken motivations in specific local and temporal settings. Giddens cautions that "between discursive and practical consciousness there is no bar; there are only the differences between what can be said and what is characteristically simply done" (1984: 7).

Discursive and practical consciousness[47] stand in a reflexive relation to each other. Human agents as "purposive agents" possess a "reflexive form of knowledgeability" about themselves in respect to others. Reflexivity is the "continuous monitoring of action which human beings display and expect others to display" in order to rationalize their own practices (1984: 3). In social conduct, actors are aware of other positions in different fields and monitor alternative options to given ways of action. Reflexivity in social conduct is then the precondition for an actor to exert agency.

> Agency refers not to the *intentions* people have in doing things but to their *capability* of doing those things in the first place […] . Agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently (1984: 9, emphases added).[48]

Agency as a general capability to act is different from series of discrete actions: Agency is "a continuous flow of conduct" (1979: 55). If structure is actualized only through social practices, the reproduction of these structures involves agency as the "recursive mobilization of knowledge" about alternatives to given forms of conduct. According to Giddens, social structures exist as "recursively organized sets of rules and resources" (1984: 5f.). Agents make use of rules and resources to reproduce social structures in interaction (1979: 71) but only in conjunction can rules and resources explain the perpetuation of a practice (ibid., 82).[49] What is then called 'structuration' involves both the *patterning of interaction* and the *continuity of interaction* across time

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47. For the present discussion, the third level, the unconscious, is excluded, since it is not relevant for the structuring of practices but refers to the "unintended consequences of actions" (See Giddens, 1984: 5).

48. The difference between actors and agents is not very clear. *Actor* and *agent* both originate in the Latin verb *agere* (to act). In the context of Giddens' focus on agency, agent will refer to an actor with "practical consciousness", someone with the capability to act (See Giddens, 1984: xxiii).

49. Ira Cohen remarks that rules and resources are "structural properties of collectivities" which "not only serve as the media of social reproduction but are also reproduced as an outcome of this process. (…) [S]tructure is reconstituted in each instance where a pervasive and enduring practice is reproduced" (Cohen, 1987: 301).

(62). Social reproduction relies on the continuity of interaction, where rules (and resources) are "recursively implicated in practices" (65). As Caroline New has aptly noted:

> Rules and resources … *are* social relations *as these impact on the agent*. In everyday life social relations present themselves as rules about how to go on in relation to other positions, and as sets of possible options involving available rules and resources. Knowledgeable human agents are aware not only of the rules attaching to the social positions they themselves occupy (such as adult, man, mother, shopkeeper, Catholic, beggar), but also of those attaching to related positions. Social reproduction occurs through situated actors' responses to the sets of options offered at any moment (New, 1994: 197).

It would be reductive to infer from this seemingly open definition of structures as "rule-resource sets" (Giddens, 1984: 377) that all agents are equally capable of reproducing structures. But Giddens maintains that "structure is always both enabling and constraining" because resources are distributed "asymmetrically" in society (1984: 169, 1979: 69). Power is primarily exercised through the use of resources unavailable to others but the *effectiveness* of power depends in large part on the "agency of others." In this sense, then, power relations are always "two-way" (Giddens, 1979: 91-93).

Compared to Bourdieu's concept of habitus as a generative scheme of practices, Giddens accords more agency to social actors. In Giddens' terminology, Bourdieu's field can only continue to exist as a structure because individual agents continue to follow the rules and provide resources to reproduce the field as a social structure. Practices in Giddens' concept of the 'duality of structure' are then constitutive of structures and make them endure over time, which has the consequence that structures cease to exist, when they are no longer enacted by agents. The duality of structure seems to remedy the deficit of Bourdieu in underlining the mutual reflexivity of structure and agency or actors. Yet, this great benefit is also its most problematic aspect.

Margareth Archer has criticized that Giddens' inclusive, not to say hermetic, formulation of the relation of structure and agency suffers from a "central conflation" between the level of individual agency and the dominance of structures (Archer, 1996: 72f.). Because he wants to do away with the primacy of either structure *or* individual agency in explaining social coherence, he collapses both into the hermetic "bundle" of a duality: "Thus the core of the central conflationist conception of culture concerns its

essential duality. Culture is the product of human agency but at the same time any form of social interaction is embedded in it" (ibid., 77f.). Archer argues that Giddens' "conflationary theorizing … prevents the interplay between 'parts' and 'people' from being the foundation of cultural dynamics." Because the duality of structure seems to always account for both the structural and the individual level of social action, "the elision of the two elements withdraws any autonomy or independence from one of them, if not from both" (ibid., xv). Archer criticizes that Giddens remains too general in his theorizing, which keeps him from being able to answer "'when' questions - when can actors be transformative … and when are they trapped into replication." Giddens' 'duality of structure' is a "conceptualization of change as a permanently imminent yet defiantly unpredictable" (87) property of structures. It overrides any attempt to see specific degrees of agency or structural dominance that cannot only be ascribed to questions of power. Giddens thus fails to "specify the *variable* degrees of freedom of which actors could avail themselves in different contexts" Archers sums up (88, emphasis in original).

In part, this criticism is answered by the social-historian William Sewell, who developed a model of structure and agency out of Giddens' earlier theorizing, remedying some of its more general claims in a more specific terminology geared toward a historical analysis of social change. Sewell elaborates a concept of structure that recognizes the agency of actors, accounts for change as a feature of structure, and argues for a more reflexive conceptualization of social structures themselves.

> Structures shape people's practices, but it is also people's practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures. In this view of things, human agency and structure, far from being *opposed*, in fact, *presuppose* each other (Sewell Jr., 1992: 4, original emphasis).

The "recursive enactment of structures" (6) contributes to the stability of society over time, yet this enactment is at the same time a potential source of agency for individuals. Sewell here departs from Giddens' definition of rules as "generalizable procedures" (as 'rule-resource sets') and proposes the term "schema."[50] Because *rules* imply a

50. Giddens himself introduces "interpretative schemes" as "standardized elements of stocks of knowledge, applied by actors in the production of interaction", as "the core of mutual knowledge" (1979: 83; also 1984: 29).

formalized logic of prescriptive statements, the term *schema* highlights that patterns in social interaction tend to be less explicitly formed and can be multidimensional. Schemas can be generalized and transposed to different contexts. As Sewell writes, schemas "can be actualized in a potentially broad and unpredetermined range of situations" (8), they are potentially overlapping in multiple ways and may have less clearly defined boundaries of applicability than rules. As a form of general cultural knowledge, schemas remain virtual before being applied to actual problems or in new interactions. While social agents are empowered in their capacity to apply schemas to new situations, they also have access to material (non-human) or human resources. In order to avoid a simple materialism, Sewell points out that in social interactions non-human resources like technologies or tools are tied to cultural schemas determining their "value and social power" (12). Material resources are not empowering by themselves but become powerful in their valuation for particular purposes in interaction.

The domain of practice forms the link between structures and individuals. Because structures need to be enacted in practice to endure, and actors need structures as resources to achieve certain ends, practice is the domain of social life, where the valuation of schemas and resources for the endurance of structures takes place. Sewell argues that there are four reasons why structures can innovate while being reproduced: 1) The *multiplicity of structures* implies that many different structures operate within a society. Different structures interfere and overlap with each other, of which some are more dominant or are valued differently than others. 2) Because social actors are "capable of applying a wide range of different and even incompatible schemas and have access to heterogeneous arrays of resources" schemas are *generalizable and transposable*. A schema may emerge in one structure and find application in respect to another structure or resource. Here, agency crucially "entail[s] the capacity to transpose and extend schemas to new contexts." New practices result from such transpositions of schemas to new contexts. 3) If schemas can be transposed to different context, the effect is that *resources may accumulate in unpredictable ways*. Valuing certain kinds of resources for hitherto unthought-of problems or tasks may lead to an accumulation of a

particular resource in areas where it was scarce before. 4) This unpredictability also entails that *resources are polysemous* and are valued differently by actors. Polysemy of resources and the transposability of schemas lead to an intersection of structures, where structures may address and empower social agents in different ways. Sewell summarizes that "structures, then, are sets of mutually sustaining schemas and resources that empower and constrain social action" (16-19). In order to endure over time, structures, need to impose rules and prerequisites on entry of new agents by either requiring resources (e.g. capital or time) or by privileging certain cognitive and interactive schemas over others.

The emphasis on the enactment of structures can explain why certain structures (as schema and resource) may cease to exist while others persist or even new ones emerge. Structures which continue to renew their resources and valuing schemas, endure over time because their enactment is marks a transposition to new circumstances by endowing new actors with agency. As Sewell argues, "agents are empowered to act with and against others by structures" but agency also depends on "a specific range of cultural schemas and resources available in a person's particular social milieu." Habitual or inculcated cultural schemas serve as orientation in social interaction and actors differ in their "ability to apply [schemas] to new contexts" (ibid., 20). While social structures survive only by being enacted, the ability of actors to take part in a range of different structures increases their level of agency. Sewell contends that "structures empower agents differentially" (21) because actors differ in their ability to transpose schemas to new resources or revaluate existing resources in new ways.

Sewell admits that his theory of agency and structure remains very general (22f.) which makes it a model that can be developed to address the seemingly paradoxical question of how practice account for stability *and* innovation. In contrast to Williams and Bourdieu, Giddens and Sewell highlight the adaptability of social structures in their theorizing of practice. Especially in Sewell the transposition of schemas and resources to new contexts accounts for both the enactment of social structures over long time periods and the considerable agency individual actors have in this enactment to innovate

structures. A social structure or system cannot continue to exist "apart from the succession of practices that instantiate, reproduce, or–most interestingly–transform it" (Sewell Jr., 2005: 164). How such a transformation of social structures can be attributed to practice, how practice can be a model of cultural innovation, depends on a revision of agency in social structures and the materiality of cultural production.

Innovation and Journalistic Practice: Three Dimensions

Sociology and cultural studies overlap in important ways in their concern with practice. The previous discussion of core theorists of practice has shown that the "emergent level of the social" (Reckwitz) intersects with the assumed stability of social structures over time. Although the strategic emphases on either stability or innovation vary largely between in the theories presented so far, a uniting feature is that practice is thought of as an important domain of social life where the limiting effects of social structures are curtailed, challenged and innovated through the heterogeneity of individual practices. Various points about the importance of practice in social life, originally brought up by Raymond Williams in his reflections on culture and communication, have been elaborated by sociologists in more refined terms. The benefit of such an interdisciplinary approach to practice is that the social and cultural implications can mutually enrich an analysis of media change and cultural innovation. As social theory is increasingly becoming cultural theory and vice versa,[51] previously distinct senses of culture in anthropology, sociology and cultural studies are converging on a common concern with practice.

In his article on "The Concept(s) of Culture", Sewell contrasts older theories of "culture as a system of symbols and meanings" and newer theories of "culture as practice" (Sewell Jr., 2005: 160). Among the first group are ethnologist such as Clifford Geertz, whose focus on 'culture as text' established the idea that cultures can be

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51. As Andreas Reckwitz argues, the blurring of boundaries between previously distinct definitions of cultures suggests that "social theory has been transformed largely into cultural theory." Culture itself, then, "can be defined as vocabularies that understand or explain human action and social order by establishing their basis in symbolic codes and schemes that regulate meaning" (Reckwitz, 2002a: 195).

analyzed as semiotic structures of signification, which are distinct and isomorphic from other structures.[52] After the *linguistic turn* initiated by semiotics, structuralists like Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan or Claude Lévi-Strauss have exclusively focused on the "systematic nature of cultural meaning and the autonomy of symbol systems," trying to develop elaborate schemes of signification between opposing pairs of symbols or elements of social life. As Sewell writes: "They all abstracted a realm of pure signification out from the complex *messiness* of social life and sought to specify its internal *coherence* and deep *logic*" (161, emphases added). From this 'realm of pure signification' two things are strangely absent: social actors performing practices and the material dimension of such practices. In favor of 'logic' or 'coherence' structuralism excludes the 'messiness' of social life by ignoring the often contradictory motivations of individual actors and the uneven access to and valuation of material resources for specific social practices.

A common thread from Williams to Bourdieu to Giddens and Sewell is the rejection of structuralist accounts of the social, from which any notion of individual agency is strangely absent. Williams argues that, in practice, actual language use resists the definition of fixed meanings; Bourdieu questions whether a system of symmetric oppositions can adequately explain the complexity of an actor's practice seen from within its unfolding; Giddens and Sewell criticize the exclusion of actors' practical consciousness from structuralism (and its too hermetic conception in Bourdieu). But whereas Williams and Bourdieu seek to establish coherence on another level ("structure of feeling" or "habitus"), newer approaches to practice "object to a portrayal of culture as logical, coherent, shared, uniform, and static" and conceive of culture as a sphere of "practical activity" in which individual elements, actors and structures can contradict each other (Sewell, 2005: 161). Culture in this sense *practically* enables agents to act, to

52. Geertz' "semiotic" concept of culture concentrates on "webs of significance" between human agents, structures, practices and artifacts (Geertz, 1973: 5). Cultures, in Geertz' view are an "assemblage of texts"; particular cultural forms are perceived as "imaginative works built out of social materials" (1972: 26-27). The analogy of culture and text–or culture as text–leads to an objectification of texts as distinct artifacts which are taken out of their social significance for the sake of analysis. As Hörning and Reuter criticize, Geertz is interested only "in the fabric, not the weaving; in the text, not the process of writing or reading; in structure, not history (2008: 110, my translation).

create meaning and sustain social structures in interaction, serving as a "repertoire of practices" (Hillebrandt, 2009: 84).

As defined before, journalism can be thought of as a structure of public communication. By placing the emphasis on social structure, journalism can be seen in its mutual implication of media, actors, topical content and audiences. In light of the previous elaborations, the long continuity of this structure, coextensive with modern media of communication, can be explained as the continued enactment of a structure through actors, which in every instance, e.g. in every daily issue of a newspaper, reproduces a social structure. In this dynamic conception, actors include journalists and editors as part of a field of producers, but more importantly, audiences as well. Both producers and audiences need resources to (re)produce a structure called journalism: printing presses, offices, staff on the side of producers; money, time and attention on the side of audiences. But as Sewell underlined, these resources need to be valued in any form to become socially significant. A newspaper can serve as an advertisement for the printer's shop or can serve a political crusade against perceived ills in society. The newspaper can serve audiences to feel embedded in the social fabric of society; it can structure the perception of time passing in predictable patterns; it can offer banking tables, weather forecasts, amusing content and so on. Both sides of the structure value the newspaper (or other media of communication) in different terms but they nonetheless are both part of the continued enactment of a particular structure of public communication. Without an audience valuing journalism as a daily resource of information (*or* entertainment, *or* political discourse), such a resource ceases to be socially relevant. As journalism historian John Nerone argued: "a medium is essentially a relationship or a combination of relationships, it is not a thing in itself" (1989: 5). Media constitute relationships between producers and audiences, among producers, and among audiences. In each of these relationships certain patterns are discernible as forms of practice, which may be 'messy' and change over time but which are not arbitrary.

Regarding media as practice entails that media innovations are not reduced to technological innovations alone but represent new resources for communication that are

evaluated by cultural schemas. These schemas necessarily exist before media innovations gain broader popularity as they condense the meaningful dimension of social actions in regard to communication. When a new medium becomes popular, this moment signals that a given technology or media form is valued by audiences and producers in distinct ways. The adoption of a new medium for journalism rests in no small part on the transposition or recombination of existing cultural schemas into new contexts. Technological innovation is only the most visible aspect of cultural innovation, but many studies of changing communications media are content to focus on the technological, political or institutional framework of innovations alone.[53] The adoption of technologies in social interaction seems to follow by virtue of technological superiority of certain new media over older ones.

In contrast, Brian Winston has argued that "there is nothing in the histories of electrical and electronic communication systems to indicate that significant major changes have not been accommodated by previous social formations" (Winston, 1998: 2). In Winston's model of technological change, the social dimension of scientists and engineers negotiating the potentials for adopting new media sits at a prominent position, but his history of media conventionally is based on a study of technology instead of looking first at the social formations in which new media are adopted. In journalism, media of communication are only a part of the structure that audiences and producers enact. Admittedly, especially in journalistic practice of the present, the meanings of new technologies are also negotiated, but more importantly, these media are secondary to social relations in which they are embedded. Journalism values new technologies only insofar as it allows journalistic practice to renew its public function in a changing social environment.[54] As Carolyn Marvin has argued, new media challenge the ways in which groups in society communicate. A new medium here questions the established practices, yet in adopting a new medium of communication, old practices are effectively adopted

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53. See, for example, (Carey and Elton, 2010; Kovarik, 2011; Stöber, 2013) and the collection by (Crowley and Heyer, 2003).

54. See also Pablo Boczkowski's practice-based study of newspapers adopting to the digital era in *Digitizing the News* (2004) where he argues that "new media emerge by merging existing social and material infrastructures with novel technical capabilities" (Boczkowski, 2004: 4).

to new circumstances rather than being radically transformed.

> New media may change the perceived effectiveness of one group's surveillance of another, the permissible familiarity of exchange, the frequency and intensity of contact (...). Old practices are then painfully revised, and group habits are reformed. New practices do not so much flow directly from technologies that inspire them as they are improvised out of old practices that no longer work in new settings (Marvin, 1988: 5).

Because innovation is a constitutive part of practices in the continuation of social structures, it is problematic to speak of 'emergence' or 'newness' of media at all. Innovation should not be understood as a qualitative statement in the sense of progress or technological perfection but rather describing a change in the forms of communication at a given moment in history. For the sake of analysis, the time periods used to demarcate the following case studies simply indicate a focal point without implying that change began or ended at these temporal markers. In practice, change is unfolding any time; only in some periods change unfolds faster and has more far-reaching effects. Cultural schemas that value journalism in the present can be retraced to such defining periods in the past, in which the meanings of new journalistic media were contested and negotiated. The emergence of a cultural schema is then the main point of analysis in the present study, in which new media were also involved.

In order to capture innovation of journalistic practices as part of the enactment of journalism as a structure of public communication, three dimensions are especially important: a material, a cognitive and a social dimension. Although the case studies will show how each dimension is always implicated in the other two, the dimensions should initially be isolated as far as possible for the sake of a later analytic synthesis. The *material dimension* comprises technological conditions for the production and distribution of journalistic news, but also other forms of resources that enable a producer or audience to enact the structure. Innovation in the material dimension, however, depends on evaluative schemas, which explain the use of a particular resource for a particular task. The domain of valuation is the *cognitive dimension* of journalistic practice. The cultural schemas used to value a new journalistic medium apply both to journalists and to audiences, which includes the possibility that such valuations may incur very different schemas. While a newspaper may be valued by a printer as an

advertisement for his workshop, the same medium may be valued by its audience for the topical information it provides. Such valuations can not be deducted from properties of the medium itself but need to be seen in the context of competing media fulfilling similar functions within a given historical setting. The cognitive dimension also applies to the structuring of specific texts or media forms as they are used in journalistic practice.[55] The *social dimension* refers to the relationships that are established or innovated by journalistic media. Although historical records of audience involvement with media are notoriously hard to come by (See Bird, 2008), a social relation is already implied in the way journalism addresses its audiences through cognitive or narrative schemas. The history of journalism, like the history of literature, is largely in favor of the "moment of enunciation"[56] because only what is enunciated has a chance to be preserved in archives. But in journalism, what is published in a topical fashion crucially involves addressing and renewing an audience on a regular basis. The main interest in the social dimension of journalistic practice is then how journalism achieves to renew this relation to audiences, how it imagines the continuity of its audience across technological change, social transformation or cultural revaluation.

In summary, journalism as a structure of public communication is enacted through journalistic practices, practices which in turn are generative of the structure across its modern history. Innovation of journalism in times of media change can be explained on

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55. Instead of keeping with Sewell's emphasis on schema, Erving Goffman's 'frame' would pose an alternative to describe cognitive patterns. Goffman envisioned frames as "basic elements" in the "organization of experience" (Goffman, 1974: 11). This captures a decisive attribute of cognition and the effect of social learning in interaction. But 'frame' underlines, in close analogy to visual media like photographs and paintings, a *limitation*, a restriction. Especially in the discussion of photography in chapter three, frame would confuse the content of photographs with the way photography is culturally valued. Further, frame analysis has itself a history in journalism research: how media 'frame' events as narratives (See Tuchman, 1976; Kuypers, 2002; D'Angelo and Kuypers, 2010). While I use frame in reference to particular news stories and news media as a limiting cognitive structure, schema as a cognitive pattern that evaluates a new technology emphasizes *openness* instead of closure. Schemas can derive from very different social practices and can be combined to form new schemas like "topicality" or "objectivity." The interest in the cultural valuation of journalistic media through schemas keeps open the possibility that certain schemas might have only a limited, procedural significance but eventually were transposed to higher levels of complexity. While frame implies that there is a complete object, a total view, which is limited by a frame, schemas accentuate that this complete object is only a temporary manifestation of permanently changing cognitive attributions and patterns.

56. Janice Radway criticizes that research on cultural production is often biased towards the enunciatory side as the only site of production. A "naturalized conception of people who use mass-produced cultural texts as an audience of receivers subtly privileges the moment of enunciation as production and focuses attention on the subsequent circuit of exchange" (Radway, 1988: 361).

the basis of practice, which *integrally relies on resources to create and value topical content through cultural schemas that are socially relevant to audiences on a regular basis*. The materiality of production is never without effect on the content that is circulated. Journalism is never only about texts isolated from their social uses.[57] Cognitive schemas that value media innovations are not properties of these innovations themselves but are negotiated in social practice.

By broadening the scope of media as both technical artifact, cognitive schema and social relation, practice can highlight, how a shift in one dimension instantiates different patterns in the others. All three dimensions together constitute journalism as a form of practice. The difficulty, however, in understanding "media as practices" is that "media are *both* a production process with specific internal characteristics … *and* a source of taken-for-granted frameworks for understanding the reality they represent" (Couldry, 2003b: 653). Media are institutional actors and material artifacts involved in constituting a social practice. But the history of their social uses likewise functions as a cognitive framework for what can be communicated. For example, Michael Warner investigates the "cultural meaning of printedness" (1990: xi) in his study of eighteenth century print culture by relating forms of private and public writing to their different material supports. Warner argues that

> the cultural constitution of a medium (in this case printing) is a set of political conditions of discourse. Those conditions include the practices and structured labors that we call technology. But I shall suppose that the latter have no ontological privilege over and at no point can be distinguished from their political meaning; that the practices of technology, in other words, are always structured, and that their meaningful structure is the dimension of culture (Warner, 1990: 9f.).

This reminder of the importance of culture to offer meanings of new technologies brings back the social and material dimension of the journalistic text. Its material mode of production alone does not determine the way the text acquires meaning, is circulated or embedded in interactions. Nick Couldry writes "the structures of media production …

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57. John Carey argues in an early essay: "From the standpoint of the audience the techniques of journalism determine what the audience can think" (Carey, 1974; quoted in Bird, 2008: 93). Arguably such a determination seems problematic in view of the multiple meanings that audience research has recovered within and among audiences. But the statement is certainly true in that journalistic practices structure what audiences can think *about* and *how* news items are cognitively and narratively framed.

do not, of themselves, tell us anything about the uses to which media products are put in social life generally" (Couldry, 2004: 118). At the same time, a given material condition of media production needs to be culturally valued to become socially significant. Such a valuation involves cultural schemas that cognitively prefigure the content and its relevance in social interaction.

Historians of the book have pointed out that apart from the hermeneutic analysis of texts, material properties are important to consider the social significance of a text. Because popular texts were printed in many editions and formats, historians of the book urged to consider "the physical reality of books in creating their meaning" (Erickson, 2004: 98). Although the words of texts often remained the same, different editions addressed and constructed different audiences. As Roger Chartier argued, "a morphological analysis of the materiality of texts and a social and cultural analysis of readers and reading must necessarily be combined" (Chartier, 2004: 149).[58] Historians of the book shift from the text as a discrete semantic unit to the text's function in interactions based on material properties of different books. This concern for material properties extends to digital texts as well. As Lisa Gitelman argues, "[a] column of newsprint rendered as a PDF file and a Web page written in the first iteration of HTML are very different electronic documents. One is a digitized image, and the other a first-generation digital object, born digital" (Gitelman, 2006: 126). The seemingly immaterial hypertexts appear in a common digital format but this homogeneity does not imply that their social uses are equally homogenous. While the material dimension of cultural artifacts can serve as an indicator of different "media-oriented practices" of audiences (Couldry, 2004), the lack of such material properties of hypertexts constitutes a different analytical challenge. In a practice-based approach to media innovation the focus on "media as text" include primarily the social uses of the text as both cognitive unit and cultural artifact:

> [M]edia research must analyse media as practice, as an open-ended set of things people do in the world. The world is not a text but a vast weaving together of particular practices and resources, including practices of making and interpreting texts; reading the social world as if it were a text is deeply

58. For a genealogy of practices of reading in conjunction with material text forms see also (Chartier, 2001).

misguided (Couldry, 2012: 30).

As Couldry sums it up, a "practice approach decentres the media text" (36) by placing the text in the context of interaction and in the context of its own routines of production. This includes the study of historical media texts, which are usually only accessible as printed or digital documents. If the text, however, is not the unit of analysis but only an element within a wider practice of communication, the historic text can be read with regard to how it, too, enacts a structure called journalism.

Bringing together material, cognitive and social dimensions of journalistic practice offers a higher level of complexity to recover the cultural impact of new technologies than production-focused, text-focused, or audience-focused approaches. The benefit is that media change can be seen in its cultural embeddedness. Further, a practice-based method can focus on the enactment of a structure like journalism without having to explain (or cover) long-range effects. Through its attention on minute variations of a practice within a fairly narrow time period of change, practice-based approaches lend themselves rather to a case study format of inquiry then to long-term analysis of media change. As such, the approach to media change and the transformation of journalistic practices attempts a revision of "histories" of journalism which need to develop overarching themes out of the 'messiness' of their historical sources, and above all, out of the conflicting ways in which news media have been valued in journalism. However, each of the following case studies underlines that the specific circumstances of the emergence of individual practices *do* have long-term effects by stabilizing and innovating journalism as a structure of public communication. In a practice perspective, the emergence of the penny press in the 1830s, for example, can be located in an array of practices associated with printing ephemera rather than the field of journalism. Everyday usage of such cultural artifacts differed from the subscriber-based, home-delivered metropolitan dailies. In terms of pricing, paper format and printing practices, the penny press was a product of the printer's shop, not an editor's office. It started as another form of pamphlet that gradually took over journalistic functions by transposing

cultural schemas from other media and forms of usage. On the level of practice, the penny printers gradually introduced the concept of daily news to a general American audience.

2: From Correspondence to Topicality - Penny Papers in the 1830s

The penny press emerged as an innovative newspaper format in New York in the 1830s. Its primary audience were people not previously used to owning and reading a daily paper. Priced at one penny and offering a wide array of news and 'useful' information, the penny press is regarded by journalism scholars as the beginning of a modern press in the United States. The pennies were pitted against partisan and mercantile newspapers, which provided daily news for an elite readership of merchants, politicians and bankers. Placing greater emphasis on the topicality and usefulness of its news reports, the penny press helped to institutionalize journalism as a specific structure of public communication. Within a few years, several penny papers were founded in different cities on the East Cost, e.g. the *Public Ledger* in Philadelphia (1836) and *The Sun* in Baltimore (1837) apart from many similar papers such as the *New York Transcript* (1834), and Horace Greeley's *Tribune* (1841) in New York itself. The best known examples are *The Sun*, started by the job printer Benjamin Day in 1833, and *The Herald*, started in 1835 by the veteran journalist and ousted Jacksonian editor James Gordon Bennett.

This chapter will retrace how the penny press departed from the established printer-publisher model of newspaper production to become a market-oriented, daily medium of news for a general audience. By focusing on the well-documented rivalry between Benjamin Day and James Gordon Bennett, this transition can be retraced in the early issues of their papers, the *Sun* and the *Herald*.[59] The opposition between Day and Bennett beyond their personal dispute allows to regard the innovation of the penny press in structural terms, when the schema of topicality began to value journalistic practice, and the daily newspaper became an indispensable resource of information for

59. I omit Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* here because it was founded when the pennies were already firmly established in American journalism and because the *Tribune* in many respects remained a partisan paper for the 'laboring classes'. See Greeley's comment on the founding of the *Tribune* in 1841: "I had been incited to this enterprise by several Whig friends, who deemed a cheap daily, addressed more especially to the laboring class, eminently needed in our city" (quoted in Burns Robinson, 1937: 438). For more background, see (Parton, 1855: 191-93; Payne, 1925: 269-81; Tuchinsky, 2009).

audiences. Whereas Day was “one of the last of the old breed” of printer-publishers (Stevens, 1991: 19), Bennett not only paid for the typesetting of his paper[60] but had a track record as a controversial partisan journalist before starting the *Herald*. Day’s *Sun* was in many respects the product of a printer’s workshop, not an editor’s office. His innovation was at first to use the format of a newspaper as an advertisement for his business, which indadvertedly had effects in the field of daily journalism. In the words of *The Sun*’s chronicler, Frank O’Brien in 1928, “Bennett may have written the constitution of popular journalism, but it was Day who wrote its declaration of independence” (O'Brien, 1928: 83). However, since Day sold *The Sun* after only four years and the *Herald* merged with the *Sun* in 1920, the history of these newspapers is clearly in favor of Bennett, who founded a family dynasty of editors in American journalism (Seitz, 1928).

Bennett’s legacy in American journalism has inspired many biographic studies - from Issac Pray (1855), to Don C. Seitz (1928) and Oliver Carlson (1942) - but only Douglas Fermer (1986) and James L. Crouthamel (1989) attempt to relate Bennett to general trends in American society and journalism. The earlier studies often show a tendency to introduce Bennett based on either personal experience, e.g. Pray who was an editor at the *Herald*, or frame their narrative from the perspective of the *Herald’s* accomplished success.[61] Valuing judgments on Bennett thus have to be handled cautiously. A similar caution has to be applied to early histories of journalism, like Frederic Hudson’s widely quoted *Journalism in the United States, 1690-1872*, originally published in 1873. Although Hudson offers a plethora of anecdotes and details he also contributes to an all too open glorification of Bennett as the model of independent

60. Bennett commissioned Anderson & Smith for typesetting and printing the first issues of *The Herald* in May 1835 (Carlson 121f.). See also Crouthamel’s observation: “[Bennett] had never set type or operated a press, which distinguished him from most of the printer-editors who established the penny press” (1989: 18).

61. Contrary to John D. Stevens’ assessment that journalism history has largely ignored the popular papers (1991: vii), there is hardly a history of American journalism which does not accord a special significance to the penny press as the first modern papers (see Mott, 1962; Bleyer, 1973; Lee, 1973; Kobre, 1969).

journalism.[62]

If the emergence of the penny papers marks a shift in journalistic practice, a biographical focus on prominent editors is not enough to explain their innovative thrust. Neither is a detailed enumeration of news items of the newspapers' first issues helpful (as in O'Brien, 1928 or Carlson, 1942) to assess the cultural impact of a daily news medium. The penny papers changed the status and value of daily news for a general audience by marketing their medium as an indispensable daily resource to readers formerly not used to owning a private paper. Apart from lowering their price to one cent, the penny editors combined journalistic and non-journalistic practices from different fields of cultural production into a new structure of public communication, which is regarded today as the beginning of modern journalism in the United States.

In his ground-breaking study *Discovering the News*, Michael Schudson argued that the revolution of the penny papers consisted in widening the audience for daily news by reporting "not just commerce and politics but social life" (1978: 22). In the wake of the emergence of a "democratic market society" (57f.), the penny press "created news as a marketable product" with a special focus on the topicality of what was reported (26). The penny papers changed the definition of what counted as news in the 1830s by increasing the ratio of local news on their pages and by placing "greater emphasis on sensational news" to differentiate their style from the established mercantile and partisan papers (Mott, 1962: 243). The success of the penny papers relied, according to James L. Crouthamel, on their emphasis on local news and their focus on "news as a commodity" traded on a public market (1989: 24).

This conventional narrative on the beginnings of modern American journalism can be found in varying shades in most studies of the subject, contributing to a venerable "mythology of the penny press," as historian John Nerone titled his fervent critique of the field (1987). Nerone criticizes the "heroic narrative" of the pennies, and its three core assumptions: the pennies increased circulation by lowering their price and by

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62. Frederic Hudson also served as editor of *The Herald*. His *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872* was already criticized by contemporaries at the time of its publication for "inaccuracy" and "slovenly writing" as well as an "overemphasis on the *Herald* as the exemplar of contemporary journalism" (Thorn, 1988: 100-01).

offering more sensational stories; their revenue base in sales made them politically independent; and they started professionalizing journalistic practice by employing reporters expressly for collecting topical news. The mythology of the penny press assumes that "the rise of the penny press constituted the liberation of market forces and the triumph of democracy in the press" (382). Irrespective of their historical significance, the penny papers continue to feed "a myth of origins" in American journalism, Nerone argued, and were often invoked to "legitimize contemporary U.S. newspapers" (399). Because scholars instrumentalized the penny press, they failed to limit the competition between mercantile and penny papers in the 1830s to a particular environment of business expansion, immigration and urbanization in New York at that time and drew premature conclusions for the rest of the press in other parts of the country. But Nerone asserts that the "news practices of penny papers" *did not* in any significant way "signal a revolution in American newspaper content" (393). The penny papers were rather "a mutation in one class or species of newspapers;" they were a new kind of *daily* paper (377) apart from the myriad other paper formats that were published in varying intervals in the 1830s.

In a reply to Nerone, Michael Schudson defends that "some individuals and institutions loom larger than others in their long-term influence," which justifies their paradigmatic position in journalism discourse. He proposes to regard "the newspaper as a text and a cultural form," where news as a textual genre "has to be read on its own terms, has to be understood as a social and linguistic construction operating according to its own rules, in dialogue not only with the 'real world' but with literary conventions and traditions" (1987: 407). While Nerone argues for more attention to specific local settings, Schudson emphasizes that certain papers and certain editors were in fact more influential on the development of news as a "textual genre" - a form of information which developed its own, narrative conventions independent of reflecting "real" events.

The practice-based approach offered here is an attempt to reconcile these two positions. Departing from Julie Williams' caution that the pennies "tended to adopt tried and true journalistic forms" (Williams, 1993: 2) the emergence of the pennies will here

be presented as the transposition of already established journalistic practices into a new structure of public communication. The penny papers emerged along the East Coast and owed much of their prominence to the competitive newspaper market in New York. The number of daily newspapers in the state of New York remained significantly higher throughout the century than in any other state (Lee, 1973: See appendix table VII: 715-17).[63] In the period between 1790 and 1820 the number of newspapers published in the United States rose from about a hundred to almost 600, while the population grew by "only" thirty percent in each decade, the growth in the variety and number of newspapers was disproportionally higher (Pasley, 2001: 403-05; Carter et al., 2006: Table 1-26). Competition of news media can account for the higher differentiation of such media in locales like New York but such an approach cannot explain the cultural valuation of a newspaper as a daily resource for audiences. Material and technological improvements of printing technologies, such as stereotyping, steam-driven presses or rotary printing, are equally weak to explain the sudden surge in newspaper readership. Improved printing presses certainly increased the *amount* of papers but technology itself does not explain the increasing *demand* for such news products and changing reading habits, even if immigrants significantly broadened the potential audience.[64]

Likewise, the pennies' departure from an elite readership of mercantile dailies is a simplified opposition of two models of newspaper publishing, which ignores the general plurality of news media at the time.[65] The practice of publishing daily news in the pennies included material, cognitive *and* social dimensions, none of which can assume to constitute a decisive innovation independent of the others. The penny press built a

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63. The penny papers initiated a phase where "printing and publishing was the fastest-growing industry in the city" which later attracted many writers like Walt Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe or Margaret Fuller to journalism (Bender, 1987: 156-57). See also the chapter "Manhattan Ink" (Burrows and Wallace, 1999: 674-90) for a detailed overview of publishing trades and formats in the 1840s and '50s.

64. The total population in 1820 was 9.6 million. In 1830, the population was almost 13 million, in 1840 it had reached 17 million ("Measuring America", 2002).

65. Huntzicker provides an overview of the different forms of "popular press" periodicals, which competed for public attention in the 1830s and '40s (Huntzicker, 1999: 53-71). The oft-quoted opposition between the pennies and the "broadside" mercantile press seems to derive in no small measure from the self-confident rhetoric of the *Herald*, which did not tire to perpetuate the "difference between the old and new dynasty of the press." (See "The Ten Dollar Newspaper Press." *The Herald* 16 Dec. 1835: 2.)

structure of communication that rested equally on innovating the material support for news, the textual structures and graphic conventions of news and the postulation of topicality and usefulness to audiences. The pennies innovated an existing model of a daily paper, which became a private resource of information ready at hand for quick reference and paid for at the moment of purchase.

The penny papers emerged at the end of a period when printed media containing news and entertainment, religious and moral embellishments were already reaching into the daily lives of citizens on many levels.[66] Readers had many publications to choose from and quickly deserted one for another (Leonard, 1995: 36-44), often without giving notice to editors. The penny press established a structure of public communication that ended the notoriously dire conditions of printers of newspapers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, principally by offering news and entertainment as a commodity geared towards quickly changing audience preferences. The practice of publishing a daily newspaper began to involve creating "circulation" beyond the number of copies. The penny press addressed and educated its audience, it offered a schema of topicality in which news could be accommodated as something that changed every day but that *changed within predictable dimensions*.

In order to present the changing journalistic practice introduced by the penny papers in a wider cultural context, this chapter will focus on four structural aspects in which the pennies were especially innovative. The first part will characterize the old model of publishing newspapers which suffered from unpaid subscriptions and relied overtly on secondary news sources like correspondents. The penny papers approached the function of news from the perspective of its "usefulness" for audiences, turning the newspaper into daily personal resource for entertainment and information. The second part will focus on the presentation of news in its relation to printing technologies and graphic conventions of printed ephemera. The penny papers emphasized greater graphic

66. David Nord argues that the vision of modern mass media was first introduced by the New England Tract Society, which wanted to "deliver the same printed message to *everyone* in America" (2). For this end, the evangelical societies pioneered the use of stereotyping and steam presses, improved paper making and established distribution networks for their tracts, bibles and almanacs. In order to promote the acceptance of their publications, fundraising helped to cover the production costs and reduced the price to 1 cent for a tract of ten pages (Nord, 1984; see also Nord, 2004).

differentiation of news items and appropriated many graphic conventions of other print media. In the penny press, such graphic conventions started to become cognitive schemas, which structured the content of news articles and information, marking a transition from the *space frame* of news of the mercantile dailies, to a *time frame* of news. The third part highlights how this transition towards topicality effected the structure of news stories themselves. The serialized news story, either as scientific hoax or as murder mystery with topical relevance, became a structuring schema for the penny press underlining that the newspaper contributed to a 'continuity effect' in a quickly changing environment. Especially the *Herald* used the continuity of its reporting also as an advertisement for itself. The 'schema of topicality' also provides the cultural valuation, which prepared the ground for the telegraph as a single technology that changed news gathering. Instead of relating the telegraph's quick adoption to its technical capability, its role for news gathering will again be placed in the context of the pennies' greater emphasis on topicality and the established practices of transporting news quickly by boats and express couriers. The close connection of the daily production cycle of the paper to its changing function as a topical news medium is regarded throughout as the most consequential innovation of the penny papers in journalistic practice of the time.

The Unacknowledged *Usefulness* of a Daily News Medium

The emphasis on audiences as an integral part of journalism as a structure of public communication is nowhere more apparent than in antebellum American newspaper, because readers were important as subscribers *and as a main source of news*. But while readers in the 1820s and '30s thrived in their role as correspondents and letter writers, they failed in their role as subscribers. Both of these trends are intertwined and they hold a lesson for assessing the cultural impact of the penny papers, which ended the perennially precarious economic conditions of printers and publishers of news in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

A peculiar feature of newspaper publishing in the United States has been its strong

local footing, which prompted Alexis de Tocqueville to observe in 1836 that there is "scarcely a hamlet which has not its own newspaper" (2002: 214). Such a local footing was in part due to the gradual expansion of settlements towards the West, which made post offices central links to the rest of the nation and "paradigmatic sites of public life" (Henkin, 2006: 64).[67] In the Colonial Era and Early Republic, the postmaster often served as publisher of the local paper (Moore, 1968: 22; Kielbowicz, 1989: 142f.) since he was in a privileged position to circulate gossip as well as notifying residents of newly arrived mail through a public note in the paper. According to Paul Starr, the promotion and subsidy of the postal network simplified exchanges of papers and established the "first national news network" after 1792 (2004: 89). The indirect government subsidy of newspaper circulation through extremely low rates, made cheap print a "public policy in America" (ibid., 125).[68] In his study of the postal system and the press, Kielbowicz emphasizes that "the post office and press *together* constituted the most important mechanism for the dissemination of public information" before the Civil War (1989: 2).

Free exchanges of papers between editors further enhanced the spread of information from the centers of publishing to the frontier towns of the West (ibid., 142-51). For settlers in the West, sending newspapers back to their home communities proved that a family member had made it to a desired spot and maintained a tie (although symbolic and mediated) to other parts of the country (Zboray, 1993: 110-15). Reading the same articles, novels or magazines "could be one of the few experiences correspondents shared" when they were physically far apart. Especially newspapers were a cheap and welcome item to send to family members and friends (ibid., 119).[69] Driven by increasing internal migration in the 1830s and '40s, the world of print became a "surrogate for community on a national scale" (ibid., 121). The volume of

67. On the impact of the postal system on social relations see Richard John's extensive study *Spreading the News* (1998).

68. The 1833 edition of the *American Almanac* notes the following postage rates: While a single letter was charged at 6 cents for a distance of up to 30 miles, a newspaper shipping cost only 1 cent for a distance of up to 100 miles. Even distances of over 100 miles cost only 1.5 cents, compared to a single sheet of paper at 12.5 cents for the same distance ("American Almanac", 1832: 147).

69. Because sending papers was cheaper than sending letters, readers found multiple ways to put personal notes on margins and convert printed material into a resource of personal communication, despite the watchful eye of postmasters to prohibit such illicit appropriations (cf. Leonard, 1995: 12-19, 119-24; Zboray and Zboray, 2006: 79-85; Henkin, 2006: 15-62).

mail transported through the postal system rose significantly between 1800 and 1840 from two million to about 40 million, both for letters and newspapers (John, 1998: 4). Rural papers increased the amount of news on more varied subjects which put even remote dwellings in touch with the cities and centers of commerce and power (Marshall, 2007).

In order to tap into the constant flow of private news from remote locations, a printer would issue a prospectus for a new newspaper to the members of the community. Designed as an appeal to sign subscriptions of the paper, editors also asked their readers to provide either personal correspondences or papers from other locations. Private correspondence thus became a principal source of news.[70] In the prospectus of 1782 for his *Massachusetts Spy*, Isaiah Thomas "humbly" asks the assistance of Boston residents to provide him with correspondence in the form of newspapers:

> The Editor craves the assistance of such Gentlemen in Boston, and elsewhere, who may have from time to time European or West-India News-papers fall into their hands, or those which are published by the enemy on this continent, and begs that (after they have perused such papers themselves) they would be so very obliging as to forward them to him, that he may collect from such intelligence as will be interesting to the publick [sic], or entertaining to his readers; after which, if desired, they will be returned to their owners. (Thomas, 1782).

By responding to such prospectuses either through mail, by subscribing to the paper or by writing letters, local communities of readers actively engaged in interaction with a paper. In this sense, (reader) *response* stayed close to its etymological root of "to promise ... , offer or present in return" (Klein, 1971: 632). Articles from other papers were often clipped and reprinted, often without attributing the source. The "culture of reprinting" (McGill, 2003) was a source of intense debate and inspiration, both in journalism and literature at the time. Such a procedure was not considered a "crime, or even a misdemeanor: it was expected." An editor would use "paste pot and shears … unsparingly on books, newspapers, pamphlets, or magazines in his quest for

70. Since newspapers were often the only local source of information in the eighteenth century, papers mixed a variety of news and information on their pages: anything from advertising new goods to private correspondence and foreign intelligence found its way to the page. Bernard Faÿ argues that "Americans had acquired the habit of announcing everything in the newspapers, and of searching them for information of all kinds [...]. The local function of the newspapers guaranteed their original development and assured their stability" (1927: 21-29).

material" (Carlson: 45).[71] Due to their strong reliance on readers for new material, local papers remained tied to a limited sphere of influence and reach. Even if letters helped to obtain news from remote regions, newspapers reached few readers outside their place of publication. In Washington Irving's novel *Rip van Winkle* the scene of reading 'old' news is described, "when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller." Listening to the schoolmaster reading to them "they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place" (Irving, 1974: 28f.).

Michael Warner has cautioned to confuse ways of publishing correspondence with assumptions about its public or private meaning for audiences. In his study of eighteenth-century print culture in America, Warner asks what it meant to "identify printing *as* publishing" (8) in a period, when handwritten correspondence or oral lectures were transformed into public documents through the print medium (1990: 5-10). A printed document, such as a speech or a newspaper, could remain in circulation among a fairly limited number of readers. In these circles, printed documents were not necessarily identified as public, but retained a character of a privileged form of social exchange.[72] However, printing itself was associated with crossing a threshold from an inner to an outer circle of readers. In their study of amateur writers in the nineteenth century, Ronald and Mary Zboray argue that antebellum readers and writers were "deliberately avoiding print because it produced errors, corrupted authorial intentions, and froze a text in time." Instead, these "social authors" addressed their works to "networks of known readers who as collaborators commented upon and amended writings" (Zboray and Zboray, 2005: xv).[73] With the proliferation of newspapers, the public printing of private correspondences became more common. Because news

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71. Similarly, Pasley underlines that the "practice" of reprinting articles helped to quickly inform readers about events in Washington and effectively build party bases through partisan newspapers: "Early American newspapers relied far to heavily on reprints for the practice to be seriously regulated or curtailed, and in the heat of a political controversy or campaign, correct attribution of a newspaper item was obviously less important than the rapid spread of the ideas or information it contained" (Pasley, 2001: 9).

72. Compare (Williams, 1999) for an insightful review of the different functions of printed and spoken words in colonial America, especially with regard to newspapers (112-22).

73. Cf. (Hall, 2008: 48-54) on the origins of the dichotomy and significance of private vs. public texts as linked to their mode of production (handwritten vs. printed) and the "stigma of print" (50) among seventeenth-century New England writers.

travelled slowly by unreliable messengers and ships, printers relied on reproducing in print, what others had already commissioned for publication.

The practice of reprinting and close ties to a community of correspondents had a serious downside: readers were reluctant to pay for their publications and sustain the printer's business. Printed news in the eighteenth century had been identified with imported foreign correspondence. This perception lingered on as "local news could be had through hearsay faster than the weekly newspaper could print it." The printing trade in rural America classified "the spoken with the local and the printed with the exotic" (Warner, 1990: 17). News, as an original and topical information about the social environment, remained "an unsought-for by-product" (Carlson: 63) of printing papers. The greatest commercial threat to the news business in the early nineteenth century were unpaid subscriptions and newspaper borrowing. The weekly *Haverhill Gazette and Essex Patriot* from Massachusetts advised its readers "never to lend newspapers." The dilemma of newspaper publishers at the time, however, is found on the front page. In its terms of service, the *Gazette* states that "*no paper [is] discontinued* till all arrearages are paid."[74] Although such a policy seems at best odd from today's perspective, eighteenth and early nineteenth century newspapers preferred to have "deadbeat readers" to having no readers at all. "Publishers were force feeders," writes Thomas Leonard in *News for All* (1996), who were unwilling to let defaulting subscribers go. Readers disagreeing with arguments presented in their paper were quick to jump at the occasion and cancel subscriptions by vehemently demanding, in person or by letter, to "stop my paper." But as long as accounts remained unsettled, publishers continued delivery not to give up on the faint chance that customers might, after all, pay their dues one day. Leonard summarizes this curious situation quite aptly: "Readers pretended to be subscribers, and publishers pretended they had paying customers" (1995: 44).

Arrears in subscriptions were the "the grand malady" of newspaper publishing in 1823. Subscribers seemed to believe that "printers live upon old newspapers, and fatten

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74. "Newspaper Borrowers." *Haverhill Gazette & Essex Patriot* 10 May 1823: 3; 1, emphasis added.

upon type metal, and that a little pure cash will jeopardize their constitutions."[75] The *Baltimore Patriot* in 1823 urged fellow printers to publish "a list of borrowers of newspapers, who never contribute any thing to the support of the publishers."[76] The weekly *New Bedford Mercury* complained that newspaper borrowing had become a deplorable but "fashionable practice." Even if individual subscribers ordered papers for their "own convenience," the paper quickly started to serve the "whole neighborhood" - at the expense of the subscriber.[77] But despite the frequent complaints about defaulting subscribers, the cash problem continued well into the 1830s. Notes on trials against newspaper thieves appeared frequently in newspapers, and were readily reprinted farther afield. In a mixture of humorous anecdote and didactic instruction, an example from the *Boston Statesman* ridicules a thief's "desire to learn the current news of the morning" as being topped only by "a very ardent desire to procure a glass of gin bitters" from his victim. Similar educational asides appeared as late as 1836, as in a fictive dialogue which appeared as a space filler in the *Daily Cleveland Herald*:

> No man who loves his family fails *to take a newspaper*, says a contemporary.
> Very true, and no man who loves his character, fails *to pay for it.*[78]

A front-page article from the *Pittsfield Sun* lets a newspaper tell of its rugged life. With the intention to serve all its readers as a valuable source of information, the newspaper often met villainous disrespect, of which borrowing seemed to be the severest misdemeanor:

> Yes, gentlemen, you cannot do without me; you must take me, good, bad, or indifferent: I am a friend to you all, except the villain 'borrowers,' and reading thieves, that go to the barber shops & taverns to get a squint at me.[79]

Another commentator adds that the American publisher "is as much to blame" for continuing deliveries at his own expense. The entire business of publishing periodicals needed a "reform in the pecuniary system." Although Americans "boast of the freedom

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75. *Village Register and Norfolk County Advertiser* 7 Mar. 1823: 1. A printer-publisher from New York remarks in 1833: "[M]en who think printers can live on air, deserve themselves to live on skunk cabbage tea, flavored with assafoetida [strong variant of fennel]." *Daily National Intelligencer* 30 Apr. 1833: 3.

76. *Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser* 28 Mar. 1823: 2.

77. *New-Bedford Mercury* 4 July 1828: 2.

78. *Daily Cleveland Herald* 8 June 1836: 2, original emphasis.

79. "Adventures of a Newspaper." *The Pittsfield Sun* 23 Dec. 1830: 1.

of the press" the current system suffered from "meagre support from the majority of its votaries" (Light, 1835: 382). These didactic insertions suggest that newspaper editors tried to educate their readers in proper manners of paying for subscriptions. Often enough, the format of a letter to the editor served as a discursive frame to instruct readers on the inadvertent effects of their misbehavior. In another example from the *New York Spectator*, a letter writer complains about customers loitering in his shop for the sole purpose of snatching the newly arrived paper from his desk:

> Now, I am very willing, as no one else in the immediate neighborhood takes your paper, that these gentlemen should read it–but let them have the politeness to wait until I have read it myself.[80]

The letter is signed "Ten Dollars Per Annum", a usual rate of a mercantile paper. While the text appears as a reprint from the *Commercial Advertiser*, the reference to the commodity price turns this supposed complaint about newspaper thieves into an advertisement for the much cheaper *Spectator.* Both papers were published by Francis Hall, who here uses the letter as a form of audience interaction to promote private reading. The lower price of the *Spectator* is advertised indirectly as a way to avoid the obnoxious common practice of newspaper borrowing.

One strategy to convince and educate audiences of the benefits of owning a private paper was to underline the 'usefulness' of a paper in every day life. A "good newspaper," argues an article in the *New Hampshire Gazette* in 1833 is "an impartial record, an abstract of the times, a vast fund of useful knowledge" which also acts as a leveling force in social life: "In its diversified pages, persons of every rank, denomination and pursuit, can be informed."[81] Key to such an appeal to a general audience was a mix of information, that the *Baltimore Patriot* likened to "a variety of dishes suited to the different tastes and appetites of those who sit down at the entertainment." In this array of "dishes," "politics are beefsteaks," "poetry is custard"

80. *New York Spectator* 7 Sep. 1827: 2.

81. "The Newspaper." *New-Hampshire Gazette* 9 July 1833: 4. See also a similar article which argues that the newspaper bridges the gap in knowledge between the "scholar" and the "working man," putting the latter "on nearly an equal footing in point of useful knowledge." ("Newspaper Reading." *Virginia Free Press* 7 Mar. 1833: 1.)

and "ship news is a glass of grog at eleven."[82] Reading in the comfort of the home placed subscribers of newspapers in a privileged position to observe world affairs:

> Seated in your old fashioned arm chair, you can look out upon the world as upon a mirror, and observe its busy scene, passing in ever changing review before your mind's eye. A newspaper, friend, is the *camera obscura* that brings the objects abroad within the narrow compass of vision. Here is a fine medley for your amusement.[83]

Relating homemade foods to a mix of subjects, consumed in the familiar environment of the reading parlor, signals a value of newspaper reading which underlines the modern newspaper as a catch-all medium. Moreover, the increasing promotion of private reading in the home begins to signal the waning of public places like taverns, squares and post-offices as privileged sites of public communication and exchange of news in the later half of the 1830s.

The appeal to a general audience also entailed that a newspaper's content needed to be leveled at a general reader. This effect of audience appeal is probably most tangible in discussions on popularity, entertainment, and education in papers of the 1820 and '30s. An article in the *Norwich Courier* (Connecticut) in 1828, cautioned that a paper should not be "too good," "too amusing" or "too interesting," because going into too much detail in any particular article entailed the danger of deterring readers who were interested in general information. The newspaper should "preserve a proper medium" between different interests of its readers to "become useful, instructive, interesting, and entertaining."[84] As newspaper editors sought to promote a daily news medium to readers, they counted on the habitualizing affect of reading itself. In 1828, an article from the *National Philantropist* (reprinted in *Connecticut Mirror)* wondered why readers were less willing to cut back on expenses for wine or tobacco than on spending money for newspapers. The authors characterized the paper as "the best economist of time and the aptest instructor of the mind." A newspaper was especially worthwhile for

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82. "A Newspaper." *Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser* 2 Oct. 1823:2.

83. "Newspaper Reading." *Norwich Courier* 15 Apr. 1829: 4.

84. *Norwich Courier* 14 May 1828: 4. An article in *Atkinson's Casket* in 1834, warns of the consequences of popularizing the arts and sciences, which conflates the cultural hierarchies between sentiment and knowledge: "Astronomy comes before us, clothed in the garb of romance; and History looks so gay with all her embellishments, that we hand out our pennies for her with rapture" ("Notes on Periodicals" 1834: 410).

educating children, who "will acquire the *habit* of reading and a degree of intelligence worth the price of subscription ten times told."[85] Teaching audiences to acquire the habit of reading a daily paper was regarded as a key to forge a sustainable relation between newspaper editors and their readers. Usefulness and a broad range of subjects were central schemas used to raise appreciation among audiences for the benefit of having a private paper.

The penny papers can be seen as a reaction to these structural problems that plagued printer-publishers of newspapers. The pennies furnished an appeal to a general audience through their 'usefulness', a moderate price, a politically independent ethos and a novel distribution scheme. Taken together, these innovations changed journalism from its modest beginnings into a profitable business and powerful structure of public communication. Necessarily, the innovation also broke with dominant cultural hierarchies, represented by the augurs of mercantile[86] and partisan publishing.

Issuing a partisan newspaper was a way to circumvent the unreliable patronage of readers and find a steady income from party subsidies. Distributing the paper through the postal system, helped to "link … parties and the voter" across great distances (Pasley, 2001: 7; also Silver, 1967: 66-70). By giving extensive space to legal documents, new bills and speeches of party officials and business men, the mercantile and partisan dailies catered to an elite audience of public figures. In the words of Willard Bleyer, partisan publishers of newspapers "edited their journals for the classes and not for the masses" (1973: 135). Journalists would often collaborate with politicians to properly transpose oral speeches to print (Leonard, 1986: 63-96). The newspaper served its readers as a means to maintain ties along party lines and business interests. Their price in the range of 4 to 6 cents per issue (or $10 to $12 per annum) also effectively limited the readership to an affluent few. The mercantile paper, or

85. *Connecticut Mirror* 23 June 1828: 2, emphasis added.

86. Mercantile newspapers go back to the *corantos* published by Dutch printers in the sixteenth century in Europe (Steinberg, 1959: 168f.) and first published regularly in English starting around 1621 in London (Hart, 1970: 16-35). They served the information needs of an elite readership of traders and businessmen by publishing columns of advertisements for a wide array of goods and services.

sixpennies, did not actively seek to expand the base of their readership but regarded the limited number of readers as a sign of prestige.

Because the penny papers claimed "independence" from such party or government subsidies, their emergence has been interpreted as the beginning of a new age in journalism. Frank Luther Mott's seminal history of American journalism described the era before the penny press as "the dark ages of partisan journalism" (1962: 167-80), although partisan journalism persisted till the twentieth century (McGerr, 1986; Sheppard, 2008).[87] James Gordon Bennett, editor of the *Herald*, had served these circles as a printing assistant in Boston for Wells & Lilly and as a journalist for Aaron Smith Willington's *Charleston Daily Courier* in South Carolina in 1823. But despite his avowed allegiance to Andrew Jackson, party officials like Jesse Hoyt and Martin van Buren did not want to employ Bennett for his caustic commentaries on financial policy (Hudson 411-5). After founding the *Herald* in 1835, Bennett excelled in the role of an ousted party editor, who could adopt the motto "vote against Van Buren - and kick all politicians and parsons to the devil."[88] In a public announcement for the reissue of the *Herald*, Bennett professes to employ "good, sound, practical common sense" in his journalism and abhor party allegiance.[89] The *Sun*, which had been started in 1833, also based its claim to independence on its lack of party affiliation: "We began an independent course, and nothing shall deter us therefrom. With TRUTH for our motto we alike disregard the libel suits of the house-breaker and the money of the office-seeker."[90]

The schema of independence based on revenue from news consumers had been established by the London *Penny Magazine*, which was first published in 1832 by the

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87. For a summary of the competing visions on the role or government and the individual between Whig and Democrat newspapers during the Jacksonian Era, see (Kohl, 1989). (Huntzicker, 1999: 35-51) and (Burns Robinson, 1937) offer further background on the intimate relations of printers to parties and the subsidy system.

88. "Motto of the Herald." *Morning Herald* 25 Sep. 1837: 2.

89. *The Morning Herald* 6 May 1835: 2.

90. "Ourselves." *The Sun* 31 Mar. 1834: 2+.

Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.[91] The circulation of the *Penny Magazine* was at 200,000 issues, which was quite a remarkable number even for the more advanced market in Britain at the time. The magazine was dedicated to instruction and education, using illustrations apart from text frequently to foster its mission (Anderson, 1987). The *Penny Magazine* wanted to "prepare an useful and entertaining Weekly Magazine, that may be taken up and laid down without requiring any considerable effort (…)." By appealing to readers through a mix of instructive subjects, short articles, and a moderate price, the *Penny Magazine* turned its success on the market into a claim of its independence from political influence.

> This Work has no exclusive privileges, and can have no exclusive privileges. *It stands upon the commercial principle alone*; and if its sale did not pay its expenses ... it would not stand at all.[92]

The connection between a versatile mix of subjects geared toward a general audience sustained the claim of independence from party interests on the basis of the 'commercial principle'. The penny press followed this model. The first issue of *The Sun* appeared on September 3, 1833 and it bore the oft-quoted, programmatic motto:

> The object of this paper is to lay before the public, at a price within the means of every one, ALL THE NEWS OF THE DAY, and at the same time afford an advantageous medium for advertising.

All the central elements of a modern, commercial daily paper, seem to be included here: a general public, an affordable price, and a 'medium for advertising'. To attract advertising customers, Day even copied advertising from mercantile papers and published them for free, e.g. ferry announcements, to give the impression of economic success to his new venture.[93] *The Sun* promoted the habit to "read thy newspaper punctually" to its audience and praised the mix of news, entertainment and advertising presented on its pages.[94] Two months after its first issue, *The Sun* claimed that "the

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91. American magazines directly modeled on the British *Penny Magazine* include the *People's Magazine of Useful Information* (Boston, 1833) and the *Family Magazine, or General Abstract of Useful Knowledge* (New York, 1833).

92. "Reading for All." *Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* 1.1 (1832): 1; 4, original emphasis)

93. "Mr. Day procured a copy of the *Courier and Enquirer,* scissored out the news of the morning, and put it in type himself" ("Pioneer in Journalism" 1889).

94. "A Newspaper." *The Sun* 27 Jan. 1834: 4.

penny press, by diffusing useful knowledge among the operative classes of society, is effecting the march of independence to a greater degree than any other mode of instruction.'[95] Likewise, Bennett professed a year later that his paper would be "just, independent, fearless, and good tempered" and was intended for "masses of the community–the merchant, mechanic, working people–... the clerk and his principal" (*Prospectus* quoted in Carlson: 125). Similar to other penny editors, Bennett emphasized usefulness as a main argument for his paper. This applied to its content but also to the paper format, which was much smaller than in the mercantile dailies. Bennett claims

> there is not a person in this city, male or female, that may not be able to say–"well I have got a paper of my own which will tell me all about what's doing in the world–I'm busy now–but I'll put it into my pocket and read it at my leisure.'[96]

Apart from its usefulness, the penny papers promoted private ownership of a paper that enabled audiences to become independent of public news rooms or taverns. Or, as an anecdote from the *Ladies' Companion* of 1834, notes: "No man is ever satisfied ... with another man's reading a newspaper to him; but the moment it is laid down, he takes it up, and reads it over again" ("Chit-Chat"). In the first issue of the *Public Ledger* from Philadelphia, a penny paper founded in 1836, the prospectus conjoins "usefulness" and "cheapness" as arguments to target workers as readers, while simultaneously seeking the patronage of merchants and artisans as advertisers:

> [The penny paper's] cheapness places it within the reach of the very poorest; for every laborer ... can daily obtain ... the mental luxury of a newspaper; a source of *rational amusement* and *useful instruction in the intervals of toil*, or when the toil has ended. […] [W]e shall endeavor to furnish to the merchant and manufacturer the earliest and most useful information relating to their respective interests. We therefore hope to receive a liberal support from the mercantile and manufacturing community.[97]

A cheap price was the condition to reach a general audience that would take up the habit of reading a daily paper. This new audience for news was also the principal target for advertisers expanding from the limited spheres of mercantile advertisements into a much broader consumer market. In this sense, Bennett's enthusiasm about cheapness

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95. Quoted in (Huntzicker, 1999: 2). Appeared originally on 9 Nov. 1833.

96. *The Morning Herald* 6 May 1835: 2.

97. "To the Public." *Public Ledger* 25 Mar. 1836: 2, emphases added.

must be understood as both an advertisement to his readers and his advertisers: cheapness becomes a key to exert power by exploiting popular interest in news and entertainment.

> Cheapness is, after all, one of the most important elements of influence, profit, popularity, and power, in the dissemination of news, literature, and general information. Cheapness is the seed of light and civilization - the corner stone of republicanism - the essence of comfort and happiness - in fact, cheapness is everything.[98]

The low price of the daily penny papers in New York broadened their readership and violated the established cultural hierarchies of mercantile and partisan newspapers and their subscribers. When Benjamin Day issued the *Sun* in 1833, he tapped into a market which had been totally neglected by conservative publishers. He sold his product through street vendors near Chatham Street market, where most items cost just one penny (Blondheim, 1994: 21f.; Goodman, 2008: 25f.). The employment of newsboys to bring papers into circulation on the streets broke with the cultural schema of news consumption in private reading parlors or in crowded public places like taverns and post-offices. The distribution by newsboys was a novel way to bring the news out to the public and simultaneously advertise the paper on the street. Shouting headlines and newly reported curiosities in the streets, the newsboys also "supplied an important oral dimension to the dissemination of news in the city" (Henkin, 1998: 111), marking an ironic conversion of printed news now being heard and read at the same time.

Newsboys were certainly at the lowest end of the social hierarchy, earning their daily pay through a revenue scheme known as the London plan established by the already quoted *Penny Magazine*. Publishers sold bundles of 100 papers directly to street vendors for 67 cents. The remaining revenue was the income for the newsboys.[99] Newsboys initially sold papers only on the street but as subscriptions increased, they would also serve as regular carriers to subscribers, who paid a week's dues on Saturday's (Burrows and Wallace, 1999: 523). Because regular deliveries, apart from spontaneous street sales, would soon achieve a certain stability the penny papers

98. *The Morning Herald* 26 Apr. 1839: 2.

99. The *Herald* offered one hundred papers for 50 cents in its first year, probably also to woo carriers away from other papers (See "Notice to News Carriers and Boys." *Herald* 10 Sep. 1835: 2.).

continued to refer to their readers as "subscribers".

Contemporary reactions to the newsboys are overtly negative and derogatory, which underlines their disruptive effect on the discretionary model of newspaper subscriptions featured by the elite dailies. In a diary entry from 1836, former New York mayor Philip Hone remarks on the *Herald* being "hawked about the streets by a gang of troublesome, ragged boys" (1936: 195).[100] Among the elite trade and partisan dailies close ties to advertising customers, subscribers, and party sponsors were a prerequisite for economic success so that "any editor so brash as to have his paper hawked in the streets like fresh greens, would have been disowned by the newspaper fraternity and his subscribers alike" (Carlson, 1942: 63). The disruptive effect of the newsboys on the informational network of partisan or mercantile papers with their readers is illustrated in a satire on "How to sell Newspapers," reported in *Atkinson's Casket* in 1834. An enterprising newsboy is reported selling an identical penny paper to a Whig, a Jacksonian and a neutral reader, exploiting each customer's political conviction for his own profit and exhibiting "a seven year old lad's dexterity in doing business" ("How to Sell a Newspaper", 1834: 574.)

The newsboys would find their way into popular culture, as in the stories of Horatio Alger and appearances of newsboys in classic Hollywood movies, as emblems of survival and wit in an urban jungle. In a novel from 1854, the uncivilized appearance of the newsboy prompts a genteel female observer to romanticize over the boy's "ragged habiliments" which "were right royal robes over his great heart." The newsboy is regarded as "philosopher in his way, …, a hero," who questions and stands outside established cultural hierarchies (Oakes Prince Smith, 1854: 9-10). The newsboys epitomized a "type of American independence" and business spirit. Although they were forced by poverty to work at an early age, the news boy stood as an example of "a man of business" to be emulated by others.[101] The Norwegian writer Knut Hamsun satirically called newsboys "professional sensor of the public mood," and elevated them to the

100. See also Charles Dickens' derogatory characterization of newsboys as "precocious urchins … bawling down the street" (Dickens, 1842: 104), quite in contrast to Moore's more sympathetic image of "bright, active boys, with eyes and tongues ready for any emergency" (1968: 138f.).

101. "The News-Boys." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* 15 Dec. 1855: 43.

“controlling editors in American journalism” (1969: 25).

The success and popularity of the penny papers can be attributed not only to their independence from party subsidies but to the generally changed environment of urban growth in New York city, which supported more flexible forms of public information. Many forms of printed ephemera like shop displays, handbills, tracts and newspapers were competing for readers’ attention and created “a new kind of public life” (Henkin, 1998: x). In the expanding urban sphere, reading in public began to “facilitat[e] forms of access and interaction that did not require personal acquaintance.” In the 1830s to ‘40s the “daily newspaper became an indispensable source for daily information about the city” (ibid., 14-15), which was useful for newly arrived immigrants and long-time residents alike. In 1839, an observer noted the flood of printed material in the streets of New York:

> I know not how many newspapers, penny, two-penny, three-penny, and six-penny, are published here; nor how many literary journals, weekly (weakly), monthly or quarterly, are catering constantly for the public amusements, and the publishers' profits. I only know that we are here living in a complete *rustle* (so to speak) of printed paper. Every body takes a paper. They are sold at the corners of the streets, in taverns, in barrooms, in shops [...]. The hotels, the streets, places of private and public resort are all alike pervaded by the vendors of these little begrimed sheets.[102]

Due to the abundance of competing public media, Gross argues that “Americans of the early republic lived in a world of mixed media” (2010: 518), which created a need to have institutions that could contextualize the flood of information. Donald Scott points out that an institution like the public lecture system emerged out of a “communications overload” from a diversified media scene and “provided a medium for assimilating [the] flood of print and information” (1983: 299; Also Scott, 1980).

The newspaper was becoming a useful medium for navigating and engaging with the urban environment. With the increasing number of sheets available at low prices, reading a paper in private was no longer an exclusive privilege but became a common practice. Along with this change in the reception of news, the nature of news also started to shift from an infrequent assembly of correspondence and reprints to news as a daily renewed commodity. Before the cheap dailies of the 1830s, the ratio of readers to papers

102. “The Press in New York.” *The North American* 2 Apr. 1839: 1.

papers had been much higher. Leonard gives the number that in the early nineteenth century, one daily newspaper catered to 32 residents, where "most readers went without their own copy" because papers were usually read and discussed in taverns and other public places (1995: 4, 6-12). Due to their high exposure in public, newspapers reached many more readers than their "nominal circulation" would have suggested (Pasley, 2001: 7). While *weekly* papers enjoyed a readership ratio of 20 to 1 per issue (Nerone 1987: 387), *daily* papers for a general audience were still a novelty in the 1830s that quickly won broad acceptance. Soon, almost every household had its own paper.

> With the rise of the daily, vast numbers of New Yorkers adopted new and regular reading habits that would thoroughly transform their relationship to the urban community. Whereas New York's combined daily circulation in 1830 measured 1 for every 16 residents, twenty years later the ratio would exceed 1 for every 4.5 (Henkin, 1998: 105).

With the introduction of this new format, the reading situation changed. Benjamin Day and his penny contemporaries made it a mission to further create demand for a daily paper by "emphasizing news both as something that the reader had to have *today* and with the understanding that such news was perishable, needing to be replaced *tomorrow*" (Brazeal, 2005: 411, original emphasis). The structural innovation of the pennies at this point can be summarized as an intensified market orientation to news, where the paper had to attract and sustain its readership through a cheap price and a varied mix of topical, entertaining and useful information. The orientation towards readers not acquainted with owning a private paper changed the format of news toward smaller and shorter articles. Changing the source of revenue, the penny papers could also claim independence from party or government subsidies. While the haphazard mix of reprints and correspondence in the older papers had failed to distinguish itself from news obtained by other printed ephemera, the penny papers created demand for news through a variety of graphic, narrative, and topical schemas, which were derived from other print products. The next part will discuss how the schema of usefulness applied first of all to the way news was printed and presented before it became a topical resource. The cognitive dimension of printing daily news includes both a material graphic component and is closely affiliated with the almanac as a highly topical yet ephemeral print product.

The Cognitive Dimension of Daily Print

The popularity of the penny press is often attributed to their use of steam-driven presses, which allowed for higher turnouts in shorter time (Stöber, 2013: 160). But a steam press was not used by the *Sun* until 1835, two years after the format of the paper had already become popular. Thus, the format *did not emerge as a result of the steam press* but can be regarded as a variation of other formats of printed ephemera that were typical of the printing trade in the nineteenth century and that were widely circulated among audiences. The penny press' popularity is due in no small share to their continuation of such media formats and graphic conventions within the new frame of a daily newspaper. The pennies featured a more differentiated typography and structured content according to subjects, which made selective reading easier. Such changes to the appearance of newspapers also helped to habitualize readers to new use patterns of a daily paper, turning daily print as a medium into a cognitive dimension of time perception.

Although the speed and quantity of printing increased with new presses, older bed and platen presses of the Stanhope and Columbian type were still in use in those days, despite the invention of a cylinder press in 1811 by Friedrich König and its first installation in the *London Times* in 1814. The printing trade changed quickly in the early nineteenth century due to a number of new technologies, of which Silver gives a very good illustration:

> In the first quarter of the nineteenth century […] the wooden press became an iron press, rollers instead of balls inked the type, horse power and steam power were substituted for human energy, stereotyping became a normal procedure, lithography began to be used for illustrations. In these twenty-five years the equipment of the [printing] shop changed more than in all the past three and a half centuries put together (Silver, 1967: 40).

In the United States, Richard Hoe had made himself a name as an expert builder of presses. However, the first rotary printing press was not built until 1844 ("Printing" 1976: 1054-7). The development of the Fourdrinier machine for paper making in 1803 ("Printing" 1998: 603) helped to improve the often dismal quality or general lack of paper (Kobre, 1969: 51) but white paper of British standards was still a rarity by the end of the 1830s in the United States (Hudson, 2010: 349).

Despite these innovations the first issues of the penny press were still printed on

hand-operated presses. Printing newspapers remained the same tedious and time-consuming practice that is amply described in handbooks for printers, known as "Typographia".[103] Usually, newspapers had four pages, which required merely to print a folded sheet twice: the first and last page could be printed with one impression, after which the paper had to be hung up in the attic to dry the ink. After the drying, the second impression could be made of page 2 and 3 on the inside. This standard procedure involved many different tasks which started from setting type in lines on composing sticks, transferring them to the form and locking the type, before the whole page form was individually printed onto sheets of paper on a hand-operated press. Ink had to be reapplied after several impressions.[104] This basic process of printing with movable type had not changed much since the era of Gutenberg and it was still carried out in the print shops that produced the first penny papers.

Benjamin Day was a printer trained on the older types of presses. Having served as typesetter for the *Evening Post* and the *Commercial Advertiser* (Payne, 1925: 244), Day's interest was on the business side of printing. In 1833, when the *Sun* came out, "he had no idea that there would be any permanency to it. His aim was to circulate this hand bill simply as an advertisement for his job printing office" ("Pioneer in Journalism" 1889). A regular installment in the *Sun*, as in many other papers by printer-publishers, read: "JOB PRINTING:–Handbills, cards, circulars, pamphlets, &c. executed with neatness at this office."[105] Day had been an editor and printer of the *Free Enquirer*, a socialist reform paper addressed to workers, and published by Francis Wright and Robert Dale Owen. However, Day stopped working for Wright and Owen after a fire destroyed most of his print shop in early 1833.[106] Suffering from meagre income in the wake of the cholera epidemic in 1832, losing most of his type in fire and seeing his print

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103. These practical guides detail at great length the peculiarities of fonts for different alphabets, the setting and leveling of type as well as giving sketches of printing presses, layout schemes for pages, work flows and pricing policies. Early editions were written by British authors such as Johnson (1824) and Hansard (1825); the earliest typographia for the American printing trade was compiled and printed by Isaiah Thomas (1810).

104. For details on the printing process and illustrations of presses, see (Hansard, 1825; Adams, 1857; MacKellar, 1866; Steinberg, 1959: 198-206; Moore, 1968: 35-41; and Moran, 1973).

105. *The Sun* 19 Nov. 1833: 3.

106. "To Subscribers and Agents." *The Free Enquirer* 9 Feb. 1833: 1 [121 in continuous pagination].

customers take off, Day found himself in dire business conditions in 1833.[107]

When he published *The Sun* in September of that year he employed the same 3-column page layout and paper size that he had used for the *Free Enquirer*. Earlier examples of penny papers had included *The World in a Nutshell* and the *Daily Penny-Post* (1833) from Boston,[108] as well as the short-lived *Morning Post* by Horatio David Shepard and Horace Greeley (Hudson 416-7). The first issues of *The Sun* were printed on a "crude hand-operated printing press."[109] The first edition had between 300 (Levermore, 1901: 457; Hudson, 2010: 418) and 1,000 copies (Kobre, 1969: 48-52). Day employed "one man and a boy" and his first issue "required four hours to print" ("Pioneer in Journalism" 1889). O'Brien writes that Day' press could print "two hundred impressions an hour at full speed" (O'Brien, 1928: 4). The hand-operated press was soon replaced by a more powerful "double cylinder Napier machine" able to print more than 2,000 sheets per hour.[110] As circulation rose and the paper expanded its pages, Day added steam power to the presses in 1835, which made the "crank-men" operating the press redundant (Hudson, 2010: 418) and drove printing capacity to twenty-two thousand impressions per hour (Crouthamel, 1989: 20). Although this quick succession of faster printing technologies suggests that the success of the pennies relied on technological progress, the humble beginnings of this new format underline, that technology did not promote the format itself. The time consuming practice of printing around 1,000 issues on a hand-operated press serves as a reminder, that printing in the first months remained within conventional work routines of producing newspapers.

These work routines of printing daily papers were significant for the cultural valuation of the newspaper itself. Although timeliness and topicality nowadays value the content of newspapers, the material conditions of producing papers on hand-operated presses created their own valuations of newspapers as material objects in the

107. A pamphlet for A.J. Matsell in 1832 on precautions against cholera infections was one of the few print jobs that Day could obtain. See AAS pamphlet (Pams.L157On1832) "A discourse, delivered during the prevalence of the cholera in London. By the lady of the rotunda" (1832).

108. On Boston penny papers see also (Mott, 1962: 238-39).

109. Quoted in (Brazeal, 2005: 406). The reference goes back to the Edward P. Mitchell, who authored a jubilee article, "The Story of the Sun," published in the paper 3 September 1883.

110. Quoted in (Brazeal, 2005: 411) from *The Sun* 28 Aug. 1835: 2.

past. The established mercantile papers regarded the size of their paper and the amount of type printed on it as important markers of distinction. Because printing a large page literally fixed hundreds of thousands of typefaces, the material investment in a given issue also signaled to readers that a printer's business was well established and affluent enough to reserve type in high numbers. The craft of setting large amounts of typefaces was also important to judge the quality of a print shop, even more so when the paper format exceeded the usual sizes. The *Courier & Enquirer* and the *Journal of Commerce* "measured success by the square foot of white paper" they used for an issue and the number of ems that fit on one page (Levermore, 1901: 455).[111] In 1833, the *Courier & Enquirer* measured 20 in. (50,8 cm) x 28 in. (71,1 cm) and had 7 columns on each page. The type was densely set with little visual orientation to find individual articles. *The Sun*, by contrast, measured only 8,5 in. (21,6 cm) x 11,62 in. (29,5 cm) or about the size of an A4 sheet, with the text arranged in only 3 columns.[112] Apart from the size, the *Sun* also used improved typefaces (a "plain face of agate" (O'Brien, 1928:5)) which allowed for better reading. Although first issues of newspapers tended to have smaller paper formats in general, they gradually expanded with the amount of advertising increasing. *The Sun* here was no exception.[113]

Another cognitive effect of the practice of printing newspapers at the time was that many parts of the newspaper would remain the same from issue to issue. Instead of resetting an entire issue from day to day, advertising was booked by merchants in advance and remained the same for a year. Readers thus got accustomed to a similar

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111. The term "em" refers to the length of one "m" in printing. It was a standard measurement for the space occupied by one character in a line. To give an impression of the vast number of ems (number of individual types), it is instructive to turn to Hudson's account of the *Courier & Enquirer* advertising itself with the staggering number of 714,355 ems used for *one* issue. The *Courier & Enquirer* also boasted a paper size of 1,881 in^2 (1.21 m^2) in 1850 while the *Journal* allegedly became the "largest paper in the world" in 1853 with a surface of 2,057 in^2 (1.33 m^2) (Hudson, 2010: 349-53). One of the largest papers ever published was *The Constellation* (1859), which had a surface of about 128 ft^2 (11.9 m^2) (Moore, 1968: 241), presumably as a showcase to demonstrate the capabilities of printing technologies.

112. Reprints of the original first page can be found in (Mott, 1964: 221) and (O'Brien, 1928: 23) apart from jubilee reprint editions often inserted in the *Sun* later.

113. The *Sun* expanded the number of columns gradually as circulation rose and the amount of advertising augmented: in January 1835 it enlarged to 4 columns and larger paper format (10.5 in. (26.7 cm) x 15 in. (38.1 cm). In 1836, it already had 6 columns and a paper format of 14.5 in. (36.8 cm) x 20 in. (50.8 cm) (own measurements).

layout with the effect that "whole columns … of long-dead announcements and notices continued to stare the reader in the face, day after day" (Carlson, 1942: 64).[114] Printing identical pages became even easier after the introduction of stereotyping in 1811. Such a "precedence of form over content" explains why advertising was frequently mixed with editorials, news reports and entertainment in the flow of letters set in columns (Henkin, 1998: 115-17). Bold headlines for articles were not much in use yet.[115] In order to fit as many articles as possible on one page, news articles would be printed consecutively without intermediate divisions. Only the first word would be italicized after a line break and preceded by a small indent. The practice of printing articles as a continuous sprawl of text gave the impression of a cluttered page of densely assembled type. This way of presenting news had not changed significantly since the 18th century, which suggests that papers "were read through rather than glanced at for a selective reading" (Warner, 1990: 17). Although the mercantile dailies differentiated advertising from other content by its bold type and its position on page three and four, the more topical content was set apart only by italicized anchor words or phrases at the beginning of articles. Horizontal rules were still an exception.

When the *Sun* came out in 1833, it differentiated content by a more varied spacing of fonts and sizes, horizontal rules, and intermediate headlines. These graphical features vastly improved the readability of the paper and put readers in a position to selectively pick out content whenever they had the chance to look at the paper. The schema of 'usefulness' of the paper also found its equivalent in a graphic style oriented toward quick reference, cursory glancing and much shorter narrative units. In the *Sun* of September 1833, advertisements would start with an initial letter placed at the height of two lines. Sections like "Port of New York" would be set apart by thick horizontal rules. Line breaks were used more frequently to partition large blocks of texts and simplify

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114. In April 1837, the Herald announced that no more credit would be given to advertisers, a practice which had "inflated the Wall Street papers." After the "great revolution in the newspaper system" the *Herald* joyously foresaw that "the Wall Street Papers … will fall to pieces by their own weight." ("A Revolution in Advertising." *The Herald* 15 Apr. 1837: 2.)

115. A rare exception of a capitalized headline can be found in the *New-York Evening Post* 7 Feb. 1815: 2, which reported the victory of General Jackson in New Orleans over the British army - a month after the fact: "ALMOST INCREDIBLE VICTORY!" and "GLORIOUS NEWS." However, by appearing on page two in the lower half of column C, the headline does not really attract attention.

retrieving specific parts of the text. After James Gordon Bennett had left the *Courier & Enquirer* in August 1832, he tried his luck by publishing *The New York Globe* in October 1832 for the price of 2 cents per issue (Mott 230). In a note to Washington readers, Bennett advertised the *Globe* for "eight dollars a year," and turned its smaller size and improved layout into a sales argument.

> For years past, the public has been cloyed with immense sheets, bunglingly made up, without concert of action, or individuality of character–the reservoir of crude thoughts from different persons, who were continually knocking their heads against each other, without knocking any thing remarkably good out of them. I have avoided this inconvenience. I shall give my readers the cream of foreign and domestic events. *My sheet is moderate in size, but neat and manageable, printed on fine paper and with beautiful type* (quoted in Carlson 111, emphasis added).[116]

Although Bennett abandoned the *Globe*, the *Herald* paid more attention to the spacing of typefaces in lines and between columns. Advertisements and articles were printed with different spacing and typefaces. Starting in 1835, *The Herald* highlighted individual advertisements by horizontal rules similar to the *Sun*. Column heads such as 'Park Theatre' made the quick reference to individual announcements easier. 'Wants', 'Amusements', or 'Auction Sales' on page three further categorized advertising by subject. In addition, the headlines of articles were now printed in bold types, often in combination with italicized first words, which served as very brief summaries, before the front page started to feature news summaries of articles after December 1836 (Carlson 193). Further visual cues to content were given through fixed ornamental types, such as express riders for latest news, ships for ship news and various types of houses as cues to real estate advertisements.[117] Especially ornamental types, or dingbats, such as the pointing finger (☛), were used excessively by the *Herald* and other pennies to break up the continuous sprawl of type and highlight short notes or editorial comments. Since illustrations were still costly to produce, they appeared infrequently and would not become a permanent feature until after 1840 (Crouthamel, 1989: 34). An engraving of the New York fire was the first news illustration that appeared on the

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116. The prospectus is dated 22 October 1832 and was republished in the *Washington Globe* 8 Nov. 1832: 2. The term "blanket sheets" for mercantile papers is ascribed to James Gordon Bennett, who often used it as an insult to his competitors (cf. Hudson 344f.).

117. Upon adopting his policy of charging for advertisements through "cash in advance," Bennett ridiculed the sixpennies' layout and their "old plan of throwing the advertisements *in common type*" (emphasis added). See "Commercial Advertising System." *The Herald* 6 Oct. 1836: 2.

Herald's front page on 21 December 1835, including an additional map showing ravaged districts of the city. The same illustration was reprinted for three consecutive weeks in April 1836, now serving as an advertisement for a diorama presented in P.T. Barnum's *American Museum*. All these graphic innovations underlined the increasing claim to usefulness of a daily news medium for audiences.

Because the penny papers have been primarily identified as an innovation within the field of daily journalism, their origins in the printer's workshop are often overlooked. As outlined above, Benjamin Day issued the *Sun* as an advertisement for his print business and was less of an editor of news in the beginning. The *Sun*'s emphasis on usefulness and its distinct graphic style were not just innovations in the way news was presented but were themselves transpositions from other print products that were staple items of a printer's practice. Especially the connection between the penny press as a useful, daily news medium and the almanac has so far been neglected in research. The almanac typically was used daily as a resource to identify the time of sun rise and sun set, calculated individually for locales in the United States. The almanac's list style of conveying information was a prime feature of its daily usefulness. Similar to the new penny dailies, the almanac helped to structures time and its perception. Almanacs often joined miscellaneous notices and anecdotes with topical information from the past.[118] Above all, the almanac had a small paper format and was cheap to obtain.

The almanac can be considered "the most ubiquitous item of print next to the Bible in American homes" in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It served as a calendar, a guidebook for the region, as a reference work for agriculture, as a medical and moral adviser throughout the year (Gross, 2010: 520-23).[119] The almanac was "*the* informational genre of its day" (Goddu, 2009: 133). Milton Drake's historical

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118. See for example the *Knickerbocker Almanac for the Year of our Lord 1834* (Young, 1833), which featured memorable historical events from past centuries for every month under its calendric tables.

119. Gross stresses the point that almanacs were also used as a form of personal diary, where "pages of print were converted into pieces of paper suitable for inscribing with pen and ink" (520). Due to similar type faces, e.g. Minion, Great Primer or Nonpareil, "printed documents bore an impersonal look" (523). Personal annotation can be seen as a way to personalize a standard print item and document a daily interaction with the medium.

bibliography of almanacs lists 33 different titles of almanacs for the year 1833 in the state of New York alone (1962: 706-711, Vol. 2). The almanac was a profitable and popular product of the printer's shop. The publishing of an almanac for the region often coincided with the first printing presses being installed in almost all of the first thirteen colonies (Stowell, 1977: 322-25).[120] Isaiah Thomas, one of America's most famed printers, started printing almanacs in the 1770s although he lacked the scientific background to calculate lunar and solar tables. As a printer, Thomas was "interested in almanacs only as a sideline or feeders for his hungry presses" (Sagendorph, 1970: 95).[121] At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the most popular genre was the *Farmer's Almanac*s, of which there were around "500 different titles" in 1816. Due to their local focus, circulation is estimated to have remained below 100,000 copies per issue (ibid., 118). Almanacs as an informational resource reached their widest proliferation at about the same time when the penny papers were emerging.[122] As the printing business began to diversify and specialize in either fine book printing or newspapers, a "steady seller" like the almanac, "lost much of its importance" to sustain the job printer's business in the nineteenth century (Hall, 1996: 44, 74).

The almanac was especially geared toward offering useful information on a daily basis in a graphic format that was easily accessible. In *The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge for the Year 1830*, published by Gray & Bowen in Boston, the particular relation of the graphic mode to utility is quite emblematic. The authors of the almanac underline that "[t]he main object of this work is *utility.*" The editors' aim to publish the almanac was to "collect within the smallest compass the greatest amount of *useful and practical information* on those topics, in which the community is generally interested" ("American Almanac" 1829: vi, emphasis added).

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120. Stowell's comparison of the date of installing the first printing press and the date of publishing the first almanac in the thirteen colonies illustrates that the close relation applied to all colonies with the exception of North and South Carolina.

121. In the nineteenth century, other typical print ephemera included handbills, pamphlets and lottery tickets, which could be printed on cut-off margins from larger publications such as books or newspapers. Horace Greeley, founding editor of the *New York Tribune*, had started as a printer of lottery tickets and bulletins (Carlson, 1942: 103).

122. For Michael Warner, almanacs "represent the peak of the book trade's organization" in the early 19th century, because they "were produced on a schedule, and because their audience included many people who would not have bought any other book" (1990: 24).

The condensed, tabular presentation of facts like the times of sun rise and sun set relates a practice of graphic presentation to its enhanced 'utility' for the reader.

> The method of tabular views, for communicating certain kinds of knowledge, has immense advantages over any other, in presenting, at a single glance of the eye, a mass of information, that would be expanded over many pages if exhibited in any other form (ibid., viii).

This linking of brevity and more condensed information space resembles the pennies' reliance on a smaller size of paper, which greatly enhanced the accessibility and legibility of type. As in the mercantile dailies, the pennies continued to print lists as a recurrent and 'useful' feature in their columns. Such lists could include the names of residents who had mail waiting for them at the post office, lists of marriages and fatalities, as well as bank note tables, lists of prices for crops, shares, and raw materials.

Tables were an important graphic measure to enhance the use value of the newspaper and could serve as a resource to quickly access information that was needed on a daily basis to manage daily life. A "Table of Wages" was presented on the front page of the *Sun* in June 1835, printed vertically in the middle of the page. The table showed calculations for different hourly wages and their weekly sum.[123] Such a table recommended itself to readers as a material object to be kept for reference. Readers could see their weekly wage at a quick glance instead of having to calculate it individually. Another table on the "financial history of the United States", published on the front page of the *Tribune* in 1841, was recommended to readers "for the sake of future reference."[124] The list style of conveying information coincided with the extended gathering of demographic information, trade figures, and the generally higher attention given to numbers as a form of 'objective fact.' Because to contemporaries numbers "existed apart from any imposition of taste or moral judgement on the part of the viewer" they were ideally suited to lend a seemingly 'objective' base to political action or social reform ambitions (Cline Cohen, 1982: 40). The way of presenting such number in tables had a precursor in the tabulations of solar and lunar movements, typically found in almanacs.

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123. "A Table of Wages." *The Sun* 27 June 1835: 1.

124. *New York Tribune* 7. Sep. 1841: 2

The connection between the pennies and the almanac form is most palpable in their common reference to the passing and recording of time. The almanac was crucial to structure this "natural time," especially in rural areas where work started with the sun rising. This function of the almanac, to structure the perception of time passing, was now gradually taken over by the daily newspaper that most people could afford. The transposition of the almanac's function to the newspaper can be seen, for example, in the *Sun* publishing a "Miniature Almanac" on its front page on New Year 1835.[125] But the analogy between both print media can be further extended. Benedict Anderson has pointed out that the modern newspaper is distinguished from its precursors for presenting articles on events based on their mere "calendrical coincidence" (Anderson, 2006: 33). The only common denominator for news items was the fact that they appeared together on the same date in the same paper. Likewise, the audience of news was assembled only on the basis of its common and often synchronous exposure to the same news. Because readers no longer shared a community of political ideology or of location, the only commonality that remained in a diverse urban sprawl was being exposed at the same time to the same topical media: "[T]he newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his ... neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life" (ibid., 35-36). The newspaper started to create a sense of 'imagined community' of readers, which was actualized every day by reading, discussing and encountering the same news items in the daily papers.

The changed significance of time in daily life can be seen in the gradual decline of the almanac as a time-keeping medium that was consulted for practical reasons every day. As O'Malley has observed in his study *Keeping Watch* "by the 1830s, a sense of time rooted in nature confronted a seemingly arbitrary time based in commerce, revealing itself in machine movements and the linear progress of invention" (O'Malley, 1990: 9).[126] Initially almanacs had structured events of the year in relation to the cycle

125. *The Sun* 1 Jan. 1835: 1.

126. On the conflict between the slow experience of 'natural' time and its (often unwelcome) acceleration by train travel, see also (Schivelbusch, 2007).

of celestial motions. Now, they also offered advice on how to structure one's linear time of work, commerce and travel efficiently. As time became a resource in its own right, the almanac lent itself to helping structure the time-bound aspects of business like giving postal rates, interest rates on loans, and traveling distances between cities. As O'Malley observes "rigorous organization of individual time made for an organized and rational society" (21). This efficiency was severely hampered by the plurality of local times. In the 1830s the accuracy of universal "clock time" ran into conflict with many local times calculated after the solar cycle. Local times calculated for individual places made it hard to coordinate activities between locations that were far removed from each other. Especially train service between states or even individual towns was hard to coordinate. Thus train operators were among the first to push for standard time across the continent (Bartky, 2000: 137f.; White, 2005).

The pennies not only emulated the graphic conventions of almanac printing, featuring list and tables as useful formats of presenting information, but gradually replaced the almanac as a time structuring medium. Isabelle Lehuu argues that "the [daily] newspaper was constructed around the timing of a daily narration" - combining the timing of almanacs with topical news. Through their emphasis on topicality in reporting, "antebellum dailies succeeded in combining the structure of time with extraordinary events" (2000: 40-41). In their particular 'schema of topicality', however, the new penny dailies found ways to contain and structure the extraordinary and contain the unforeseeable.

The Schema of Topicality

The topicality of news began to play a much more important role in the penny press than it had played in the established mercantile and partisan papers. Renewing contact to audiences on a daily basis necessitated to both innovate the content while keeping the medium recognizable as a frame for news. While graphic conventions were important to signal to readers how certain types of content were to be read, the pennies also used narrative and dramatic conventions to create a sense of continuity in the newspaper across longer time periods. The new schema of topicality became a structural feature in the journalism of the penny dailies by offering news reports in close temporal proximity to events. The schema most importantly served to value journalistic practice in its function to *contain* a quickly changing world. The practices which sustained the daily publication of a newspaper began creating a structure of communication which was designed to register and accommodate change, both in its narrative and graphic forms but also in its orientation toward an audience. The schema of topicality contributed to the newspapers' new function of structuring the perception of time and events passing. The journalistic practices employed in the penny press began to support a structure of communication that was distinguished from the printer-publishers of correspondences by a regularity of attention to particular subjects, by a stability of narrative forms, by a heightened sense of audience contact and eventually, by the telegraph in the process of news gathering. All of these elements together sustained the schema of topicality, which established journalistic practice as a modern structure of public communication.

The penny dailies are most importantly distinguished by their attention to local news instead of foreign correspondences. As the urban communities of large metropolitan centers along the East Coast were becoming small nations in themselves, "encounters with strangers" became more frequent and the strong bonds of neighborly chat were waning (Rose, 1995: 60).[127] The penny papers began taking the plurality of the city as a source of news. The *Sun* wrote "a city newspaper is a picture of the

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127. See also Richard Sennett's similar definition of the city as "a human settlement in which strangers are likely to meet" (1978: 3).

world”[128] in 1834, a world which was on every reader’s doorstep and that had many stories to tell. Some critics of the pennies ridiculed their often sensationalist reporting of drama, murder and human interest. Their ‘retailing of gossip’[129] was not just an infringement on the exclusive terrain of elite newspaper publishing, they also turned to subjects that had not been deemed worthy of representation in newspapers before. Their attention to topicality was at first closely connected to *locality*, to the small and big events that occurred only a few blocks apart from each other.

In order to fill the pages of the *Sun*’s first issues, Benjamin Day looked for stories he could quickly set into print and thus “turned to police-court reports because they were accessible and cheap” (Hughes, 1968: 10). Day employed George W. Wisner expressly for the task of writing police reports. Wisner’s lively style and feel for dialogue made the police reports a popular item in the *Sun* (Stevens, 1991: 22-25; Goodman, 2008: 36-39). The practice of court reports in newspapers was not new but had already been introduced in the *London Herald* in the 1820s (Carlson, 1942: 143) and many other papers in the United States. However, Day and Wisner actively sought to find new stories worth reporting from the police courts. While keeping up the genre, they applied it to their immediate environment and gradually began stressing the topicality of their reports. Hence, their reports began to differ from similar items found in the mercantile papers. Miller succinctly summarizes this trend in stating that “[p]erhaps the main difference between the six-penny papers and the new penny dailies was that the penny papers consciously sought out the news, beginning to adopt the concept of reporters and correspondents” (1987: 154). George Wisner partly shed the moralizing tone of the mercantile papers and made use of local jargon and wrote ironic, funny dialogues inspired by court cases. The acquitted criminals and petty thieves were rendered in colorful shades and given idiosyncratic traits. Irony and wit proved a successful strategy to create a form of comic relief from the urban chaos that supposedly disoriented many readers of the *Sun*.

128. “A Newspaper.” *The Sun* 27 Jan. 1834: 4.

129. Carlson, adopting Bennett’s jargon, describes the pennies as “retailers of gossip” (126), and Philip Hone, mayor of New York in the 1820s, laments that “scandal is retailed to all who delight in it at that moderate price” (1936: 195).

Court reports could also be found in James Watson Webb's *Courier & Enquirer*, the most widely circulated mercantile paper in New York in 1833. Especially 'Melancholy Accidents' were a standard news item in both the penny and mercantile papers, as the genre offered a frame that legitimized telling horrid, sad or sensational stories by presenting them in a moralizing perspective. The pennies, however, differed from the mercantile papers in tone and moral lesson. In the *Courier & Enquirer* from September 1833, an article reports the fatal accident of a honey thief. While the victim's family is left to "to mourn over his untimely death" the article closes on the moralizing note: "Let this prove a warning to those who engage in like adventures."[130] A similar article on a "melancholy accident" from the *Sun* reports the death of a man by an accidental gunshot. The article closes, in marked contrast to the *Courier & Enquirer*, by assuring the family of "the consolation and sympathies of the community."[131] These two examples refer to different incidents but allow to contrast both papers' perspective on their audience. The *Courier & Enquirer* teaches a lesson to thieves, voicing the moral convictions of its conservative readership of business men, while the *Sun* sympathizes with the family of the victim, creating a bond of solidarity among the paper and its readers. Gaffield notes that at the time most news items were "used for some didactic purpose" (1981: 18). Drawing moral lessons from fatal accidents, drunken sprees and treacherous husbands (or wives) was a frequent way to editorialize. The journalist-editor became a "school teacher of the nation" (ibid., 17) by selecting news articles which allowed him restate the moral convictions, with which his audiences could identify.

Staple items like "Melancholy Accidents", "Police Office" or "Court of Sessions" are not remarkable for their narrative content but for the form they established, a form that was served every day. The question whether these anecdotes and stories were news of actual events was subordinate to the continuity of the form as a standard content of newspapers. The pennies printed serialized fiction with semi-journalistic content

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130. "Court of Sessions." *Courier & Enquirer* 14 Sep. 1833: 1.

131. "Melancholy Accident." *The Sun* 3 Dec. 1833: 2.

alongside topical articles without differentiating the two types. While ship news in mercantile newspapers referred to ships actually arriving and departing from the harbor on a daily basis, moralizing stories could be freely filled with content. Rather than reporting actual events, story formats *themselves* created a ‘continuity effect’ (Gans), offered a frame in which unpredictable events could find a similar form. Readers could expect to find such formats in every new issue of the paper, which not only contained the unforeseeable in predictable narrative patterns but also signaled to readers that despite rapid changes, the integrity of their value system was preserved. Publishing ship news on a regular basis had practical value in every day affairs, but moralizing formats of news were served every day as a way to create a bond between the paper and its readers. Topicality also applied to the medium itself and not just events, making the reading of a daily newspaper into a habitual form of relating to the outside world. Ronald Zboray aptly notes that “readers of newspapers acquired a *new consciousness of time and events*” (emphasis added). News as a narrative format became tied to the incessant “novelty for novelty’s sake” of which the newspaper was a paradigmatic example (1993: 126). Such continuity of form over content is similar to the serialization of fiction because it allowed to place new content within set boundaries, both of graphic and narrative dimensions.

In his study of serialized fiction in Britain in the nineteenth century, Laurel Brake underlines that serializing fiction had two basic advantages for magazine editors and printers alike. First, new authors could anonymously test stories on audiences before their name was revealed and exclusive (and more expensive) issues of a book were published. Second, magazine editors could plan their issues in advance for an entire year, advertising their periodical with contracted installments of fiction (Brake, 2001: 3-26). The serializing of fiction in newspapers and magazines broke up long narratives into internally closed and sequential episodes that needed to anticipate their following installments. While much of this temporality of the reading experience is lost when a novel is published as a book, the serial form is closely tied to a pace or temporal pattern of reading that is set by the pace of the medium’s own daily, weekly, or monthly

publishing cycle.

The serialized story format offered a 'literary convention' with 'its own rules' (Schudson) that could be exploited for journalistic ends of topical reporting. As Karen Roggenkamp has argued, the penny papers were the precursors of the 'new journalism' of the 1890s because their news articles also "operated explicitly within the models of dramatic storytelling." The transposition of literary formats to journalistic writing created a "fluidity between literary and journalistic forms" with the effect that a "confusion between fact and fiction" reigned supreme in almost any article (2005: xv, 1, 2). Journalistic serialization implies that stories, once they are established, are continuously activated on a daily basis. New information is presented within the perspective of what has already been said. Any event can become the subject of reporting but once the newspaper introduces a given story, it creates its own frame of reference by invoking its previous reporting as shared knowledge among its audience. Serialization for the penny press offered a standard by which to organize material, even if the events themselves were insignificant or did not yield new information.

Topicality then needs to be understood in relation to the daily production cycle of the newspaper itself, as a practice which sets news within established narrative frames. The attraction to a daily paper by audiences relies on news as a flexible textual format, which can contain and rationalize unforeseen events. Two stories are especially significant to explain this schema of topicality as it applied to news in the pennies. The famous "Moon Hoax" in the *Sun* appeared in installments in August 1835. The story is most notorious for its scientific jargon that lent it credibility and fascinated audiences for weeks. What is often overlooked is that the temporal structure of publishing the hoax in installments worked toward revealing the most sensational news at the end of the series. The following analysis will concentrate on the temporal structure to underline how the schema of topicality created its own "practical reality," as Bourdieu wrote. The effect of the schema of topicality on reporting *actual* events can be seen in the case of Helen Jewett (1836), which was covered at length in the *Herald*. While Bennett sought new information as the criminal investigation was unfolding, he also used his continued

reporting as a way to advertise his paper and ridicule his competitors. Reporting the Jewett case offered an occasion for Bennett to assure audiences of the continuity of a narrative form in spite of unforeseen events. Both stories exemplify the structural effect of topicality on the internal form and narrative organization of news in the penny papers.

The Veracity of the Hoax

The Great Moon Hoax appeared in the *Sun* in a series of six installments in August 1835. Under the heading "Great Astronomical Discoveries" the series reported on the discovery of living creatures on the surface of the moon, made by on of the leading astronomers of the time, Sir John Herschel. *The Sun*'s police court reporter, Richard Adams Locke, who was an amateur astronomer himself, was later acknowledged as the author of the series. The story was reprinted in many papers across the country. Commentaries and reactions oscillated between believing the alleged *Discoveries* or exposing them as a 'hoax'.[132] The story was largely inspired by Herschel's own book *A Treatise on Astronomy*, published in the United States in 1834 (Goodman, 2008: 1-6), and the fictional exploration of lunar civilization in *Voyage to the Moon* (1827) by Joseph Atterley, the literary alias of George Tucker (Harris, 1973: 73). *The Sun* seized on the growing public interest in astronomy in 1835, which marked the passing of Halley's comet, as Ormond Seavey remarks in his introduction to a later re-edition (Locke, 1975: xxiv). The Moon Hoax itself referenced Halley's comet in its second installment (26 August 1835).

After the publication of the *Discoveries*, the *Sun*'s proprietors further exploited the popularity of the story through pamphlet reprints of the "original" *Supplement from the Edinburgh Journal of Science* and a range of lithographs for popular consumption (Seavey in Locke 1975: xi). One such pamphlet printed by Day featured a fold-out

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132. Readers of the *Sun* should have been warned. In the very first weeks of its existence, Day published an engraving of "Herschel's Forty Feet Telescope" on the front page (14 Sep. 1833: 1) and an article on the Moon that entertained the possible advantages of "Lunarians" having clearer sight of events on earth than the earthlings ("The Moon" *The Sun* 11 Sep. 1833: 1)

poster depicting an enchanted lunar civilization of (partly nude) "Lunar Animals."[133] Day here continued a publishing procedure, which he had already tested in the coverage of the trial against "Matthias the Prophet" earlier in May 1835 (O'Brien, 1928: 37). The first edition of the Matthias pamphlets had 16 pages and sold 6,000 pieces at 3 cents each (Goodman, 2008: 72-82). Pamphlets were used by Day, as well as other printer-publishers, as "circulation builders" (Jamison, 2001: 420) for their newspapers.

The controversy about the Hoax was further complicated by the fact that the author of the story was not readily identified. For some time, Edgar Allan Poe appeared as the originator, whose story of "Hans Pfaal" [Phaall] going to the moon in a balloon, had been published earlier that year (Poe, 1835). Other penny papers like the *Transcript*, reprinted the 'Moon Hoax' along with Poe's tale in September (Tucher, 1994: 53), leaving the decision on the originality of either story to the speculation of audiences. In his essay collection *The Literati*, Poe goes into a detailed comparison of Locke's and his own story, calling both stories 'hoaxes' which relate to 'astronomy.' Although Poe sees a similarity in the fabrications, which "attempt to give plausibility by minuteness of detail," he is surprised that his arguments on the Moon Hoax' "fictitious character" found no audience (1850: 122).[134]

But the question of a 'fictitious character' as opposed to a factual account is not as easily resolved as Poe would like to have it. The moon hoax borders on a factual account of astronomical discoveries exactly through its 'minuteness of detail'. The attention paid to parts and mechanism of lenses and the telescope, the use of scientific jargon and latinized names, make the hoax a "hard reading" (Harris, 1973: 69), even for a mind schooled in astronomy, optics and physics. The skillful literary techniques of foreshadowing were combined with a heavy reliance on experts in the field of astronomy to lend the account credibility. Serializing the story further creates the

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133. See AAS Pamphlet G437L814G835, Locke, Richard Adams. *Great astronomical discoveries lately made by Sir John Herschel, LL.D. F.R.S. &c. at the Cape of Good Hope. First published in the New-York Sun, from the supplement to the Edinburgh journal of science.* Benjamin Day: New York, 1835.

134. In a famous note to a subsequent edition, Poe finds "but little similarity between [Hans Pfaall] and the celebrated 'Moon-Story' of Mr. Locke," likening the confusion about the identity of the hoaxes' authors to the simultaneous publication in the *Transcript* and other penny papers (Poe, 1965: 103).

impression of a carefully managed effect, which culminates in the question, what the "great astronomical discoveries" actually refer to. Suspending disbelief for the moment, the temporal structure of exposure in the *Discoveries* is worth of attention to underline the importance of serialization in relation to journalistic practice.

The six parts of the Moon Hoax appeared on the front page of *The Sun* from Tuesday, August 25, to Monday, August 31, in 1835.[135] The first two parts provide background on the astronomer Herschel and his telescope. Part I announces Herschel's *Discoveries* as a breakthrough in astronomy, made possible by a new and much larger telescope, "his new and stupendous apparatus" (4). Herschel is portrayed as a zealous scientist, who "had been nursed and cradled in the observatory" (6). Making reference to "Huygens, Fontana, Gregory, Newton" and other astronomers (9), the article announces that Herschel succeeded in creating a lens "free from every achromatic obscurity," (7) a perennial problem of large lenses at the time. Part II explains the benefits of the location of the telescope, "his ponderous and complicated machinery" (16), in South Africa and reports first signs of an atmosphere on the moon's surface which sustains a "lunar forest" (21). After establishing the fact that the moon has a vegetation, the sensation of the second part is the discovery of a variety of "lunar animals," a bison (similar to Atterley's *Voyage to the Moon*), a "monster" of a "bluish lead color," a pelican and an "amphibious creature" (25f.). These animals are partly referenced by latin names as are the areas of the moon's surface they dwell in.

Part III is published on Thursday, August 27, and reports on other areas of the moon, giving details of volcanoes, the landscape and different sorts of vegetation. Herschel gets the chance to classify "thirty-eight species of forest trees … nine species of mammalia, and five of ovipara [birds]" (31). The discovery of a humanoid "biped beaver," which walks upright, builds huts and "is no doubt … acquainted with the use of fire" (32) foreshadows the appearance of humanoids later. The narrative carefully prepares its central discovery of humanoids on the moon, by introducing first an atmosphere, vegetation, animals, and finally humanoid animals. The third part ends with

135. All further quotations from the Moon Hoax series refer to the facsimile edition, issued by the *Gesellschaft der Arno Schmidt Leser* (Locke, 1835).

Herschel preparing for a different quadrant of the moon's surface, for which he "entertained some singular expectations" (34).

On Friday, August 28, the series finally reports the discovery of "lunar humanoids" who were "large winged creatures" that walked "erect and dignified" (37f.). Their hair was "glossy copper colored"; the color of their face being "a slight improvement upon that of the large orang outang, being more open and intelligent in its expression." In their comportment they make the impression of "rational beings" although their large wings "were similar in structure to … the bat" (39). Hence, Herschel gives these humanoids the name "*Vespertilio-homo*, or man-bat." At this point in the narration, the *Sun*'s writer interrupts his account to point out that a few "highly curious passages" in his sources "would be wholly incredible to readers" not familiar with astronomic gear. Classified as "prohibited passages," the reader is referred to Herschel's own forthcoming account in which the readers will have a chance to "become eye-witnesses" to the whole range of discoveries, "the most sublime in science, and the most intense in general interest, that ever issued from the press" (40). As if the discovery of "lunar humanoids" was not exciting enough, Locke here inserts further suspense by hinting at even more incredible discoveries in the next installment on Saturday. But the fifth part on 29 August is a rather inconspicuous account of a "great ocean" and an "equitriangular temple, built of polished sapphire" (44, 46). The author self-ironically notes that "we have been more desirous of collecting the greatest possible number of new facts, than of indulging in speculative theories, however seductive for the imagination" (47). Keeping in mind that the account in the *Sun* is based on a supposed exchange with a scientist on location, this passage further sustains the claim to veracity by anticipating (and countering) a skeptical reaction from readers.

Since the paper was not published on Sunday, the next and last installment appears on Monday, August 31. The author goes into further detail on the lunar civilization, again imitating similar accounts from Atterley's novel. Starting from a temple in the center of settlements, other man-bats are introduced as an "improved

variety of the race" (48), who live as peaceful "creatures of order and subordination," and who spend their time "collecting various fruits" and living in a "universal state of amity" (49). This account is again interrupted, because a fire destroys part of the equipment at the observatory. After weeks of delay, Herschel turns his attention to Saturn, which gives the author of the hoax a chance to excel in his knowledge of the planet's commotion and dimensions. Before the account can become too technical, the *Sun* editors spare the lay reader the strain of following an expert treatise. After announcing a "beautiful demonstration" by Herschel, the writer inserts "[Which we omit, as too mathematical for popular comprehension - Ed. *Sun.*]" (52). The very last paragraph further insinuates an original, a much longer version of the piece, containing "forty pages of illustrative and mathematical notes" but which are here omitted for not "adding to its [the story's] general interest" (ibid.).

Although the individual parts of the story are not split according to dramatic climaxes - some breaks appear rather randomly chosen - the entire story gradually builds up tension before the most sensational discovery comes into focus. The parts published before Friday first establish the authority of the account by reference to eminent scientists, through expert jargon, and details of technical description, before releasing the greatest discovery. Instead of arguing about the veracity of the hoax, the structure of its presentation shows the careful management of effect which is based on the daily activation of already imparted "facts."

The hoax was soon revealed in the *Herald* but the story proved fascinating to newspapers in the whole country.[136] It was reprinted along the East Coast before reaching the Midwest. Many commentators acknowledged that Locke had demonstrated great skill at constructing the story. Following a reprint of the series in St. Louis, the editors admitted that

> the individual who wrote the article, is one deeply read in Astronomical lore; one whose imagination must have been of the most fertile nature, to have concocted a series of circumstances so harmonious with the prevalent

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136. Although the *Herald* rejoiced at revealing the *Sun*'s hoax, the paper adopted the form as well to attract audiences. In November 1874, the *Herald* reported about escaped zoo animals roaming the streets and destroying parts of central Manhattan. The story became known as the *Wild Animal Hoax*. A reprint can be found in (Seitz, 1928: 304-36).

> opinions of the Scientific world.[137]

An article in the *Cleveland Herald* goes further into detail, why the moon story appeared convincing even to scholars as a scientific treatise. Quoting from Herschel's original book, the paper highlights that a leading German astronomer, Franz von Gruithausen, had published a theory about vegetation and civilization on the moon already in 1811. He allegedly had discovered roads and buildings on the surface of the moon and inferred that animal life forms could be supported. The article in the *Cleveland Herald* concludes, that the Moon Hoax played on this expert knowledge, which was regarded as a still tenable theory at the time.[138] The public fascination with the hoax is aptly summarized in an article in the *Maryland Gazette*, published about two weeks after the series appeared in the *Sun*:

> The tale was so plausible!–so scientifically told!–from such a respectable source–and so much in accordance with former discoveries in the moon!–who could doubt?[139]

An introduction to a reprint in the *Greenville Mountaineer* from South Carolina reads: "If the writer has drawn on his *imagination* for his *facts*, it is one rich in poetical elements, while he shows a skill and cleverness in putting together the materials for his hoax, that entitles him to the merit of an inventor" (original emphases).[140] Many other commentators accorded the author of the hoax great skill in its fabrication (even James Gordon Bennett, who on other occasions, ridiculed the *Sun* for its published half-truths). Brian Thornton argues that the entertainment of the hoax, its fabricated nature, overruled any serious attempt of readers to believe in the veracity of the story. Although many letters to editors published in the wake of the hoax concentrate on the importance of truth(fulness) in journalism, the fabrication did not cut back on the popularity of the penny papers - rather the opposite occurred (Thornton, 2000). The question pertinent to the attraction of the hoax was not, whether the story *was* true but rather, whether it *could be* true. "There was nothing false about the Moon Hoax," remarks Andie Tucher,

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137. *St. Louis Commercial Bulletin and Missouri Literary Register* 16 Sep. 1835: 2.

138. "Wonders of the Moon." *Daily Cleveland Herald* 14 Sep. 1835: 2.

139. "Stupendous Discoveries in the Moon." *Maryland Gazette* 10 Sep. 1835: 2.

140. "Discoveries in the Moon." *Greenville Mountaineer* 19 Sep. 1835: 2.

“except its facts” (1994: 51).

The hoax inspired a public debate about whether technology had in fact, advanced to the degree, that optical instruments could discern the eye color of animals living on the moon’s surface. In his book on P. T. Barnum, Neil Harris underlines that half-truths or hoaxes worked on the public imaginary as an “intellectual exercise” which catered to people’s “passion for detail,” especially when it came to technology (Harris, 1973: 75). In an age when technological innovations were quickly rendering traditional knowledge obsolete, hoaxes satirized this quickening speed of innovation: “Experiencing a complicated hoax was pleasurable because of the competition between victim and hoaxer” (77). Between the ‘operational aesthetic’, as Harris calls the fascination with complicated technology, and its subversion in the hoax, fabricated stories created ample “opportunity to debate the issue of falsity,” which arguably put agency back into the hands of those overwhelmed with technological change (71). The function of the hoax in public discourse was not so much its claim to veracity, but to invite debate about its utter possibility. This is underlined by the fact, that most reprints of the article in other papers, started off to mention the questionable credibility of the story, but then proceeded to reprint the article nonetheless. Ironically, the Moon Hoax exemplifies how the penny papers were related to seventeenth century almanacs in England, which, according to Francis Lieber in the *Encyclopaedia Americana* of 1829, “became conspicuous for the unblushing boldness of their astrological predictions, and their determined perpetuation of popular errors” (Lieber, 1829: 188). The continuity between the penny press and almanacs even extends to the subject matter discussed and presented on its pages. The schema of topicality introduced here was initially based on the temporal structure of a serialized story but it is remarkable for the way it creates suspense along its ‘discoveries’ and anticipates the coming of the next installment. The hoax offered an occasion of public discussion which was in turn upheld with each new revelation that appeared over the course of a week. Pamphlets and reprints in other papers created public attention far beyond the limited sphere of circulation of the *Sun*. The next example of the murder of Helen Jewett in 1836 will further underline the

internal logic of updating an established story in daily installments only this time, the story was based on a real world event. The actual murder of a prostitute by her lover-patron Richard Robinson spurred the continuous coverage by the *Herald*, which from the start of its reporting established the narrative frame of a girl falling from grace in the corrupted big city.

The Murder Mystery of Helen Jewett

Interest in the often dismal social conditions of newcomers in the expanding urban space spurred many reform movements in the 1830s, which provided a background for Bennett to criticize social ills. In August 1830, Bennett had served as court reporter in the murder trial against the two brothers of Joseph White in Salem, where he famously defended the right of the press to record the proceedings of the case as representative of the general public (Carlson 104f.). The disproportionate attention given to trials, murder cases and human interest stories in the penny papers was met with consternation and outright derision by the established mercantile papers. Lambert Wilmer, a veteran journalist, sarcastically commented in 1859 on the "custom of publishing in the journals a full and minute account of criminal trials, cases of rape, seduction, crim. con., etc." Wilmer alleged that such articles threatened the moral integrity of audiences, especially of young readers:

> If familiarity with vice disposes us to embrace it, … the youth of America, blessed as they are with a luxuriant abundance of newspaper reading, must become adepts in iniquity almost as soon as they leave off their diapers (1970: 173).

Although the *Courier & Enquirer* also published accounts of crimes and accidents, the editors railed against the spread of "excitement" through the cheap penny papers which were "showing off a powerful talent at hideous description" of crimes and casualties. Portrayed as a nervous disease, excitement was, according to the editors, a direct effect of being overexposed to gory fare in the pennies, where "[t]he very types are made to assume a blacker darkness, and the paper to seem blanched with agony."[141]

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141. "Excitement." *Courier & Enquirer* 2 Nov 1833: 1.

The most prominent example of such a crime story was the murder of Helen Jewett in April 1836. Murdered at night in a brothel, Jewett's dead body was discovered by the hostess of the *City Hotel* Rosina Townsend. Jewett's regular customer, Richard Robinson, was soon suspected as the murderer because a hatchet and a cloak found near the crime scene were traced back to him. Since the details of the case have been presented in a comprehensive study by Patricia Cline Cohen (1998),[142] the current analysis will focus only on the coverage of the case by the *Herald*. Special attention will be paid to the way in which the *Herald* introduces its main story line, and then refers back to its own reporting as common knowledge. Bennett used the Jewett case as a moral tale to criticize, as he wrote, the '*soi-disant* fashionable' but morally defunct New York society; he "elaborated his conspiracy theory" about a society to which he did not belong (Anthony, 1997: 497). At the heart of this conspiracy were people like Rosina Townsend and her patrons, who seduced and perverted innocent young ladies from the countryside. Robinson in particular epitomized the leisurely, good-looking young clerk, who contributed to the perceived decline in morality by entertaining relationships with different women at the same time.

The story of Helen Jewett starts on Tuesday, April 12, 1835, with a lengthy article on the front page of the *Herald*, presenting several accounts of the murder by witnesses and the persons involved. On page four, Bennett further adds impressions from a "visit to the scene"[143] he had undertaken. He brackets his report by stating that "our city was disgraced on Sunday" before proceeding with a detailed description of Jewett's room and her corpse. The "object if [his] curiosity" was still in her burned "elegant double mahogany bed," next to a shelf of classic English literature and a table covered with magazines. In a mildly pornographic description, Bennett marvels at the "most remarkable sight [he] ever beheld." Jewett's body is described "as polished as the purest Parisian marble … the fine face–the full arms–the beautiful bust … surpassed in every

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142. Different spellings and names exist for the protagonist Helen Jewett (Cline Cohen 52-4)and the spelling will be kept to Helen Jewett but may vary in quotes from original sources.

143. Bennett had already employed a "Visit to the scene" a year earlier, when a huge fire destroyed large parts of Manhattan (21 Dec. 1835: 1). A similar eye-witness account was offered in the *Sun* in 1834 in an article on a "Visit to the Five Points" (*Sun* 29 May 1834: 2).

respect the Venus de Medicis [sic!].” Bennett is “lost in admiration at this extraordinary sight” before leaving the scene and closing the report with the question “In what a horrible condition is a portion of the young men of this city?”[144] The paraphernalia of education and beauty presented around Jewett in a destitute place like a brothel go against Bennett’s expectations. David Anthony remarks that Bennett “encountered ... a scene that frustrated his efforts to classify her” (502). But having found the basic line of the story, Bennett elevates Jewett to the status of a fallen saint and feeds the mystery of her murder.

The next issue of April 13 contains already 3 articles related to the case on the front page, announcing “several strange disclosures” to be published in the days to come. Enumerating again the facts against Robinson, Bennett attests that the clerk’s “probable guilt” should be established on the basis of “clearest, strongest and most undoubted evidence,” which Bennett has just provided with his enumeration. After glorifying Helen Jewett, who “gave grace to its [the brothel’s] licentiousness,” the article delves off in two directions. It accuses the “community” of supporting the immorality (“We are all guilty alike.”) while feeding the “impossible” and “incomprehensible” mystery of the murder, which has turned the city into “confusion, excitement and wonder.” Although the *Herald* openly refrains from getting involved in the official investigation of the case, the paper does not shy away from presenting its own version of the story by providing clues to dispel the “confusion.”[145] The leading article is accompanied by another report from “the scene,” and a reprint of a letter[146] from an admirer of Jewett (a person named “Wandering Willi”) supposedly found among her belongings. The letter sustains the impression that Helen was an admirable person, who liked to stay out of trouble and wanted to dedicate more time to her literary aspirations.[147]

In the issue of April 15, the story of Jewett is taken up indirectly again, in a

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144. “Most Atrocious Murder.” followed by “Visit to the Scene.” *The Herald* 12 Apr. 1836: 4.

145. “Still Further of the Tragedy” *The Herald* 13 Apr. 1836: 1.

146. Further letters of Jewett to be published in the *Herald* are announced 14 Apr. 1836: 2.

147. “Her Literary Correspondence.” *The Herald* 13 Apr. 1836: 1.

defense against a rivaling penny paper, the *Transcript*, which accuses the *Herald* of trying to save Robinson from the death penalty. While the *Transcript* is unmistakably convinced of Robinson's hand in the matter, the *Herald* defends the accused until a proper trial has shown his guilt. The differences are subtle here. The *Transcript* insinuates that the *Herald* is protecting the patrons of the brothel, hence is whitewashing Robinson. The *Herald*, in turn, claims to be neutral and leave the investigation to the authorities, while continuing its own "investigation" of the case, feeding more material on Robinson's "probable guilt," which implicitly foreshadows the expected outcome of the trial. On that ground then, the *Herald* ironically can claim its "independence to stem the torrent of public prejudice against Robinson."[148] The rebuke at the *Transcript* gives Bennett an occasion to fill the space on a day, when no news in the case was forthcoming and keep the story alive. More importantly, the rebuffs against the other penny papers, create a possibility to differentiate the *Herald*'s reporting from the other papers through first quoting and then deriding them.[149] The Helen Jewett story gradually shifts from an account of a murder and its investigation into a publicity scheme where the framing of new facts becomes more important than the facts themselves. Bennett establishes a formula of selection which is based on reprints from other penny papers and his own attempts to stand up as a neutral observer.

The issue of April 16 shows this strategy quite emblematically. The leading article on page one features a reprint of an article from the *Sun*, which contained excerpts from Robinson's journal. Whereas the *Sun* sees a vain attempt here to absolve Robinson of his guilt, the *Herald* questions the authenticity of the journal, which the *Sun* could not have obtained "without the consent of the Police."[150] The article then continues first to

148. *The Herald* 15 Apr. 1836: 1.

149. In the issue of April 18, an accusation against Bennett for forging a letter is reprinted from the *Sun*. Bennett abstains from commenting on the accusation but interprets the *Sun*'s attack as an act of envy at the *Herald*'s increasing circulation ("Decency." *The Herald* 18 Apr. 1836: 2). Another article on April 19 fills three columns of the front page, alternating between reprints from the *Sun* on the guilt of Robinson, and dismissive and insulting retorts from Bennett at the expense of the *Sun*'s editors ("The Robinson Case." *The Herald* 19 Apr. 1836: 1).

150. A further installment of Robinson's diary on May 26 and 27 is reprinted from the *Sun*, combining original passages with commentary from the *Herald*. The second part on May 27 is introduced by questioning the veracity of the text: "We continue to-day from the pamphlet got up by the Sun, the true or fabricated 'Journal,' of poor Robinson–we don't know." Nonetheless, the reprints fill almost two columns of the front page ("Robinson's Journal." *The Herald* 27 May 1836: 1).

discredit the *Sun*, before going into the details of a "visit to the scene," which includes an interview between Bennett and the hostess Rosina Townsend. The conversation is printed in dialogue form with "Q.-" and "A.-" clearly marked. The form of the dialog resembles earlier court reports printed in the *Herald* and marks a transposition from the judicial investigation of criminal cases to journalistic reporting.

As Nils Gunnar Nilsson states "[t]he question-and-answer method used in court became a natural tool for collecting information outside the court" (Nilsson, 1971: 713). Assuming the role of an attorney of the public, Bennett steps into the role of the cross-examiner: "newspaper readers were now the jury," when Bennett started to act as "opener of closed doors, as inquisitor, as detective" (Stephens, 1988: 245, 246). This interview is often quoted as the first verbatim interview in journalism history (Carlson: 146; 160-1),[151] because Bennett supposedly used the technique to obtain new information on the case. But the interview with Rosina Townsend is more than a neutral report of news gathering. Bennett uses the occasion to present his view of the story, by pointing to the "material contradictions" in Townsend's account of events.[152] The interview is used to promote Bennett as an investigator and *The Herald* as the only paper to speak the truth (Stevens, 1991: 48-49). The interview merely confirms what Bennett had already established as the story's basic dramaturgy.

The case was exploited by Bennett to increase circulation and present the *Herald* as an independent, investigative paper through the continuing accusations against the fellow penny and Wall Street press (Carlson, 1942: 143-167). This constellation gave him an opportunity to present himself as an advocate of the people, as a moral example and strong-willed democrat. But in its narcissistic style, the reports from the murder scene were far from independent, showing rather how Bennett started "to make himself an item of news" (Fermer, 1986: 20). In light of this dynamic, Payne's humble assessment that Bennett wanted to "sell news as news and not for the effect it would have on its readers" (Payne, 1925: 256) is rather a euphemism. Bennett relied on

151. Interviewing did not become a standard journalistic practice of news gathering until the 1860's (Hudson, 2010: 563), when it began to "identif[y] journalism as a distinct occupation with its own patterns of behavior" (Schudson, 2003: 81-82).

152. "Further Highly Important Particulars of the Thomas St. Tragedy." *The Herald* 16 Apr. 1836: 1.

conflict and effect in his articles and he did what he could to insert himself in even the most benign news items, referring to himself and his fight with other editors almost incessantly in the first years.[153] Stevens argues that “Bennett hung the story [of Helen Jewett] on every peg he could find” (1991: 47), which is confirmed by even trivial items like notes on the weather or in comparisons to other murder cases.[154]

Similar to the division between the *Sun* and the *Herald* on the issue of Robinson’s guilt, the public was divided as well. Stirred by a series of pamphlets[155] of the story and lavish lithographs of the victim, the reading public was divided over believing in Robinson’s innocence or demanding his execution. Working class men dressed in “white fur hats with black crepe ribbons” (‘Helen Jewett Mourner’) came to stand against supporters of Robinson who were “sporting ‘Robinson cloaks’ and ‘Robinson caps’ in support of the accused clerk” (Anthony, 1997: 489). *The Herald* was feeding the controversy by reporting on a group of “medical goths,” who had supposedly exhumed Helen Jewett’s body.[156] Perpetuating the myth of an innocent and beautiful girl, the article reports that the ‘goths’ were said to have “completed a most elegant and classic skeleton of her bones.”[157] Another article from a day later, meanwhile exposed as a fabrication itself (cf. Cline Cohen 1998), reports of a group of former customers of Jewett, chipping away at Jewett’s bed and distributing the splinters as souvenirs.[158] In the wake of the Jewett case reports on murder cases of women became a staple narrative

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153. The hostility between Bennett and the Wall Street editors culminated in 1840 in what became known as the Moral War (See: Carlson 184-90; Seitz 73-101; Fermer 30-3).

154. On June 15, the *Herald* carried a short note “The weather is commonly mysterious - as much as the murder of Ellen Jewett. Yesterday it was cool - the day before warm … . When are we to have steady weather” (15 June 1836: 1). Also “Another Attempt at a Tragedy.” (23 Apr. 1836: 1) and “Another Awful Consequence of Seduction.” (30 Apr. 1836: 1).

155. See an illustration of such pamphlets in (Burrows and Wallace, 1999: 540). Also (Cline Cohen, 1998: 87-95). The first illustrations depicting Jewett in her room are announced in the *Herald* (14 Apr. 1836: 1). The issue of April 16, published on a Saturday, contains the main articles from Monday, to give late readers a chance to catch up on the state of affairs (16 Apr. 1836: 4). An advertisement for an Helen Jewett pamphlet announced “6 engravings, and illustrations, with portions of her correspondence, and poetical productions. Price 50 cents.” (“Ellen Jewett” *The Herald* 21 Apr. 1836: 2).

156. “Goths in Surgery.” *The Herald* 16 Apr. 1836: 1.

157. “Beautiful Work of Art.” *The Herald* 19 Apr. 1836: 1.

158. “Reliques.” *The Herald* 20 Apr. 1836: 1.

format that was applied in the cases of Mary Rogers (1841)[159] and Sophia Smith (1845). The genre was further exploited by a new type of weekly appearing in the 1840s, “The Flash Press,” that catered explicitly to male readers and offered the one or other alluring illustration along with entertainment news (Cline Cohen et al., 2008).

These examples may suffice to illustrate that Bennett was keenly aware that reported news, if it seemed plausible within a larger story, was equally newsworthy even as a fabrication. In that respect, he was not very different from his rival *The Sun*. His innovation consisted in feeding a previously established story line with new information on a daily basis. Bennett also used reprints and serialization in reporting a topical story over a long time frame, creating the expectation that news on the murder case would continuously appear in the *Herald*. Even three years later, “the blood of Ellen Jewett continually crie[d] from the ground for vengeance on her murderer”[160] as the *Herald* reported occasional news on the new life of Robinson in the Midwest. Bennett realized that an unresolved story could create more attention from audiences than a closed case. The schema of topicality allowed Bennett to furnish news and advertise his own paper as a daily, useful resource for readers to stay in tune with developing events. In light of these structural shifts of the journalistic practice of the time, Robinson’s eventual acquittal seems like a mere footnote to the story.

159. For the detailed account of the murder of the “beautiful seegar girl” Mary Rogers and its adaptation by Edgar Allan Poe for the story of “Marie Rogêt,” see (Stashower, 2006).

160. “The Innocent Boy.” *The Herald* 21 Nov. 1839: 2.

Advertising the *Herald*

> *That a cause leads to an effect, is scarcely more certain than that, so far as Morals are concerned, a repetition of effect tends to the generation of a cause. Herein lies the principle of what we so vaguely term "habit."* (Poe, 1850: 605).

The Jewett case illustrates that the reporting of news became structurally aligned with the daily publication schedule of the penny papers. Along with pamphlets and handbills, the penny papers kept stories active because communicating with the public over controversial issues assured continued patronage of the paper. But news as a form of daily updated narrative was not the only way to establish a structure of communication. Bennett is also an exemplary case to underline how the audience itself was addressed and reflected on the pages of the paper. Whereas letters from correspondents had formerly been sources of news, the form of the letter was already appropriated by editors educating their readers on the benefit of owning and paying for a private paper. Bennett further developed the letter form as a way to address his audience and advertise his paper. The use of letters in the early issues of the *Herald* is certainly not a form of interactive audience relation. Bennett writes letters to himself in which he imagines relations to audiences. He instrumentalizes a communicative schema for lending his paper an air of responsiveness and sustain its own legitimacy as a public communicator. Letters offer a chance to voice opinions, impart news or ridicule competitors without having to stand up as the author of such content. They are not a sign of intense debate but rather they *stage debate for the audience* with the result that the *Herald* appears as a neutral medium that merely prints what others are saying.

At the climax of the Jewett case in 1836, for example, Bennett printed an editorial letter to seamstresses who were supposedly gathering to prepare a strike. Following the address "my pretty creatures," Bennett assured the seamstresses that he would "show … no mercy" on their employers, if the latter failed to raise wages.[161] The chauvinist attitude expressed in the letter is at the same time an occasion to sustain the *Herald*'s

161. "Address to Seamstresses and Tailoresses." *The Herald* 27 May 1836: 1.

claim of independence from business and party interests. A year later, Bennett publishes a selection of letters from female readers, which exuberantly praise the editor's independent character and sharp wit. Yet, as the tone of the letters is overtly positive - "admirable Bennett," "my dear Bennett" - and the replies are inserted sequentially, Bennett's assurance that "there's no humbug with me" rather dimly covers up the fabrication.[162] The letter form becomes a way to connect to readers by imagining relations and reflexively answering in a personal style. During the Moral War between the *Herald* and the Wall Street papers in 1840, a letter signed by "Truth" praises Bennett for his "fearless and independent manner [in] exposing dishonesty and immorality" to which he replies that only a "better and cheaper paper" will be able to compete with the *Herald*.[163] Of course, such a paper did not exist, according to the editor's own estimation.

The Jewett case also took Bennett's attacks against the penny rivals and the Wall Street press to new heights. Apart from lecturing his audiences on the benefits of the *Herald*, Bennett fed his hostility to the penny press to claim superior legitimacy for the *Herald* as an independent news medium. Bennett demanded "penitentiary" for the "thieves" Benjamin Day and the later editor of the *Sun*, Moses Y. Beach, in the same list that called for "Death" for the suspected murderer Robinson.[164] Such attacks continued the already established feud with Day, that Bennett had started in December 1835. Day was called an "infidel" throughout this campaign, due to his association with the abolitionist and women's rights activist, Fanny Wright, for whom Day had worked as printer of the *Free Enquirer* in 1832 (see above). Bennett insinuates that Day was associated with radical libertarians and atheists as publisher of Richard Carlile's *Every*

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162. "Real Magnetism - Female Correspondence." *The Herald* 12 Dec. 1837: 2. See also a telling example in June 1836: "They [the ladies] pore over our columns–laugh, smile, get angry, cry, dry up their tears, smile, and laugh again in all their beauty and loveliness–God bless them!" ("Advertising." 24 June 1836: 1).

163. *The Herald* 1 June 1840:4.

164. "Indictments Standing Over From Last Term." *The Herald* 21 Apr. 1836: 1.

Women's Book (1826),[165] which advocated free love and contraception to enhance sexual pleasure for men and women alike. Bennett thus presented himself as an apostle of Victorian morals, affirming the validity of such morals for his readers by publicly campaigning against Day. The *Herald*'s rivalry with the *Sun*, which had built its circulation on the basis of a fabricated story ("The moon hoax"), gave Bennett the basic outlines of his attacks on Day, who was regarded as a threat to conservative morality. Fanny Wright and Day were promoting, in Bennett's words, the "indiscriminate prostitution" of women, and were intent on "amalgamating the black and white races together," which would bring about a "horrible demoralization too hideous to picture."[166] Subsequently, the *Herald* dug up old copies of the *Free Enquirer*, and started citing passages which sustained the legitimacy of his attacks.

The series "Sketches of Infidelity," published 31 December 1835 and 8 January 1836, portrayed Day as Francis Wright's disciple and "chere amie [sic!]." Bennett accused both of "infidel fanatism."[167] The *Sun* appeared as the "continuation" of the *Free Enquirer*, which sought to propagate "infidelity, abolition, amalgamation, and every species of immorality and social disorganization" by offering a cheap popular paper.[168] In June, Bennett published what was "said to be a copy of a letter" from Day to Wright, where Day had supposedly assured Wright of his love ("my dear mistress, my Fanny, my love, my directress") and had suggested to use the *Sun* as a medium for their reform cause. The wording and rhetoric of this letter emulate Bennett's basic story scheme but since it is introduced as an external communication, Bennett can use the letter as a factual support for his own claims.[169] Having fed the theme and the looming

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165. In his overview on the impact of the book, Michael Bush makes no mention of Benjamin Day being involved in the production of a book or pamphlet in the United States. Bush suggests that the radical reformer and atheist Carlile was impressed by Francis Wright's 'Infidel Mission' in the United States and wanted to imitate her success in Great Britain (Bush, 1998: 113f.). This contradicts the *Herald's* repeated claim, that Wright was a touring promoter of atheism to spread Carlile's ideas in the United States.

166. "Abolition Movements." *The Herald* 5 Dec. 1835: 2.

167. "Sketches of Infidelity. No. 1" *The Herald* 31 Dec. 1835: 2. See also the article "Shocking Impudence" (Jan. 15) on Day's and Wright's "wicked project to disorganize society" (p.2) as well as "Extraordinary Disclosures of a Nunnery" (20 Jan. 1836: 2), where Day is accused of promoting "the destruction of religion and all morality."

168. "The New York Sun." *The Herald* 5 Jan. 1836: 2.

169. "Fanny Wright in Motion." *The Herald* 17 June 1836: 2.

threat of anarchy coming from the editor of the *Sun* for a while, Bennett started using the *Sun* as an antagonist to distinguish the *Herald* as the speaker of truth and the preserver of morality, increasing its importance for the city's audience by a steadily increasing circulation.

Not surprisingly, Bennett did not want the *Herald* to be identified as a penny paper, having already raised the price to two cents on August 18, 1836.[170] In November of the same year, he writes:

> Really the penny press is in fair way of going to the devil. [...] No character–no reputation–no establishment–no press can be stable, that is not founded on virtue and morality in the lives of its conductors. The penny press is going to perdition.[171]

On another occasion Bennett states: "In less than six months there will not be a penny paper published in New York." Instead, he will "make the daily newspaper the great organ of civilization for the nineteenth century, in religion, in philosophy, in business, in literature and in finance."[172] Such self-righteous statements clutter the pages of almost every issue of the *Herald*, which would merit dedicating an independent study to the advertising history of the paper. For the moment, a few examples may suffice to underline that the *Herald* catered as much to its advertising patrons as it addressed the general reader. While patronage allowed for independence from party funding, the paper also needed to renew contact to audiences through the continuity it offered as a structure of public communication. The Jewett story shows, that Bennett exploited the case to fill the pages with diversified material relating to the story. The issue of April 19, 1836, features articles and notes on three of its four pages, including reprints from other papers and letters from readers. Next to these topical articles, advertising for patent medicines, garments and consumer items is presented as other newsworthy facts about the city. This loose blend of information is succinctly summarized in a serialized reprint on the "Fine Art of Advertising" in 1835:

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170. "A Strike - Herald Two Cents Per Copy." *The Herald* 18 Aug. 1836: 1.

171. "The Penny Papers." *The Herald* 8 Nov. 1836: 2.

172. "Downfall of the Penny, and Disease Among the Press." *The Herald* 10 Aug. 1837: 2. See also "Benefits of Advertising in the Herald": "The Herald is an organ of business and intellectual amusement combined, in which editor, printers, and patrons have all a deep interest. We and our advertisers will all go ahead - all take a fresh start - and all get rich before two years are out" (15 Mar. 1836: 1).

> Every man is influenced in all things by imagination … . The chief thing in every business–and more especially so in the retail trade–is the Art of practicing gracefully upon the corporeal senses through the imagination of the public by the exercise of your own imagination, combined with factual experience. [...] It is of no use to tell a lie that nobody will believe; but it is almost impossible to invent a lie which many will not believe. You have only, therefore, to invent such a one as the great number will believe (...).[173]

Fact or fiction, as long as they engaged the public imagination and boosted circulation, were similarly undifferentiated like advertising and editorial content. The emphasis in this passage is not on information or political independence. The article self-consciously appeals to the 'corporeal senses' as the basis of excitement and sensation, proclaiming that a lie (or fabrication) will equally engage the readers in their imaginative capacities as long as it sounds plausible enough.

Articles in the *Herald* on the benefits of advertising in the paper are legion, but typically follow the same strategy. They rely on the opposition of the *Herald* from the penny press or the established Wall Street press, underline its independence and eventually regard increasing circulation as the proof of the paper's superiority in engaging audiences in its communications. In January 1836, an article starts: "The *Herald*'s rapid increase of circulation, popularity, advertising and patronage, appears to annoy excessively the nerves of the Sun and Transcript." On the other front, Bennett is no less courteous: "My great purpose is to upset–reform–knock up–and revolutionize the impudent, blustering, corrupt, immoral Wall Street press."[174] In June 1836, Bennett had started to charge for advertisements before they would appear (Carlson 192-3). "Cash in Advance" became the motto of his new advertising strategy, reprinted in his masthead and in articles on advertising: "[I]t is all done for cash–all money in advance … cash for every thing."[175] The purely pecuniary interest in the paper, however, relied on praising nonmaterial benefits of subscribing to the paper to its readers.

The common practice of reprinting advertisements for months on end in the Wall Street papers gave way to a more flexible way of inserting notices on current business opportunities and consumer products. Along with this change, the columns of identical

173. "Advertising Considered as one of the Fine Arts." (Part Two) *The Herald* 16 Dec. 1835: 1. Part One appeared on 14 December 1835.

174. "Bread and Butter in Danger." *The Herald* 12 Aug. 1836: 2.

175. "Rapid Increase." *The Herald* 31 Mar. 1837: 2.

advertisements began changing on a frequent basis, which supposedly also made reading the paper more attractive for novelty's sake. "It was the inflation of the credit system," writes Bennett, "that inflated the Wall Street papers."[176] *The Herald*, by contrast, having a smaller format, offered timely information to a widely differentiated readership, "the fashionable, the gay, the industrious, the mechanic, the merchant, the banker, the broker, and even the lazy reader."[177] In order to find effective ways to address this heterogeneous public, the *Herald* recommends that advertisers be "short and pithy" so that notices will be "more read and better remembered"[178]–even by a 'lazy reader'. Because advertisements now changed frequently and were shorter, the effect of advertising needed to rely on its "indirect nature" through repetition. "A faint and unfrequent system of advertising," advises Bennett, "does not succeed even in proportion."[179] The same schema of topicality that distinguished the penny press now began to qualify advertising as well. Regular exposure to advertising began to turn news readers into consumers.

The new attention given to daily installments of an established news story along with a heightened emphasis on topical advertising underlined the changing preferences for selecting and presenting news items in the penny papers. By seeking subjects which could be exploited for public sensation - either as hoax or murder mystery - these stories created a demand for follow-ups and served editors to advertise their growing circulation to business patrons. The newspaper was designed as a daily resource of useful information and established a structure of communication in which audiences were given a reliable frame of reference to observe change. Graphic and narrative conventions helped to create expectations among readers for the next issue of the paper. Active reporting and the seeking out of new information further contributed to a greater topical emphasis of news items, which relied less and less on random correspondences. As Mott observes, the pennies "caused a shift in the concept of news" (1962: 243).

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176. "A Revolution in Advertising." *The Herald* 15 Apr. 1837: 2.

177. "Advertising." *The Herald* 19 May 1836: 2.

178. "To the Advertising Public." *The Herald* 25 May 1839: 2.

179. "Use of Advertising." *The Herald* 11 Aug. 1838: 4.

Their schema of topicality, however, not only concerned the subject of their reporting but was as much a result of the printer's practice, their market orientation and daily production routines.

Dematerializing Information - From News Boats to the Telegraph

The schema of topicality was the result of various transposition of practices and their subsequent revaluation in respect to daily journalism. It was based on the printing routines and graphic conventions, use habits of ephemeral print media, and the production of news as a distinct narrative genre that created temporal continuity within the frame of the newspaper. The introduction of the telegraph as an individual technology of communication in the 1840s tied in with this already established schema of topicality rather than instating it. The simple availability of the telegraph did not initiate a new awareness of time in news production during the 1840s. When the telegraph was first installed between Washington and Baltimore in 1844, its benefit for newspapers was not readily apparent, also because the network of telegraph connections was unsteady and patchy. Although the telegraph began to dissociate communication from physical transport,[180] it initially remained anchored into a network of news couriers, express riders and other forms of material transport.

A boy delivering newspaper to the public became common in the 1830s and continued well into the telegraphic age, when 'telegraph messenger boys' came to represent the human end of an advanced system of communication, which crucially relied on manual labor for the final link in the distribution chain.

> From the start of the first commercial telegraph line in 1845, young boys were employed to ferry handwritten messages into and out of the electric telegraph system, to and from individual customers. About the same time as such messages became known as 'telegrams,' the boys started to become known as 'messengers' (Downey, 2002: 3).

Despite the seemingly immaterial simultaneity of telegraphic communication, the messenger boys remained tied to space in important ways although the telegraph

180. The transmission of electrical signals through telegraphy overturned the common notion of communication as a form of transport. See (Williams, 1963: 121-34; Carey, 1989: 201-30; Standage, 2007: 2f.).

seemed to annul the spatial dimension of news-gathering. As Durham Peters has argued, the telegraph was a "space-binding medium" as opposed to "time binding" print media like newspapers or books because it initiated "telecommunication" or 'communication at a distance' (Durham Peters, 1999: 139). However, during the initial period of the introduction of the technology, such divisions were not as clear-cut. Although the newspaper did structure the perception of time passing, the variety of communications printed on its pages also had a "space-binding" function, especially in local papers that were based on correspondences from all over the country. The telegraph in turn, although it was distinguished by its electromagnetic instantaneousness, needed a spatially seamless network of wires, an uninterrupted electric current and operators at relay stations ready to transcribe incoming messages. If anything, telegraphic communications were as uncertain as express riders during the first decade of the new technology.

For newspapers, the delivery of timely news depended in great measure on resources of physical transport through ships, mail coaches, express riders and even carrier pigeons. The news race between different mercantile papers in the 1820s and later between the pennies and the mercantile papers in New York consisted chiefly in using the most efficient combination of such resources, depending on their (seasonal) availability, reliability and degree of institutionalization. The telegraph eased this dependency on physical transport but it did not become the sole source of news after the completion of the network in 1846-1848. Rather, the telegraph became embedded in a network with other news transport resources which remained subject to the constraints and vagaries of space. The opening of the Erie Canal in October 1825 had already increased the traffic of goods and people going to and through New York from the heartland. This made transport of correspondences easier "especially after the federal government declared the railroad a postal route in 1838" (Zboray, 1993: 59).

The most sought-after news continued to come from Europe, especially since they arrived at irregular intervals and the perilous passage could interrupt the flow of news at any time. In order to keep the transmission of news from Europe to short intervals,

several attempts were made to procure news packages from incoming vessels, once they neared the American Eastern shore. The practice of picking up packs of foreign newspapers from incoming transatlantic ships originated with the Boston coffee house employee Samuel Topliff in 1811, who offered subscriptions of foreign and trade news for business people (Rosewater, 1930: 4-10; Mott, 1962: 194f.). The same practice was also championed by the editor of the *Charleston Daily Courier*, Aaron Smith Willington, who employed the method especially as a way to receive foreign news earlier than his competitors. Willington's scoop late in 1814 was to be the first to report on the Peace of Ghent (Carlson, 1942: 57; Stephens, 1988: 231). James Gordon Bennett had worked for Willington in 1823 as a translator of Spanish correspondences from South America. After Bennett had started the *Herald* in 1835 in New York, he continued the practice of picking up newspapers from incoming ships. But the news race by boat already had a tradition among the established mercantile dailies in the 1820s in New York itself. James Watson Webb of the *Courier* and David Hale of the *Journal of Commerce* were fighting a "newspaper boat war in 1831," which involved the older "Association of Morning Papers" as a third player (Rosewater, 1930: 18; Schwarzlose, 1989: 16f.).

News boats waited around Sandy Hook off the coast of New Jersey for transatlantic ships nearing the port of New York (Levermore, 1901: 454-55).[181] The narrow passage to the port made it necessary for transatlantic packet boats to wait for pilot boats to guide them. Depending on the season, these transatlantic boats needed between five to seven weeks for the passage, bringing in goods, passengers, newspapers, and correspondences from Europe. As ships had to wait for customs and health inspections they could be detained outside the harbor for weeks before discharging their cargo. Editors of newspapers "went to great pains to secure [foreign news] at the earliest possible moment" (Albion, 1970: 52), trying to reduce further delays by intricate transport and express schemes between the coast and the editorial office. One such scheme involved a horse express rider rushing to a "semaphore on the

181. As Carlson notes: "The swift-sailing craft would often go as far as a hundred miles beyond Sandy Hook to lie and wait for the incoming ships" (1942: 103).

Brooklyn side" to signal short versions of the most important news to James Watson Webb's office at the *Courier* (Schwarzlose, 1989: 18).

In addition to news boats on the Atlantic coast, express riders also connected major cities on the continent. In 1830, the *Courier & Enquirer* famously employed a pony express to bring the presidential address first to Baltimore, where it was shipped to Philadelphia and then rushed to New York, only to reach readers in less than thirty hours after the address had been delivered (Crouthamel, 1989: 11f.). The procedure was emulated by other papers and annually repeated as a form of contest. A regular horse express with eight relay stations was installed by the *Journal of Commerce* between Washington D.C. and New York in January 1833, and later continued "as a government system" under the operative management of the postal service in the same month (Schwarzlose, 1989: 21).

The news race between the *Herald* and the *Sun* in the late 1830s and early 1840s became an iconic rivalry. "The Sun went in for carrier pigeons and for some time had a dovecote on its roof" (Rosewater, 1930: 23) apart from maintaining its own news boat. Bennett entered the game with his own fleet of boats in 1837 - the *Teaser, Celeste*, and *Tom Boxer*. Aggressiveness in the provision of timely news can be seen as a direct effect of this new form of newspaper, which had to attract unstable audiences on a daily basis. The editors pursuing to outdo each other in the provision of exclusive news thus "benefited their readers and ... promoted their newspapers' public images" (Schwarzlose, 1989: 11).

With the introduction of steam ships in 1838, the trade in foreign news changed. Although the first steam ship *Sirius* had arrived in New York in 1838, the regular routes of the Cunarders, as they were called, would later head for Halifax and Boston between 1840 and 1847 instead of New York (Rosewater, 1930: 27f.). Although the travel time between Europe and the United States shrank to "ten days to two weeks" (33), important news from Europe now had to be transported from the northern cities to New York. In order to profit from the more stable and quicker ship connection in the North,

New York editors resorted to using pony expresses, carrier pigeons,[182] and even employed “compositors setting type as they travelled” on express trains rushing from Boston to New York (Albion, 1970: 334).

Although this intricate network of different transport media points toward stronger specialization in the news gathering, the channels themselves were not very specialized: “the newspaper remained interfaced with a transportation system that … was better equipped to move people and goods than it was to move information.” The same channels of transport served the wider public as much as the specialized demands of editors, which meant that transportation remained “primitive and uncertain as a mover of news.” The close relation of physical transport with the transmission of news only gradually began to break up with the relatively expensive and exclusive use of the telegraph “pushing news-gathering and reporting beyond the public’s own accessibility to news.” Although the telegraph was a more specialized service of communication than written letters and mailed newspapers, its use in journalism remained tied to existing journalistic practices of news gathering, continuing the news race by boat in a different medium (Schwarzlose, 1989: 28-32). As publishing newspapers became more specialized in its use of technologies in general, the telegraph became one part in a network of express riders, optical signaling systems (semaphores), and news boats, which all together served newspaper editors as an information ecosystem. The early days of this ecosystem are marked by a coexistence of physical transport of messages with wired transmissions, which marked a “transition between transportation and communication” (Ibid., 46). The telegraph became built into established ways of acquiring domestic and foreign news, before it changed the organizational structure of the news enterprise itself, exemplified by the founding of Associated Press in 1846.

The details of the invention of the telegraph by Samuel Morse and his initial encounter with telegraphy and electricity have been dealt with elsewhere (Harlow, 1936: 58-95; Standage, 2007: 22-30; Sprenger, 2012: 205-330). From a perspective of

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182. Similar to Paul Julius Reuter in Germany in the 1850s, Daniel H. Craig started to offer a service of carrier pigeons in 1843 to deliver news from Halifax to Boston. Because his airborne messengers were faster than their earth-bound counterparts, newspaper editors from New York tried to suppress Craig’s competitive advantage (Rosewater 30-31).

practice it will suffice to say that Morse may not have been the first or only one to develop a telegraphic signaling system, but in the words of the *Herald*, Morse's telegraph was novel because its "mode of operation [was] plain and simple."[183] Morse's telegraph combined several elements known in separate sectors of science and communication before: a closed electric circuit interrupted by a metallic switch, a battery supplying the energy for transmissions and a coding scheme to represent letters as combinations of long and short sounds, translating on-current and off-current translated into impressions on a paper slip. According to Standage, Morse determined his code "[b]y counting the number of copies of each letter *in a box of printer's type* … so that the most common letters had the shortest equivalents in code" (2007: 39, emphasis added).

After years of experimentation with the technology and many thwarted attempts to gather funds, Morse and his partner Alfred Vail[184] succeeded in March 1843 to secure a government grant of $30,000 to build an experimental line along the rail tracks between Baltimore and Washington D.C. The first transmission was made 1 May 1844, during the Whig convention in Baltimore ("The ticket is Clay and Freylinghuysen…"), which Vail at Annapolis Junction telegraphed to Morse in Washington, in advance of a train carrying passengers from Baltimore who later verified the message. This "publicity stunt" created great public curiosity about the first transmission on the completed line later that month. On 24 May 1844 Morse famously telegraphed to Vail in Baltimore "What hath God wrought" followed by "Have you any news?" (Blondheim, 1994: 33).

The Herald in New York first mentions the successful transmission of a telegraph message in an article dated 28 May. According to the article, the most fascinating aspect of the new technology was the "new species of consciousness" it had created. A message appearing almost simultaneously with an event was truly novel. The simultaneousness in communication changed the perception of time. The correspondent

183. "Facilis Descensus Averni." *The Herald* 27 May 1844: 1.

184. On the role of Vail in developing the telegraph's practical technology and implementation see also (Pope, 1888).

writes: “it requires no small intellectual effort to realize that this is a fact that *now is*, and not one that *has been*.”[185] In June 1844, *The Herald* mentions Morse’s invention in a salutary article on the front page. Reprinted from the *Baltimore American*, the article highlights that the telegraph will be of “practical and every day utility in the business transactions of the country,” underlining this point by a practical example of price negotiations “in the space of half an hour” between New York and New Orleans. Drawing on the analogy to railroads connecting the cities of the nation, the article summarizes that “the day of iron bars must now yield to that of copper wires.”[186] Two months later, the *Herald* offers a short history of signal communication at a distance, announcing the telegraph as a “new era in civilization.” After presenting a history of telegraphic systems - from antique fire signals to Abraham Chappe’s optical telegraph in France - the article closes on the ironic note that “[w]e have no space at present to follow out the reflections which this subject naturally excites” although “that mysterious and subtle agent” is presented as beneficial for the connection of the continent. Without further elaborating the implications of the telegraph for communication, the *Herald* announces instead that it has renewed its typefaces.[187]

Seitz argues that Bennett “was the first to grasp the importance of the new device to his profession” (1928: 120). Rosewater sees the verbatim reprint of one of the first telegraph conversation as an attempt by the *Herald* to “confound persisting doubters” of the utility of the new technology (1930: 35). But the article quoted by both authors from 4 June 1844, is more ambiguous than the overt message may suggest. The article refers to the Democratic Convention also taking place in Baltimore later in May 1844 (cf. Harlow 100f.). Titled as “Annihilation of Space,” the article gives a verbatim report of the telegraph conversation which tried to verify the rejection of Silas Wright to serve as candidate for the vice-presidency next to James Polk. Since irony was common even in news articles at the time, the irony here is subtle because it plays on the insecurity of the

185. “Washington - Correspondence of the Herald.” *The Herald* 30 May 1844: 4, original emphases.

186. “Morse’s Magnetic Telegraph.” *The Herald* 6 June 1844: 1.

187. “A New Era in Civilization - The Electric Telegraph.” *The Herald* 5 Aug. 1844: 2. followed by “Approach of Great National Prosperity - The Fall Business - Position and Prospects of the New York Herald.” *The Herald* 5 Aug. 1844: 2.

new medium and the new temporality between report and event. The actual message of the reported "conversation" is an attempt to verify what is already known - that Wright declined. Before quoting the actual conversation, the article joyously announces "This shows what can be done" but the blandness of the exchange suggests that what can be done, does not amount to much. The way the news is presented by the *Herald*, ironically plays on the temporal dissonance[188] between the printed report on June 4, the original news dated May 29, and the reference to an event on May 26. The conversation consists in only one fact, which is verified over and over again, in other words, which becomes redundant in the act of transmission and which is thus the opposite of information. The closing note mentions that "the distance from Baltimore to Washington is thirty-six miles," which is not very far, even in contemporary dimensions. The supposed 'annihilation of space' by telegraphy is presented as a redundant transmission of already established facts between places not very far apart.[189]

This interpretation of the article support's Schwarzlose's assessment, contrary to Seitz's and Rosewater's, that Bennett initially was reluctant to embrace the possibilities of the telegraph right away, preferring to rely on his established express network (cf. (Schwarzlose, 1989: 40). Similarly, Standage argues that "Bennett ... assumed that the telegraph would actually put newspapers out of business." Because it simplified and accelerated the provision of news, the "only role left for printed publications, it seemed, would be to comment on the news and provide analysis" (Standage 149). This reluctance to adopt the telegraph as a technology of news-gathering explains why it was first used in conjunction with established express routes of material transport. The "mixture of telegraph and transportation links" (Schwarzlose 57f.) became a new resource for news-gathering, not the telegraph alone. Up until the 1850s, "the electric telegraph ... was used sparingly" by newspapers "because the income of the best papers

188. Blondheim argues that the different speeds of telegraphic transmission and physical transport could create a temporal "dissonance" on the pages of papers. Up-to-date information could be placed next to a reports several weeks old. This would lead to strange juxtapositions between correspondents expressing uncertainty about the outcome of battles, for example, while the results were already known at the moment of printing (66).

189. "Annihilation of Space." *The Herald* 4 June 1844: 2. The first short note, marked "Baltimore, 7 P.M. Wednesday [May 29]" on Wright's decision appeared Friday, 31 May 1844: 2 in the *Herald.*

did not yet justify incurring extraordinary expenses" (Smith, 1891: 529). The acceptance of the technology crucially hinged on establishing a reliable network of intercity links.

Amos Kendall, former postmaster general between 1835 and 1840, had joined Morse and Vail in May 1845 and proposed to develop a network of telegraph lines "radiating out from New York using private money" instead of government funds (Standage, 2007: 53). Kendall contributed his expertise in postal networks to the task of expanding a system of wires from New York along the Easter seaboard and down to New Orleans. As a co-founder of the *Magnetic Telegraph Company*, Kendall was remunerated disproportionately high compared to Vail and Morse, who were unable to turn their invention into a profitable enterprise without a network.[190] The "embryonic telegraph," writes Schwarzlose, "had no obvious institutional home in which to mature" (ibid., 41). Although genealogically linked to visual signaling systems like semaphores, the new form of electric "transport" of messages did not fit into the then common schemas to understand the exchange of messages. The obscurity of an electric signal carrying meaningful information deterred the first witnesses of Morse's demonstrations because it severed (and questioned) the connection of transport to communication. But the network of telegraph connection between major cities in the East - from Boston via New York and Philadelphia to Baltimore and Washington D.C. - was eventually established in 1846, linking newspaper editors in New York to Congress in the South and the Cunard-line harbor in Boston (Schwarzlose, 1989: 43-45). The last link to New Orleans in the South was not completed before 1848.[191]

The already established telegraph network in the North prompted the foundation of the New York State Associated Press in 1846, which tried to channel interest in and profit from the new fast connections for its affiliates. This early association is not to be confounded with the 'associated press of New York' formed later by the *Herald, Sun, Journal of Commerce, Tribune, Courier & Enquirer,* and *Express* between 1846 and

190. See Schwarzlose 38-43, and (Thompson, 1947: 101f.).

191. For the background of the installation of the transatlantic telegraph connection, sponsored by "a group of New Yorkers" (Albion, 1970: 334), and its short-lived fame in 1858 see (Standage, 2007: ch. 5). The first reliable transatlantic cable went into operation in 1866.

1848. From the open hostility between the editors of mercantile and the penny press in the 1830s, an effort at cooperation for mutual benefit in effect appeared very unlikely. Yet, the inadvertent effect of the telegraph and its operators' policies was that competition in the news business was not encouraged through the telegraph but disappeared in an instant. Rosewater claims that "the system of telegraphic news service was wasteful, costly, and, too frequently, ineffective" for journalistic purposes (Rosewater, 1930: 57). Limited bandwidth and unstable connections[192] in a way enforced cooperation between newspapers for the gathering of news, since identical messages from different reporters on location, as well as the "15-minute-rule" (Blondheim, 1994: 62f.) set by telegraph companies for uninterrupted use of the connection, limited the competitive edge over other papers. The sudden surge in communications in and out of the editorial office also found its limits in the still editor-centric organizational structure of the publishing houses.

> News-gathering by telegraph differed dramatically in its organizational implications from the editorial exchange [of newspapers]. It transformed news gathering into a dynamic process, requiring active control of a complex, interactive, and potentially continuous operation (Blondheim 56).

This processual dimension of news contributed to the "differentiation between the editorial and business functions of the larger newspapers" (ibid., 59). Having access to a permanent telegraph network along with organizational changes to process unending communications laid the ground to shift competition between news papers from the news-gathering to the marketing side.

> [T]he nature of the telegraph as a system, coupled with the limitations of the managerial structure of the contemporary daily, brought about the cooperative agreements reached in rapid sequence in the summer of 1846. This was the underlying cause for the formation of the New York Associated Press (ibid., 59).

With the establishment of the *Associated Press* in the period between 1846 and '48, the

192. Cf. Schwarzlose: "Editors were frustrated by the early lines' shaky performance, rebelled at the cost of telegraphic news-gathering, and resorted to codes to cut costs and protect their dispatches from thieving telegraphers and editors." Using short forms or codes became a common practice to evade the high cost-per-letter charged by the telegraph companies, which, in turn, "retaliated by threatening to eliminate press rates" (75f.). The privacy of messages, more or less preserved in postal transport, was a crucial argument against the telegraph. Because messages needed to be dictated to operators and repeated at internetwork relay stations, business and newspaper clients were reluctant to adopt the telegraph. See N. Katherine Hayles' essay "Technogenesis in Action: Telegraph Code Books and the Place of the Human" (Hayles, 2012) for a discussion of the necessity to code telegraphic communications apart from their mere technical encoding in electric signals.

rivalry between the papers abated on the news-gathering front: “The NYAP [New York Associated Press] represented the formalization and institutionalization of de facto practices. It originated as a series of working arrangements, dating from the summer of 1846” (ibid., 65). Although the initiative to found AP has been, somewhat inconsistently, ascribed to Bennett (Hudson 609f.), Blondheim convincingly argues that Moses E. Beach of the *Sun* worked towards a more cooperative way of news-gathering to avoid redundant reporting which had became especially apparent during the Mexican War of 1846 (Blondheim 50f.). Eventually, the association also started to maintain its own steam ship in 1848, tellingly called - *Newsboy* (Rosewater, 1930: 67).

The effect of syndicated news transmitted via telegraph was that the style of news changed for these messages. Tucher argues that “the high per-word toll made a financial burden of the adjective and the opinion and turned a lean, streamlined prose style into an economic asset” (Tucher, 1994: 194). Features of journalistic news writing, like inverted pyramid reporting which placed the most important facts in the top part of an article, were also prompted by telegraph transmissions, that proved unreliable (Stephens, 1988: 253).[193] These narrative and textual features of news reports along with more specialized, cooperative forms of news-gathering, contributed to the institutionalization of journalistic practices, underlining Michael Schudson’s claim to a growing independence of the journalistic “textual genre” itself (1987: 407). But the course of this institutionalization depended on a number of factors, which lay as much in technological developments, cooperation, the nation’s geography and the propensity of editors to shift from a ‘time-binding’ to a ‘space-binding medium.’

While the telegraph existed at first in conjunction with physical ways of transport, the pony expresses to the West Coast were eventually rendered obsolete with the completion of the transcontinental telegraph line in 1861 which ran along the very same tracks the quadrupeds had trotted on (Standage 59f.). The provision of news by journalists changed with quicker media of transmission, which could deliver information in non-material form. The telegraph, typewriter and later the telephone

193. See also (Dicken-Garcia, 1989: 53-55) for an analysis of the effect of telegraph technology on the form of news during the Civil War Era.

"gave a pronounced stimulus to the use of speed in journalism" (Wiener, 2007: 59), a trend which had already started with the penny press' emphasis of topicality. With electronic media wired into the very structure of journalistic reporting, newspaper journalism foraged into becoming a "realtime medium," which needed to compete with radio and television in the twentieth century (cf. Wenzel, 2001).

Summary

This chapter has presented the emergence of the penny press in the 1830s as the transposition of various practices of news production into a new structure of public communication. Originating in the printer's workshop, the pennies were circulated like other printed ephemera. They found an audience not accustomed to owning a private paper by being distributed on markets and streets. The steady income from street sales ended the structural problem of 'deadbeat readers' that had plagued newspaper printers for decades. By making their paper a useful resource of daily renewed knowledge about the city and the world, the penny editors habitualized readers to consume a daily paper. Usefulness became both a graphic and an editorial principle; it transposed graphic practices from almanac printing, before making the common exposure to topical news into a communal experience of otherwise unrelated individuals. In order to offer a sense of continuity among the perceived quick pace of change in the 1830s, the penny press renewed contact to audiences through the repetitiveness of their story formats, the serialization of stories - whether fictional or factual - and through greater attention to the topicality of their news. The schema of topicality introduced by the penny press marked the beginning of a news medium, which offered diversified, topical information and entertainment to a general audience while increasingly relying on advertising for revenue and specialized technologies for news-gathering. What had started as practices associated with the printer's and publisher's trade began to take institutional forms of modern journalism by the end of the 1840s, when newspapers foraged into becoming realtime topical media.

3: Photography and the Schema of Objectivity, 1890-1920

Objectivity in American journalism has been largely discussed in its importance for legitimizing journalism as a privileged structure of public communication. Objectivity is perennially invoked as either an ideal or a norm of journalistic practice (Lichtenberg, 1991). To associate this professional ideal with the emergence of a particular technology has so far attracted little attention in journalism research, where objectivity is widely attributed to practices such as double-checking facts, crediting sources, and using statistical data in news reports. While these practices suggest the introduction of a specific form of 'procedural objectivity' for the preparation of news reports, their emergence in the early twentieth century coincides with the introduction of photographic images in news media. Although the objectivity of the camera differs significantly from the positivist ideal of objectivity, the aim of this part is to show that the 'schema of objectivity' in journalism emerged in close conjunction with the cultural valuation of photographic images in printed periodicals around the turn of the twentieth century. The introduction of photography in news offers a prime example of how the material, the cognitive and the social dimensions of a practice intersected to value a new technology for journalism and in turn contributed to legitimizing journalism as a structure of public communication. The photographic legacy of objectivity in journalistic practice remains as yet an unexplored field of research, although the 'schema of objectivity' first evolved in conjunction with photographic technology.

The association of photography with objectivity can be seen in one of the canonical texts on photography, Roland Barthes' "The Photographic Message." Contrary to the general title of his essay, Barthes discusses only the "press photograph" (Barthes, 1977: 15) as a particular genre of photography. He argues that the press photo is a particularly convincing document, because as a "perfect analogon" of what was photographed, it is a "message without a code" (17; Barthes, 1961: 128f.). The transformation of a momentary impression of an event or action into a static image seems to have happened without interference of another semiotic system, such as in

written text. Barthes argues that "the photograph … is exclusively constituted and occupied by a 'denoted' message'", where the "perfection and plenitude of its analogy, in short its 'objectivity' has every chance of being mythical" (1977: 18f.).

Building on his theory of myth as a "second-order semiological system" (2000: 114), Barthes assumes that the 'objectivity' of press photographs lends itself to mythological functions. Each mythical object can be adopted to endless connotations, can be included in multiple discourses. Because a photograph seems exhausted in meaning already by its objective manner of production, it lends itself to constitute meaning in other semiological systems, which in turn mystify the picture.[194] Of course, by positing the content of a picture, especially of press photographs, solely in the denotative realm, Barthes can then go on to reveal how connotations of images are actively produced in the media, and how images are made to function within particular ideologies and discourses. Because Barthes excludes any reference to the materiality of press pictures from his analysis, he can foreground the semiotic dimensions of press photographs. Although such images go through many processes of exposure, fixation, and printing, none of these technological processes seems to impose its own signifying elements or code. Chemical molecules of photographic emulsions are not themselves signifying, at least in Barthes' analysis.

Stuart Hall follows up on Barthes' premise that the "objectivity" of a press photo has a function: a semiotic one for Barthes, an ideological function for Hall. In his essay "The Determinations of the News Photograph" (1974), Hall argued that news pictures were distinguished by news values such as action, "temporal recency," and "newsworthiness." These news values operated as an "ideological structure," which was all the more effective as a 'deep structure' of representation because of the news picture's seeming matter-of-fact visual style (Hall, 1974: 182). Although selectivity

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194. In the following paragraphs, I do not differentiate between 'image' or 'picture' as both are valid terms to describe printed visual material. Because it is crucial for the argument I *do* differentiate between photographs and reproductions (of photographs but also any other visual material), which refers to their different production processes. The term *illustration* describes chiefly the *function* of pictures in magazine articles as a class of images used to support a text. The images or pictures discussed here are for the most part illustrations, which are based on any previous format like drawing, painting or photograph. *Reproductions* of individual artworks are not regarded as illustrations if they stand individually (see below "Illustrated News Media in the 19th Century").

operated on all levels of the production of news photographs and their narrative placement in news stories, news photographs "suppress[ed] their selective/interpretive/ ideological function" by pretending to portray the "real world." Hall sees this suppression of a selective and productive context, from which the press photo and other journalistic messages emerge, as a crucial component of a professional ethos of journalism, which is enshrined in the 'ideology of objectivity'.

> At this level, news photos not only support the credibility of the newspaper as an accurate medium. They also guarantee and underwrite its *objectivity* (that is, they neutralize its ideological function). This 'ideology of objectivity' itself derives from one of the most profound myths in the liberal ideology: the absolute distinction between fact and value, the distinction which appears as a common-sense 'rule' in newspaper practice as 'the distinction between fact and interpretation': the empiricist illusion, the utopia of naturalism (188, original emphasis).

For Hall, the written story and a supporting image operate as an ideological structure that legitimizes journalistic authority. Objectivity serves a validating function for the newspaper's public role and legitimizes the journalists' work, although Hall concedes that objectivity is a matter of day-to-day practice rather than universal principles. Because press photos operate in conjunction with a particular story their support of a story's angle is more important than their denoted content. They lend legitimacy to journalism itself.

Both authors focus on press photographs in their discussion of photography as a cultural practice. Very surprisingly, they equate "objectivity" as a scientific norm with photographs as a particular cultural form. Whereas Barthes opens the meaning of the photograph to its multiple, mythological significations, Hall focusses on the 'objectivity' of the photograph in its legitimizing function for journalism. This equation of an 'epistemic virtue'[195] with a single technology is symptomatic for the centrality of photography to journalistic practice. But Barthes and Hall both accept a particular cultural form as an ahistorical, accomplished fact. Neither author is concerned with the fact that the pictures under discussion are black and white, halftone reproductions of photographs. Given the time of their writing, the press photographs both authors had in mind are very likely only *reproductions of* photographs, differentiated from original

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195. On objectivity as an 'epistemic virtue' of scientific research see (Daston and Galison, 2010: 39f.) and "The Scientific Dimension: Helping the 'Unaided Eye'" further down.

photographic prints by a structure of black dots and white spaces. For the following discussion this dot structure, this trace of the reproduction process, will be the starting point of the argument. Instead of assuming 'objectivity' as a given component of journalistic practice, or of photography respectively, this chapter will argue that reproduction processes for photographs are a key to understand why photographs are valued as an objective journalistic medium in the first place. Where a photograph can claim objectivity and immediacy, a reproduction of a photograph - being removed from the initial photographic exposure by a number of steps - cannot claim the same advantage.

The conflict between photography and reproductions of photography in mass periodicals is emblematic of the emergence of 'objectivity' as a professional norm in American journalism. The aim here is to underline the historical connection of photographic technology and its circulation through reproductions with the emergence of objectivity as a norm or ideal in American journalism around the turn of the twentieth century. Technologically, photography became a resource in journalistic practice only after the halftone process had made reproductions possible, which offered a similar level of detail like photographic prints themselves. But photography also needed a cultural schema to legitimize its use in journalistic practice. This schema was objectivity and it was indebted to the particular ways in which photography had been framed before it appeared *as photography* in photo magazines of the 1930s.

Photography was one of many other specialized technologies that contributed to the increasing industrial organization of journalism. What had started with steam-driven presses and the telegraph network continued in the early twentieth century with wirephoto, industrial-scale printing, marketing and distribution services. By relying increasingly on such specialized services, American journalism emancipated itself gradually from its modest beginnings in partisan and mercantile journalism and the confines of the printer's workshop. In 1891, the manager of Associated Press, William Henry Smith, detailed the many techniques and technologies that went into the production of newspapers at the time, illustrating how journalistic practice was

becoming a specialized work routine organized in industrial dimensions. This enumeration is worth quoting at length:

> The *shorthand characters* that preserve the spoken words of the statesman, the minister, the philosopher, or the man of business; the *telegraph* that transmits; the *typewriter* that puts copy into form; the *linotype* that sets the copy and casts the bars from which the impression is made; the *electric motor* that supplies power and light, and the *steam press* that throws off tens of thousands of sheets (Smith, 1891: 531, emphases added).

The entire article does not devote any attention to press photography. However, Smith argues that all these technologies are set in place to offer journalistic accounts of human affairs with "photographic minuteness" (531) and "photographic accuracy" (532). Detail and accuracy as attributes of photography are here used to promote an ideal of journalism as a neutrally observing, "objective" profession.

This equation of photography with objectivity and its importance for journalism can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. In an editorial statement on 27 January 1868, Charles A. Dana, who had taken over the *Sun* that year, wrote: "[The Sun] will study condensation, clearness, point, and will endeavor to present its *daily photograph of the whole world's doings in the most luminous and lively manner*" (quoted in Wilson, 1907: 381, emphasis added). Clarity, precision and illumination are here not associated with a general ideal of 'enlightenment' in a philosophical tradition but with photography as a particular technology. In 1882, George T. Rider wielded a similar photo-centric metaphor, describing journalism of his time as a "spectroscopic panorama" (1882: 472). Even earlier, journalism historian Fredric Hudson wrote that the newspaper is "acting as the *historical photographer* of national acts" (2010: xxvii, emphasis added). All these examples suggest that photography was culturally charged with technical precision and scientific accuracy, which made it a perfect model of journalistic practice as it was trying to redefine its public mission in a time of crisis.

Despite the variety of illustrations and images in news media of the time, these quotes single out photographs as a special class of images. While illustrations by woodcut and engraving were a common feature in magazines and newspapers in the nineteenth century, the widespread production of photographs by amateurs and professionals during the 1890s, introduced this new class of images to journalism. The

"swashbucklers of the camera" exemplified a new type of adventurous reporter, "the liveliest modern romance of journalism," as Will Irwin called them.[196] Photography altered the epistemological status of images because its production was unlike the imaginative act that created objects of art or illustrations. Photographic images were "written by sunlight,"[197] captured through lenses, and fixed immediately on sensitized materials seemingly without interference of a human hand. This shifting status of the image is symptomatically summarized in an advertisement for an overcoat by the Stein-Bloch Company, titled "Photographed—Not Idealized" showing a "spring overcoat as it really is—not in a fanciful drawing."[198]

The association of the pictorial arts with the works of imagination and the association of photography with scientific accuracy became a dominant schema of the time. In a richly illustrated article on cells, tissues and anatomy, published already in 1856 in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* the authors caution that "no matter how excellent drawings may be, they can never approach in reliability to photographic delineations." Contrasting imaginative drawings and the seemingly observer-neutral art of photography, the authors credit the photograph with conveying a superior from of knowledge. In a photograph, "we know that mere imagination has had nothing to do with its presence, but that it is there because it is a fac-simile—a truth." Photographs are "made … without human agency" and thus require no imaginative act or interpretative choice on the side of the photographer. But despite this superiority of the photographic image over drawings, the mass production of illustrated books was still "wholly impracticable in any reasonable period of time" because photographs still had to be developed as individual prints. Although photographs on any subject, popular or scientific, could be obtained in the 1850s as individual prints, engravings remained the

196. The news photographer was a "combination of reporter, craftsman, swashbuckler, and adventurer" (Irwin, 1912: 11).

197. Also known as "heliography," the formulation goes back to Henry Fox Talbot, the inventor of the negative-positive process in photography. In *The Pencil of Nature*, Talbot wondered how "the variegated scene of light and shade might leave its image or impression behind" without any interference of a human hand (1844: 4). Talbot discovered that a solution of silver iodide (insensitive to light) and silver chloride (light sensitive) had to be fixed on paper to create a durable photographic image. See also the first American history of photography as the "Heliographic Art" by Marcus Aurelius Root (1864).

198. *Collier's* 15 Apr. 1911: n. p.

dominant method to print photographs (or any other image) in periodicals for mass circulation ("Application of Photography" 1856: 433).

The seeming immediacy of the photographic process thus faced an unbridgeable dilemma for most of the nineteenth century. Photographs could not be reproduced for mass circulation by the same actinic processes that produced individual prints. To print photographs for mass circulation always required intermediary transformations. "After a photograph" became a contemporary qualifier for etchings, engravings and halftones, which began to distinguish merely illustrative designs from "objective" images, even if both types were executed in the same technique. The *production* of photos (since mid-19th century) and the *reproduction* of photos in print existed in separate fields, involving distinct crafts and practices. This separation began to fade in the 1890s which saw a number of new technologies of producing and reproducing pictures emerge in quick succession. With the implementation of the halftone process, photographs could be printed *as photographs*, and no longer required an intermediary printing format like engraving.

The argument of this chapter is that while photographic reproduction techniques were still wanting, the schema, which eventually valued photographs for purposes of journalistic objectivity, was already developing in engravings, woodcuts and other intermediary forms - even though they were obviously crafted by human hands. The relation between photography and its reproduction techniques has been relatively unexplored up until now, yet most audiences encountered photographs through mass periodicals and not fine prints. It seems warranted to question both the fine arts tradition in press photography as well as the dominant focus of photojournalism on individual prints as notable specimen of an accomplished practice. The chasm between photographic production and the limits of photographic reproduction in the nineteenth century will help to elucidate the yet unexplored connection of the epistemological status of images to their material base and cultural valuation, a valuation which did not emerge without resistance (see Jussim, 1988: 43f.).

The study of photography as an objective journalistic practice maps out a terrain

of knowledge posited between debates about objectivity in American journalism, the history of photography, photojournalism and the history of the graphic arts. The first part will map out the blind spots of both the objectivity debate and photojournalism history respectively, and introduce both the practice of photography and forms of illustrated news media as separate realms of cultural production. The second part will present the material, scientific, and cultural dimension of the photographic 'schema of objectivity' as it was negotiated in and through photographic reproductions in popular magazines of the 1890s. The last part will discuss how the 'schema of objectivity' fit debates about the professionalization of journalistic practice in the 1920s, showing how the legacy of the introduction of photography in print shaped conceptions of the professional journalist at the time and beyond.

Photographs in Print: Blind Spots of the Debate

The 'schema of objectivity,' as it is defined here, served the function to evaluate a new technology like photography for journalistic practice. The schema involved a material, a scientific and a cultural dimension of photographs in print and will be developed in part two. Because the schema not only valued photographs as a journalistic medium but was transposed to journalistic practice in general, it is important to place its explanatory power at the conjunction of two strands in journalism scholarship. The schema connects these two debates in an attempt to map out a perspective of research that cannot be accommodated in either field, yet that is based on and inspired by both fields.

The first debate concerns the role of objectivity as a professional norm in American journalism, which has been carried out, often under explicit political or normative premises, primarily among journalism researchers. This debate tellingly excludes any reference to photographic media as scholars seek evidence of objective reporting primarily in written material such as editorials and news stories. These methodological decisions frame the concept of 'objectivity' in narrowly political terms and thus foreground a political function of journalism.

The other field of knowledge concerns the history of photojournalism, which for the most part, joins histories of photography with event-focussed histories of journalism. In studies like Langton's *Photojournalism and Today's News,* historical accounts of photojournalism typically depart from individual photographic prints of historical events as they appeared in the mass press (Langton, 2009; see also Rothstein, 1979). The beginnings of genuine photojournalism, where photographs are the dominant part of the story, are dated to the emergence of photo magazines in the 1930s. Studies like those by Michael Carlebach, which go back to *pre*-photojournalistic practices in the nineteenth century, are still an exception (1992, 1997). The methodological focus in photojournalism on individual photographic prints creates the blind spot of reproduction media. But if the conjunction of photography and journalism is to make any sense, then mass-produced images must be the unit of analysis and not individual photographic prints. Reproduction media created those visual forms, which

audiences encountered in the press, reproductions which were *based on photographs*, but which could not be *printed as photographs*. Cultural historian Neil Harris here sees a critical gap in the research on visual culture.

> Artistically suspect, commercially tainted, technically cumbersome, and intellectually isolated, the development of modern visual reproduction methods has failed to engage general historical interest (Harris, 1979: 201).

If the debate about objectivity excludes references to photography, photojournalism likewise lacks a substantial focus on reproduction media for photography. Scholarship on photojournalism certainly does not lack an interest in technical aspects of printing processes. But it has so far paid little attention to the question of how technical aspects shaped cultural forms and how a new technology like photography was culturally valued for journalistic ends. In order to map out the constitutive elements of the 'schema of objectivity' the next two parts will present the key arguments about objectivity in American journalism and the history of photojournalism.

Objectivity

Michael Schudson initially pointed out that the emphasis on objectivity in American journalism emerged out of a struggle to distinguish respectable newspapers from the sensationalist press in the 1890s. Schudson retraces the ideal of objectivity, or the 'separation of values from facts', to these historical circumstances in American press publishing, emphasizing how objective standards helped newspapers to justify a public mandate. This objective standard also relied on a particular narrative form which was event-focussed, detached and factual, thereby sustaining an ethic of professionalism (Schudson, 1978: 7f., 88-120; Schudson, 2001). As Elizabeth Bird argues "once the reporter has abdicated factual responsibility to sources, the problem becomes whether the reader should believe what the source says" (1990: 381).[199] Joseph Campbell has argued that the conflict between sensationalist and fact-oriented journalism culminated

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199. With the spread of radio stations in the 1940's, the FCC introduced the Fairness Doctrine in 1949, which ruled that issues had to be presented in a fair and balanced way. Although the Doctrine was revoked in the 1980's, the practice of asking two antagonistic sides on a particular problem still prevails, especially on television.

in the pivotal year 1897. William Hearst's "journalism of action," in which the newspaper became an agent of political reform, clashed with the more detached, objective journalism featured in Adolph Och's *New York Times* (Campbell, 2004). Eventually, Och's style of journalism won the upper hand, as Hearst squandered the potential of his "new journalism" in self-centered, political campaigns. Ochs, by contrast, laid out that objectivity for his paper meant "to give perfect fairness to each party in any pending political conflict." This ideal meant that "all expression or indication of opinion or preference in disputed matters is excluded from its news columns, and is reserved solely for the editorial page."[200] The term for objectivity at that time was either 'fairness,' 'balance,' or 'impartiality' which were linked to a particular communicative situation, such as political debates, in which parties sought to win support for their views and policies. Journalists would stand between (or above) these parties as neutral observers. The legacy of 'impartiality' and 'fairness' as 'objectivity' remains strongly tied to an exclusively political dimensions of journalistic reporting.

In her book *Making News*, Gaye Tuchman follows Michael Schudson's definition of professionalism, which foregrounds how journalists began to emulate scientific methods of observation from the 1920s onward.

> Just as scientists discovered the facts about nature by using normatively established objective methods, so, too, the news media and the news professionals would use their methods to reveal social reality to the news consumer (1978: 160f.).[201]

Several studies have addressed the importance of objectivity as a professional practice

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200. Adolph Ochs. "The Strength of the New York Times." *New York Times* 18 Sep. 1901: Jubilee Supplement 24. (originally appeared in 1897). Despite the ideal of fairness the strict separation of opinion and news was only possible as a matter of degrees. Arthur Krock, chief of the Washington Bureau of the *New York Times* in the 1930s, commented that facts were necessarily provisional in the day-to-day business of newspaper reporters: "What you find plainly labeled facts as contrasted with comment and opinion, are the facts to the best of our ability to discover and present them" (Krock, 1945: 46).

201. In her earlier article "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual," Tuchman argues that objectivity also serves as a defense against criticism of journalists. She proposes three dimensions of an objective journalistic practice. First, news articles use quotation marks for statements made by sources. Second, inter-organizational relationships between journalists govern what is regarded as a best practice of news gathering and writing. Third, the idea of content brings together common sense notions about reality with the temporal sequencing of events, in which public actors are the primary reference. Such procedures are not necessarily intended to rid a news text of personal reflection but are "strategies through which newsmen protect themselves from critics and lay professional claim to objectivity" (Tuchman, 1972: 676, emphasis removed). The procedures of objectivity are thus at once methods of inquiry as much as they are a formal requirement to justify viewpoints and statements made by journalists, who are for the most part not themselves actors in a given conflict or event.

of American journalism around the turn of the twentieth century. And most studies follow Michael Schudson's basic assumption that the standard of objectivity gradually replaced the partisan affiliations of newspapers to parties. Starting with the penny press, journalism developed as a commercial enterprise, detaching itself from world views dictated by party ideology. Without such an ideology, however, journalists needed a new basis for legitimizing their role in public affairs. This basis was found in the orientation of journalistic practice along scientific methods of investigation.

In *The Decline of Popular Politics*, Michael McGerr argues that the growing competition from sensationalist and independent papers after the Civil War drew readers away from partisan publications. The independent papers featured an educational, fact-based journalism; sensationalist dailies offered an enticing mix of subjects and a visually engaging style of news: "The independent press made politics complicated and unexciting; sensationalism made it unimportant," McGerr concludes (1986: 135). By emulating the same popular practices of reporting, the party press, in turn, "de-emphasized politics" (134), gradually failing to organize political followers for parties. Gerald Baldasty focusses on the rise of an independent press, which packaged news as a commercial product, along with entertainment and advertising. The newspaper emerged as a commercial enterprise that had something to offer for everyone - it became an "omnibus press" (Baldasty, 1992: 140). Even political viewpoints began to be guided by market motives, catering rather to a particular segment of readers than advocating and speaking for any particular party position.

Richard Kaplan (2002) notes that the disavowal of party interests allowed "journalists to become professional technicians, experts at gathering information and separating truths from half-truths." Journalists could step up to offer a "public service" independent of "particular communities or private interests" (192). But the new independence from party and adherence to an ideal of objectivity also made newspaper reporters prone to seek out elite sources for newsworthy information. A "passion for rigorous objectivity," Kaplan concludes, has made it almost impossible for reporters to "interject their own evaluations and judgments; provide overarching interpretations; and

explore controversial or, conversely, taken-for-granted social viewpoints" (193).[202] In *Just the Facts* (1998), David Mindich has located the rise of objectivity within the period between 1830 and 1890, exploring how particular textual strategies created news texts that diverged from the norm of writing chronological stories of events or verbatim reports of political debates. Among the textual "practices" known as objectivity (9) Mindich counts "detachment, nonpartisanship, inverted pyramid writing, reverence for facts, and balance" (1998: 142). Mindich does not retrace the ideal of objectivity as a professional norm but infers its existence from textual and narrative features.

The most complete study to date of the philosophy of objectivity in journalism is Stephen Ward's *The Invention of Journalism Ethics* (2006), which retraces the varying senses and philosophies associated with the term back to early modernity. Ward highlights that "the doctrine of journalism objectivity was invented in the 1920s" and that it differed considerably from the "nineteenth-century idea of factual reporting" (2006: 214-16). The doctrine of objectivity went beyond impartial reporting of facts in which "healthy doses of 'colour'" had still been acceptable. In the 1920s, editors began more thoroughly to separate news from opinion, which did not mean "*less* interpretation or comment [but] *no* interpretation or opinion" (217, original emphases). A brief writing style, enshrined in inverted pyramid structures of articles, became a formal requirement for news reports. Reporters were given elaborate guide books and codes of conduct against which they could check their methods of fact gathering and style of writing. Objectivity became more than a guideline as it was enforced on every level of the news-gathering and writing process. By normatively defining a proper journalistic practice, such "rules … operationalized the principle of objectivity" (218) in journalism. The positivist method allowed journalists to stress their professional ethos and claim the same authority as social scientists. Ward points out that objectivity and its associated procedures were regarded as a way to distinguish an independent, non-partisan journalism from the sensationalist Yellow Press.

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202. Kaplan underlines that the reform of journalism towards objective standards was indebted to the "Progressive Era rhetoric of professional expertise" which allowed journalists to formulate "a new vision of journalism as independent and objective" (Kaplan, 2006: 180).

> Editors were not naive in calling for objectivity. They did not think that it would be easy to instil objectivity in newsrooms. They hoped, however, that objectivity would help to restrain the bias, subjectivity, and yellow journalism that they perceived in the press (ibid., 220).[203]

Moreover, editors sought to regain public trust in the news media in a time that saw publicity agents emerge as “the most significant symbol of our present social life,” as John Dewey wrote in 1930. The publicity agent, according to Dewey, symbolized a central deficit of a commercial press that had fallen prey to private and state propaganda; the publicity agent exemplified how “sentiment [could] be manufactured by mass methods for almost any person or any cause” (1999: 43). Against this background, public opinion as a measure for democratic government became susceptible to growing doubt and criticism, since it was easily swayed based on sentiment or powerful images. Ward summarizes the emergence of objectivity in journalism as a counter-movement against the declining trust in the news media *and* the concurrent devaluation of public opinion as a base of the legislative process. The newly adopted standards, enshrined in elaborate guidebooks, marked the point when “procedural objectivity joined epistemological objectivity as central cultural norms” (225). By codifying the process of news-gathering (procedural objectivity) and news presentation, journalists were induced to report only what had been said, what was documented by official sources and thus to present the world by scientific methods of inquiry (epistemological objectivity).

All of these studies focus on economic, political and cultural reasons for the emergence of objectivity as a professional norm in American journalism. But neither Schudson nor Kaplan nor Mindich nor Ward explore how a particular understanding of objectivity was tied to a new technology that brought all constitutive elements of the norm together: a technical apparatus of recording external reality, a neutral observing position, a machine to stop time. The ability to capture fleeting moments for close scrutiny that allowed to submit events to a detailed analysis, relied in no small part on photographic technology which had been firmly established as a journalistic form by the 1920s. Over a period of three decades, photography had become identified with a

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203. On the use of objective standards as a means of market differentiation, see also (Schudson, 1978: 88-121).

'mechanistic' meaning of objectivity but its cultural reverberations went far beyond the visual media alone.

Dan Schiller's study *Objectivity and the News* (Schiller, 1981) is a rare exception in the debate about journalistic objectivity because he connects the emergence of 'objective' elements in news texts in the nineteenth century with the emergence of daguerreotypy, the earliest popular form of photography. For Schiller, photography and its various initial technologies of exposure and development embodied the popular and practical philosophy of Baconian science with its core elements of "observation and experiment" (84). The "Moon Hoax" of the *Sun* in 1836 exemplified this new form of objectivity. Schiller argues that the "Moon Hoax" relied on established authorities and a specialized vocabulary for its authenticity. Centrally, the story featured optical instruments which gradually zoomed in to reveal a lunar civilization to the observer.[204] Although the "Moon Hoax" was published before photography was even invented,[205] it exploited the popular interest in astrology and lunar observation by offering a plausible description of "scientific discoveries" to which the lay reader had no other form of access.

The "Moon Hoax" relied on a "fabricated objectivity" (Schiller, 1981: 79) but this objectivity gained a modicum of believability through its reliance on experts and the centrality of a specialized optical technology as means of discovery. For Schiller, the "Moon Hoax" exemplified how "the pristine world of fact" (Schiller, 1979: 48) became a new basis for journalistic authority because it assumed that journalists could merely transcribe the facts of the world into news. Although Schiller cautiously regards objectivity as an "ideal" (1981: 87) he nonetheless dates its beginnings to the penny press. In view of the preceding analysis of self-advertising and serialized reporting as structuring elements of the penny press this periodization seems doubtful. But Schiller's

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204. "The Moon Hoax took the forms, thus, of a long series of telescopic swivelings in conjunction with gradually increasing magnification" (Schiller, 1981: 79). As argued before, the serial publication of the story gradually approached the most sensational 'discovery' at the end.

205. The term "photography" is commonly ascribed to Sir John Herschel, who coined the term upon seeing Fox Talbot's pictures at the Royal Institute in London in 1839 (Newhall, 1949: 35). On the history of the terminology of photography which oscillated between referring to either the process, the material support or the final product, see (Buddemeier, 1970: 145-51).

argument on the emergence of objectivity is strongest, were he suggests that photography fit into the positivist notion of observation and fact, precisely because it appeared to record without human interpretation and agency. After daguerreotypy had become a popular practice in the 1850s, journalistic practice began to co-opt a seemingly neutral technology: “News objectivity was compared metaphorically to instruments whose capacity for photographic accuracy was widely known and uncontested” (Schiller, 1981: 88). Through the objectivity of scientific instruments like telescopes and the “photographic realism” of daguerreotypes, journalism became oriented towards revealing, like photography, a “form of true knowledge,” as a “nonsymbolic ‘reflection’ of an objective world” (93). The optical metaphors “cultivated [journalists’] claim to copy, to mirror, and to reflect events occurring in a newly distanced objective world” (Schiller, 1979: 49).

Although photographs could be manipulated in all stages of their production, this did not infringe on their claim to objectivity. The new technology became charged with a particular non-subjective manner of image production. Schiller argues that the “illusion of photographic objectivity has without question been real enough in American *culture* to convince even some of the most astute critics … of its existence” (94). This assertion seems to be a premature conclusion to the argument Schiller has opened up. Because *if* such a conception of photographic objectivity was as influential in American culture, as he claims, then the next logical question would be to ask how this can be explained. While Schudson, Ward, Kaplan and Mindich conceive of objectivity as a political norm or an - unattainable, yet vital - ideal, Schiller follows their argument up to a point where he has to admit the strong association of objectivity with optical technology, the allusions to photographic accuracy and positivism, which all contributed to a discernible new paradigm in American journalism. Schiller, however, lacks a reference point outside of political theory (or outside of his historical sources) to include his findings in a different frame of analysis. The present study takes Schiller’s preliminary remarks as its starting point to emphasize how the use of photographs in journalistic media *before the advent of photojournalism proper* prepared an

understanding of objectivity in relation to photographic documents. The reason why the connection of objectivity to photographic technology has as yet been unexplored is partly a result of typical accounts of photojournalism as a vague combination of two separate spheres of cultural production: photography *and* journalism. This methodological pattern has not yielded a synthetic object of study in which the particularity of photography in print periodicals *as reproductions* would be given its due emphasis.

Photojournalism

The history of photojournalism is typically based on an analysis of individual photographs which captured decisive moments in history. These photographs are usually reproduced in anthologies as singular instances of broader trends in visual culture, journalism and media development.[206] The conjunction of photography and journalism implies a methodological hybridity between art history (with its focus on individual artworks) and journalism history (with its focus on the process of public communication). Just like individual objects are the unit of analysis in art history, histories of photojournalism, at least for the nineteenth century, often use single reprints of famous photographs in a similar way like general histories of photography do. As a paradigmatic work, Gernsheim's *History of Photography* (Gernsheim, 1955) focuses only on the technical development of photographic technology and its application by different photographers, sweeping broadly between the documentary, artistic and popular uses of the technology and the many genres it inspired. Gernsheim, who was also a famous collector of historical prints, conspicuously avoids any attention to photomechanical techniques of reproduction.

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206. Although authors like Langton note that "photographs as illustrations for publication still needed to be translated into engravings" in the nineteenth century, he remains very typical in his genealogy by introducing first the documentary forms of early photographs which then (somehow) appear in topical functions in the periodical press (Langton, 2009: 13). Miles Orvell's *American Photography* distinguishes "photographic practice" only on the basis of aesthetic and artistic characteristics (portrait or landscape photography), seeking to establish the "historical meaning" of a photograph through its "original purpose," which was supposedly the purpose of the photographer (Orvell, 2003: 16).

Presenting photojournalism as a succession of individual photographs ignores that audiences typically encountered photographs of newsworthy events in newspapers or magazines as *reproductions of photographs*. In the adaptation for reproduction, original albumen prints or daguerreotypes were more likely to be woodcuts, etchings or lithographs that referenced a photographic original. While the beginnings of photojournalism are typically dated to the emergence of illustrated news magazines like *Time* (1923), *Life* (1936) and *Look* (1937),[207] the cultural schemas which valued photography as a particular journalistic practice go back to a much older history of visual material in periodical news media in the nineteenth century. Brennen argues that a revision of terminology is needed for photojournalism because it "has actually been used to showcase a variety of photographic practices that began in the 1830s" and was not an achievement of photo magazines alone (2010: 73; See also Brennen and Hardt, 1999). Photo magazines can be interpreted as commercial media forms which closed a long period of transforming the epistemological status of the image *in conjunction with the development of reproduction technologies*. Photographic documents depended on technologies of reproduction to expand their sphere of circulation in the periodical press. This dependence needs to be taken into account when studying how one class of images became identified with conveying a particularly authoritative form of knowledge, an authority that surpassed the written word or other 'imaginative' visual media of the time.

Apart from the technologies of reproducing images for mass print, it is important to note that journalistic photographs rarely stood for themselves but were usually discursively embedded through articles, headlines and captions.[208] In the illustrated

207. A contemporary observer stated that photo magazines were a reaction to more entertaining media like cartoons in the sensationalist papers, radio and the motion pictures, which had accustomed audiences to sensually engaging forms of information retrieval. In 1937, "the American public ha[d] become picture-minded" and the photo magazines catered to increasing popular demand (Shaw, 1937: 299).

208. Michael Carlebach notes that "the principal unit of photojournalism is the noncommercial combination of text and photograph on the printed page, not the single hard-news image" (Carlebach, 1997: 6). See also Maren Stange's comment on the function of caption, text and photograph to serve "a particular rhetorical framework" in social documentary photography (1989: xiv). *Discursive embedding* of images, as I understand it here, refers to the way in which the message of images is rhetorically sustained in conjunction with other media like text, chart or map. This is slightly different from a *narrative embedding*, in which the image illustrates a particular event in a story's diegesis.

weeklies of the 1850s the combination of text and image was already a well-established convention of news stories. Especially news illustrations often criticized or satirized societal developments by ironically juxtaposing caption and image. As Barnhurst and Nerone argue, “illustrations … almost never stood without comment” in the early phase of illustrated journalism. Even short captions usually gave a perspective or comment on how the image should be understood as part of the story: “text and picture both were held to standards based on the facility with which they advanced a narrative,” the authors argue (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2000: 62f.). To regard press photographs as if they were individual artworks is detrimental to seeing their respective narrative function and spheres of circulation. Barnhurst and Nerone criticize that photography was not just the long-awaited perfection of the many graphic arts which existed in the nineteenth century. Instead, the emerging practice of photography was located loosely between science and art and often competed with other graphic arts. Before photography became eventually charged with what Julianne Newton has called the “burden of visual truth” (2008), photography co-evolved in distinction from other forms of visual representation, which all had their own distinct cultural traditions and practices, advantages and limitations.

A study of photojournalism should be concerned with photography *as it appeared in the periodical press* and not with individual photographic prints. Foregrounding the adaptation of photography for print (reproduction) will yield a more comprehensive analysis of the value of photographs for journalistic practice and will underscore how photographs were valued in distinction from other graphic media. The cultural perspective can here bypass techno-deterministic explanations for the emergence of photojournalism, as they prevail, for example, in Arthur Rothstein’s *Photojournalism* (1979). For Rothstein, the invention of the photographic negative (on the side of photographic production) and the invention of the halftone printing process (on the side of reproduction) are regarded as pivotal developments for the emergence of “the modern practice of photojournalism” (1979: 16). Although Rothstein is right that the negative *eventually* proved a decisive invention for reproducing identical prints of a

single photograph, for the better part of the nineteenth century, daguerreotypes (and not Fox Talbot's negative calotypes) dominated the field of photographic production. Although Talbot's "negative-positive concept" was the basis of "all modern photographic techniques" (Newhall, 1949: 36), it was the (positive) daguerreotype which popularized photographs as a cultural form. In other words, audiences learned what photographic images were, how they were produced and circulated first through daguerreotypes, before the status of these individual photographs changed with the advent of pictures in the press that were *reproduced from negatives*.

In this respect, the materiality and spheres of circulation of photographic media matter. Traces of production processes distinguish individual prints from reproductions. They also serve as reminders of how photographs in periodicals circulated in different spheres than individual photographic prints. Technologies of reproduction were essential for the diffusion of photographs but adaptations for print always questioned the immediacy of the photographic process. It was only by transposing this immediacy, through a variety of practices and technologies, to reproductions that photography could instate and maintain its status as a privileged form of observation - not only in photojournalism (cf. Daston and Lunbeck, 2011). If the blind spot of the objectivity debate in journalism is its exclusion of photography, then the blind spot of photojournalism is its lacking focus on visual reproduction techniques. Taken together, these lacunae open up the possibility to see objectivity as defined in photographic terms.

The Limits of Circulation: Photographic Practice in the 19th Century

In terms of photographic practice in the nineteenth century, two developments are crucial to understand why photography made its way into the periodical press at a relatively late stage of its development. The first is that photographic images were first popularized through daguerreotype portrait studios. Because these portraits could not easily be reproduced, photographs remained singular cultural artifacts. To adopt a daguerreotype for print meant to translate an image into a very different media form like

an engraving. The specific advantage of a daguerreotype as a photographic document over other forms of illustration was marginal at the time, beside its attractiveness as a cheaper medium for family portraits. The second development starts with the popularization of the dry-plate process in the 1890s. The production of daguerreotypes had remained largely a studio-based activity before dry plates liberated photography from the confines of the studio. As a practice, photography was adopted by artists, amateurs, scientists and journalists who now could photograph the visible outside world without needing a controlled environment.

The invention of photography is largely attributed to two scientists, who emerged with rivaling concepts on how to fix visual impressions durably on transportable media. In Louis Daguerre's process a positive image was recorded. Henry Fox Talbot's calotype, in contrast, created a reverse image, from which innumerable copies could be printed.[209] The initial success of daguerreotypy over calotypes is largely attributed to the fact that Daguerre did not ask for any royalties for his invention, whereas Talbot wanted to license his process to entrepreneurs. Early attempts to license the calotype process in the U.S. failed because Daguerre's process was already in the open domain and had been quickly adopted by enterprising portraitists (Hanlon, 2011). Daguerreotypes thus became the first popular photographic medium of the mid-nineteenth century in the United States, which flourished in the form of the carte-de-visite trade (Thomas, 1978: 7). Mick Gidley reports that "[b]y 1851, there were at least 50 portrait studios in New York City alone and, in 1853, the *New York Daily Tribune* estimated that three million daguerreotypes were being produced there that year" (2011: 33). Typically taken by stationary or itinerant photographers, exposing photographs took a long time and the result was a singular plate with the image appearing as a positive. Copies of such positives would gradually deteriorate in quality, which necessitated to expose several plates consecutively instead of copying one individual plate over and over again.

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209. Talbot thus used a "negative" that was reversed in the process of development to become a "positive" again. Accordingly, Jacob Abbot argued in 1870 in *Harper's Magazine* that the negative should be appropriately called a "reverse" because left and right, top and bottom, black and white tones appear as reversed on a negative. For the printing, again, a plate needed to be developed that was a reversed positive, only this time featuring dents, wholes and elevated surfaces. The plate for printing translated tonal brightness and darkness into spatial dimension of cavities and plateaus to distribute the ink (Abbott, 1870).

In 1851, the introduction of the new collodion process - or wet-plate photography - significantly reduced exposure times and replaced sensitized paper with glass plates. Beaumont Newhall emphasizes that the collodion process “required experience and skill of hand”: from wetting the glass plate, to carefully controlling the correct exposure time to keeping the plate wet before developing the negative into a positive. The new process accelerated picture production but it also had the effect that the “photographer was chained to his darkroom” in order to keep the plate wet at all times (Newhall, 1949: 56). Rudisill emphasizes that in the early days of photography the primary use of the daguerreotype format was “the wish for a portrait” (1971: 198). Studios were typically located under the roof where skylights allowed for better illumination and controlled lighting conditions, hence the term “sky light” pictures as a popular synonym for these daguerreotypes.[210] Having one’s picture taken became a “universal experience” of the nineteenth century, which helped forge a sense of “self-definition” (Rudisill, 199) as much as preserving the images of beloved family members for memory. Families would gather in their best dresses to stand still to see their image fixed for eternity on a glass plate. The practice of daguerreotypy often created a “primitive awkwardness” in the pictures, as art critic Sadakichi Hartmann noted. Sitters were anxiously following the procedure and their “poses were the simplest imaginable, generally full-face views, as if they were looking at themselves in the mirror” (Hartmann, 1978: 146f.). The experience of fixing a fleeting moment for eternity was still new and, at times, disconcerting. “With what horrible truthfulness it preserves the oddities of dress and ornament!” an article in 1880 described the early daguerreotypes.[211] Photographic plates were stored in special albums, protected by metal covers, and were displayed in parlors, or endowed to loved ones leaving home. These early daguerreotypes remained unique material objects, associated with a particular person or occasion because individual plates were irreproducible without loss of quality.

During the Civil War, daguerreotypes taken near the battlefields were a welcome

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210. David Bee. “Photography in America.” *Dallas Morning News* 29 Aug. 1909: 2.

211. “Photography.” *The Daily Inter Ocean* 27 Aug. 1880: 4.

signal of life sent home by soldiers to their families. Such photographs also fulfilled the function to “compensate loss by mortality” (Rudisill, 219), serving as physical reminders of deceased family members in a house’s parlor. The photographs gave concrete form to the fading memory up to the point that even “posthumous portraits became fairly common” (ibid.). Photography became central to ‘mourning practices’ in a variety of ways by the middle of the nineteenth century (Cadwallader, 2008). The popular fascination with preserving a person’s image across space and time prompted an understanding of the medium as both practical-objective and spiritual. As writers wrestled with the non-verbal verisimilitude of the photographic image, they also “fostered increased introspection” among their readers to “consider the spiritual and ethical dimensions of the new medium and its implications for the construction of individual identity” (Williams, 1996: 162).

Photography appeared as an obscure, scientific and miraculous contraption. Its automatism gave images an air of objectivity, often more than the sitters were willing to accept.[212] In portraiture, photography needed to cater to the audience’s preferences while maintaining the attraction of its immediacy. Neil Harris has pointed out that daguerreotypists combined the advantages of the new technology, with the established conventions of artistic portraiture that audiences were used to. “While claiming objectivity for their cameras,” Harris writes, the portraitists “could establish studios that offered flattering trappings - exotic backdrops, lush foliage, interesting costumes and accessories” (Harris, 1979: 202) - and, of course, the obligatory desk with books.

As a studio-based practice, wet-plate photography was hard to transpose to outdoor settings, where it became “an unnerving procedure (…), a tiring and bothersome operation, that also required considerable dexterity” (Steinorth, 1988: 14-16). All the plates, chemicals and photo equipment had to be set up where the pictures were to be taken. Immediately after an exposure, the plates had to be developed in the “darkroom tent” nearby. Although some venturing photographers like Matthew

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212. Contemporary reactions to the remorseless objectivity of portraits photographs were not always positive, as unpleasant bodily features became manifest on the glass plates. See further the chapter “The Daguerreotype as Human Truth” in (Rudisill, 1971: 197-225).

Brady or Alexander Gardner perfected the production, copying and distribution of outside photography, especially from the Civil War, it was usually a stationary studio and laboratory where the final commercial prints were produced. Brady's gallery in Washington "functioned somewhat like the picture agencies and news services of the twentieth century: it commissioned, gathered and sold images" (Davis, 2007: 177). But these images were individual prints, produced on a large scale for commercial purposes.[213] Often they would circulate only in reproductions in newspapers and magazines, or as in the case of Alexander Gardner's *Photographic Sketch Book of the War* (1866), in bound, exquisite volumes of albumen prints which limited the scope of their audience (Lee and Young, 2007).

The invention of dry-plates by the 1890s marked a "new phase of expansion into advertising, journalism, and the domestic market" for photographic production (Tagg, 1993: 60). Amateur photographers adopted the dry-plate process as plates became available which could "be kept for months before use, and for months again after exposure." Compared to the wet-plate process, the dry-plate helped to make photography a popular pastime and practice. "The dry plate made possible instantaneous photography … and simplified the process to such a degree that any smart boy or girl of ten can easily master it in a few days," as the *Washington Post* wrote in 1891.[214] Photography departed from being a specialists' art form to become popular among amateurs. This popularization was due in no small part to George Eastman, who had repackaged the entire photographic process in his Kodak cameras and photo services in 1888. Through the Kodak camera "the art of photography [was] no longer confined to the professional" and it was promoted as a leisure activity to consumers like the "overworked business man."[215] Eastman combined a reliable roll film, a camera, and

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213. On Brady's picture business and the sphere of circulation in newspapers and magazines of his images see (Horan, 1955: 35-59; Carlebach, 1992: 75-89). Alan Trachtenberg has argued that Brady was especially successful in commercializing his war images because he not only "authorized" them as their photographer but "placed the images in a distinct context, a structured discourse" (Trachtenberg, 1991: 289). This 'authorization' and its promotion of a particular narrative told in images can be regarded as an early journalistic function of photographs.

214. "Work of a Camera." *The Washington Post* 30 Aug. 1891: 14.

215. "'You Press the Button.'" *Wall Street Daily News* 19 Mar. 1891: 2.

a development service by mail order. He thus relegated all mystery (and potential disappointment) of the photographic process to specialized services offered for a fee by his company (cf. Steinorth, 1988).

Whereas the early adoption of photography had been dominated by "scientifically curious amateurs, mostly interested in theory and research" like Samuel Morse (Maddox, 1989: v), the expansion to a popular market marked the "ingenious application of science to the uses of the daily world" (Thomas, 1978: 7). Amateurs further developed the processes, emulsions and exposure apparatus and thus contributed to turning photography into a quotidian practice. Photography at the end of the nineteenth century passed from a "fad" to a "form of art." Dry plates made amateur photography more "attractive" and easier to handle than the wet-plate process. Soon, amateur clubs emerged where photographs were exhibited and discussed: "Lantern slides have aided in making the pastime a social one."[216] The common interest in photography brought together practitioners all over the country (Black and Huntington, 1887)[217] and the "craze" of amateur photography, as the *New York Times* called it, had "become permanent and incurable." At first, professional and amateur photographers worked in separate realms, only "the landscape professionals have suffered, and so have the traveling men who carry a few plates in a van and set up tents for a few days in country villages" to sell portraits.[218] But as amateurs organized in associations, improved their technology, and exchanged their experiences through clubs and magazines, the balance began to shift.

The beginning professionalization of the amateur craft can be attributed to the fact that amateurs were becoming a major source of pictures for magazines and later newspapers by 1890. Especially the *New York Times* enthused about amateur

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216. "An Army of Picture Takers. The Great Growth of Amateur Photography in this Country." *New York Times* 1 Nov. 1891: 15. By 1890, the use of lantern slides had "become so general that no speaker who talks of foreign lands nowadays pretends to do without them." ("The Realm of Photography. Use of the Lantern Slide in Illustrating Lectures." *New York Times* 20 Jan. 1890: 8).

217. William S. Harwood observed in 1896 that the "progress" of amateur photography was due to short exposure times and the "indescribably marvelous rapidity of the cameras of to-day" (252). He counted over 150 amateur photographer associations in the U.S. at the time with more than 5,000 members in total (1896: 254).

218. "A Successful Fad. The Rapid Growth of Amateur Photography During the Year." *New York Times* 28 Apr. 1890: 8.

photography throughout that year, emphasizing a crucial difference between a snap-shot taker and a photographer: “The man who simply snaps the shutter … is not a photographer, any more than the man who drops a nickel in the slot and hears a tune is a musician,” the *Times* satirized. As photography became a widely shared practice, those skills that had characterized early photographic practice became expert knowledge. As the *Times* continues, “the art will not be experienced till the owner of the camera develops his own pictures and goes through the delightful experience of pouring chemicals over the gelatine plate that has been exposed to the sun … in the seclusion of his dark room.” Craft and practice were now qualifiers of good photographs, which differentiated the ‘consumerist’ snap-shot fraction from the experts.[219]

Professional photographers began using portable Graflex cameras after 1898, which featured rapid shutter speeds and a comfortable focus finder (Carlebach, 1997: 24). Publications such as *Sunlight and Shadow: A Book for Photographers Amateur and Professional* (1897) by W. I. Lincoln Adams, signaled that a phase of experimentation had ended around the turn of the century and that photography as a craft was becoming more formalized in its technological, aesthetic and practical execution. Adams argued that a good photograph had to qualify through either its realism, its ability to tell a story or to be aesthetically appealing.

> We must either aim at a *truthful representation* of something interesting to ourselves or our friends; or we must present a *picture that tells a story* and is of wide interest: or else strive to attain a result that is *purely artistic*, that is dependent for its interest and success upon its composition and effect (Adams, 1897: 16, emphases added).

This brief quote signals the beginning division of uses of photographic technology at the end of the nineteenth century. And it also formulates three core components of a photographic schema as it became current in journalism. A ‘truthful representation’ implies scientific accuracy that is first linked to the photographic apparatus. A ‘picture that tells a story’ implies realism and narrative cohesion. A good image condenses a conflict, an experience or event. The ‘purely artistic’ use of photography then places photographic images in line with fine prints and art, where the purpose of the image is

219. “A Progressive Art. Facts Concerning the Growth of Amateur Photography.” *New York Times* 3 Jan. 1892: 16. See also Laurvik’s distinction between the “willy-nilly button-pusher” and the artist in photography (1908: 324).

to offer an aesthetic experience. Each of these branches would eventually become an art in itself, but for the press photography of the early photo magazines, *all of these three components* are important to distinguish a picture suitable for journalistic purposes.

Technically, press pictures also needed to respect the conditions of their reproduction, which emphasized "strong contrasts of light and dark areas," at least during the period of the halftone as the dominant reproduction technique, as journalism scholar Gunnar Horn noted in 1939. A good press picture respected the "mechanics of the halftone engraving and the quality of newsprint." It needed to "tell a story" and the "composition" should present the object "in the optical center" of the photograph so as to emulate the central focal point of human vision (Horn, 1939: 727f.). A good journalistic picture was suitable for reproduction through strong contrasts, achieved a narrative condensation as a story and presented the story in appealing aesthetic conventions congruent with the taste of the time.

As photography entered a consumer market with the help of George Eastman and the vastly simplified process of dry-plates, the formation of amateur associations, and the increasing demand of photographs for news media, the practice of photography began to expand rapidly. But despite the growing popularity of photographic practice, photographs in mass periodicals still needed to be transformed to formats suitable for printing. To enlarge a photograph's sphere of circulation beyond the family, friends or clubs, images needed to be altered and adapted significantly. The next part will analyze how this process of reproducing photographs for print first questioned and then reinstated the immediacy of photography as a privileged medium of objectivity. Especially the popular magazines of the 1890s educated their audiences in distinguishing the epistemic status of different classes of images, even if all images were rendered by identical reproduction techniques.

Illustrated News Media in the 19th Century

In the period between the 1880 and 1900 many popular-interest magazines were founded, which all relied on visual material for their audience appeal. These magazines

drew on a number of visual traditions in print media while differentiating themselves from the established literary magazines, the sensationalist daily press, and the illustrated newspapers. The most important magazines started between 1870 and the 1890s and included *Scribner's Monthly* (1870), *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* (1881),[220] *Ladies' Home Journal* (1883), *Cosmopolitan* (1886), *Scribner's Magazine* (1887), *Collier's* and *National Geographic* (1888), *Munsey's* Magazine (1889), *McClure's* (1893), and *Everybody's Magazine* (1899).[221]

These magazines were similar in their appeal to a general public through a modest price, a large variety of articles, including science and technology, documentary, travel literature, fiction, prose, and advice on everyday matters. Magazines like *Scribner's Monthly*, proudly called themselves "illustrated magazine for the people," adapting their typographic style and illustrations to a non-literary audience. The new magazines no longer just catered to a "gentle reader" like the older literary magazines had done (Wilson, 1983). Illustrations were essential to convey information quickly and attractively in marked contrast to long-winded articles typical in literary magazines. *Cosmopolitan Magazine* alleged that "the general reader … ha[d] neither the time nor the desire to wrestle with the labored and almost interminable articles that weigh down most monthly publications."[222] The magazines changed the reading habits of their audiences by offering increasing amounts of images and well-spaced typographic work, which made them "a favorite with all railway travellers [sic!] ... [and] those who still retain some feeling of kindness for the optic nerve."[223]

Another innovation was the 'staff system' which gave magazines such as *McClure's* "the ability to analyze events and reconstruct them in perspective" by employing permanent staff that could research in detail events of contemporary interest

220. *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* was the new name for *Scribner's Monthly*, which had been bought in 1881 by the Century Company. The later *Scribner's Magazine* was founded again in 1887 by Charles Scribner's Sons (see Mott, 1957: 717f.).

221. See also the timeline of American magazine publishing in (Janello and Jones, 1991: 230-37).

222. Editorial note on the "Completion of the First Volume of the Cosmopolitan." *Cosmopolitan Magazine* Aug. 1888: n.p.

223. Reaction to the first number of *Scribner's Monthly*, originally published in *The Christian Union* and quoted in "Read what the Press Says of the First Number!" *Scribner's Monthly, an Illustrated Magazine for the People* Feb. 1871: 1.

(Wilson, 1970: 81). The magazines' success on the market is often associated with a new business model of magazine publishing pioneered by *Munsey's*, as Sumner has argued: "By selling their magazines for much less than the cost of production, they [the editors] found profits in the high volume of advertising that the resulting large circulations attracted." Prices per issue were between 10 and later 15 cent which made magazines into a most popular medium of the late nineteenth century, with circulation increasing threefold between 1890 and 1905 (Sumner, 2010: 16). Driven by urbanization and increasing commerce, department store advertising in the 1880's became a chief source of incomes for newspapers and magazines (Boorstin, 1973: 106).

Apart from the price and its choice of topics, the new magazines made use of a large variety of images and image formats to appeal to variegated audiences, employing new picture printing techniques first before they were adopted by newspapers. Due to their larger circulations and a monthly publication schedule, the magazines could offer aesthetically refined reprints of art, of religious topics or of historical and contemporary events for a mass readership.[224] Often, the verso cover page contained fine prints of popular artworks. Because the cover was typically made from different paper and printed separately from the rest of the magazine, this position in the magazine was ideally suited to experiment with new printing formats. For example, the July issue of *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1871 featured a colored, fold-out poster of summer fashions, accompanied by engravings of latest embroidery styles, dresses and accessories. All illustrations were numbered and discussed in detail in the fashion department.[225] Presenting the fashions of the season on a fold-out poster suggests that such insertions could be used by readers to decorate walls or to pass on to friends independently of the magazine. Such different uses of images, apart from the mere looking at them, are suggested by their position in the binding and by the execution of the print in a finer

224. For an earlier method of printing colored reproductions of artworks for mass circulation see Marzio's study on chromolithography (1980).

225. "Fashionable Costumes." *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* July, 1871. Fold-out illustration not paginated. Examples of embroidery see p. 26f. of the same issue.

technique than was the standard for articles.[226]

In the 1890s, *Cosmopolitan Magazine* featured finely printed lithographs opposite its first page. Under a rubric of “Some Examples of Recent Art,” *Cosmopolitan* also included halftone reproductions on the last pages of the magazine, often containing explicit nudity in images of mythological figures and themes.[227] These images near the cover in the front and the back covered the entire page and thus differed in function from the rest of the halftones and engravings inside the magazine, which were narratively embedded in articles as illustrations. The reproductions, by contrast, served as images in their own right and were presented solely for aesthetic pleasure and as a lure to buy the magazine. Inserted images in color and lithographs were also printed on the verso cover page in some of *McClure’s* issues at the time. In 1900, a reader of *McClure’s* reported the common practice of his students to “cut the illustrations and tack them on a large, black painted board” for admiring the scenes of the life of Jesus.[228] The location near the front cover made images not only an attractive entry into a magazine’s written content but also expanded their sphere of circulation once they were separated from the magazine.

In most aspects of their production, publishers of illustrated magazines depended on industrial technologies and a trained work force for casting type, electrotyping page copies, printing pages, and the binding of printed matter in the final volume. Theodore de Vinne, one of the master typographers and printers of the nineteenth century, detailed the extensive production routine of printing the *Century Magazine* in 1890. Especially the printing of illustrations and text on different presses was a taxing and labor-intensive task. Apart from typesetting the text, woodcuts were first “proved on the hand press … and a mold taken in beeswax on which an electrotype shell is deposited” (Vinne, 1890:

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226. *Ladies’ Home Journal* published a series of colored dress images, which could be cut out and used as garment for a paper doll, the ‘Lettie Lane Paper Family’ in 1909 (See the example in Reed, 1997: plate VI). The cover thus became an artifact, which had a lifespan well beyond the periodical’s shorter shelf-life.

227. See, for example, the especially explicit issue of November 1895 (Vol. 20: Issue 1).

228. “Editorial Notes.” *McClure’s Magazine* Apr. 1900: 579. In January 1900, *McClure’s* had started the series “The Life of the Master” by Rev. John Watson, which was accompanied by richly colored illustrations of various stages of the life of Jesus.

89) because woodcuts easily wore out when printed thousands of times. The electrotyping department made copies of pages in lead in reverse, which were stored in the ‘plate vault’ before printers mounted the plates on a web press. Illustrated pages were printed on a stop-cylinder press, “sixteen pages only on one side of a sheet at the rate of about 750 impressions an hour” (ibid., 94). The slow speed of the press required to have duplicates of pages and illustrations to allow several presses to print simultaneously. After the printing, the separate “sections of folded paper” (96) of the magazine were brought to a large revolving table where (mostly female) gatherers put the different stacks of pages together in the right order: “Pressing and folding go on … every day,” DeVinne reported, “but gathering, collating, stitching, and covering can be done only after every sheet of the magazine has been printed” the day before the magazine’s publication (ibid., 98). Most of the new popular magazines prided themselves with the scope and quality of their illustrations: “woodcuts are the jewels of the magazine,” DeVinne enthused (ibid., 89).

The combination of text with images of all kinds (as woodcut, engraving, halftone, or lithograph) allowed magazines to create a new intermedial and intertextual format, which attracted new audiences but which also changed the practice of journalism. The magazines tried to attract readers through the quality of their reproductions and distinguish their style from the coarse illustrations, visual satires or cartoons, which were a central aesthetic element of the sensationalist daily press of the 1890s. The sensational dailies lured audiences of workers and middle class clerks with stories of exposure journalism, atrocious murders, and titillating pictures. Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York Evening World* and William Randolph Hearst’s *Journal* used topical images to “pique the curiosity of readers or sometimes to satisfy even more base instincts” (Carlebach, 1997: 14). They developed a visual style that accommodated sensationalism with consumerism.[229] One important innovation in the *World* and

229. Steele argues that richly illustrated newspapers like Pulitzer’s *World* not only made the blending of advertising and editorial content easier, they also marked a departure from the strong typographic style of newspapers like the newly established *Sun* under the leadership of Charles A. Dana. While Dana “had been sensitive to the interests of his readers” by supplying primarily information in print about their living conditions and the world around them, Pulitzer “sold more than a newspaper, he promoted a newspaper that advertised a way of life” based on consumption (Steele, 1990: 600).

Journal was the quick succession of images and words that broke with the rigid framework of type assembled in columns which had not basically changed since the early days of newspaper journalism. The more dynamic page layout forced more conventional publications like the *New York Times* to follow suit. As a chronicler of the *Times* pointed out in 1926, "the heads are still one column [in the Times], though Mr. Pulitzer and Mr. Hearst have already accustomed their publics to banner lines in huge type" ("Story of the Headlines", 1926: 40).[230] In magazines like *Century* or *McClure's* the page layout clearly distinguished text parts and images, but gave more attention to readability. By dynamically placing images alongside text, the magazines offered a well-paced reading and viewing experience that did not foreground effect but emphasized education, storytelling, and sophisticated entertainment.

Using visual material for the coverage of news had been pioneered by *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (started in 1855), *Harpers Weekly* (started in 1857),[231] the weekly *Illustrated American* (started in 1890), and *The Daily Graphic* (started in 1873).[232] Both the sensationalist press and the new popular magazines of the 1890s drew on the cultural conventions established by these media and modified them for their own demands. *Frank Leslie's*, *Harper's* and the *Daily Graphic* had employed hordes of illustrators and engravers to supply an increasing demand of pictures of contemporary events, satires and illustrated jokes. *Frank Leslie's* was especially successful to "set the pattern for nineteenth century illustrated journalism" by offering topical illustrations of newsworthy events for a period of several decades in which the nation changed rapidly (Brown, 2003: 4). Illustrations of newsworthy events were still hard to prepare at the time because large images had to be composed from several small ones and the work routine for wood engravings was time consuming. In its first issue 6 December 1855,

230. On the connection of visual style to content in newspapers, see also (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2001). For American magazines Reed offers a very detailed overview of illustrative practices and content formats (Reed, 1997: 50-79).

231. The magazine *Harper's Monthly* already began in 1850. According to Mott, its success relied on the three factors of serializing fiction, doubling the amount of pages compared to other literary magazines and its illustrations based on woodcuts (Mott, 1962: 321).

232. The first illustrated newspaper was the *Illustrated London News,* founded in 1842 by Herbert Ingram, and emulated in the United States by the short-lived *Republic* (1844) and *Gleason's Pictorial* (1853). See "Pictorial Newspapers in America" *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 15. Dec. 1855: 6.

Frank Leslie's points out that "the habit had been to glue small [blocks of engravings] together, at the risk of their coming apart in the press." Leslie's had solved this problem with a specialized press and could offer illustrations which combined "actuality and attraction [...] rapidity and freshness essential to the efficiency of a newspaper." While other editors of illustrated periodicals had to "put their paper to press ten days before its date," Leslie's could respond to events spontaneously.[233]

In the 1870's, the *Daily Graphic* offered illustrations on four of its eight pages, mostly executed in woodcuts, including the front page. Topicality and newsworthiness were important for the editors of the *Graphic.* The paper "[was] enabled to give *real pictures* of current events, which by their *truthfulness* will commend themselves to our readers as far preferable to the most highly-spiced *scenes penciled from imagination*,"[234] the editors wrote. The equation of a 'real picture,' which was often based on a photograph or drawing, with 'truthfulness' refers here to the production cycle for illustrations greatly accelerated by photo-lithography for printing. The quote implies the growing importance of photography to record events for journalistic purposes. Whereas the strictly illustrative use of images did not demand absolute truthfulness, illustrations based on photographs were now held to the new standard established by photography. "The life of our times," wrote the *Graphic*, "shall become photographic, and the illustrations of events will be as accurate and pleasing and elegant as any word-painting in the text."[235] The instantaneity of the photographic exposure emulated the focus on topical news items in the daily press–"speed and accuracy are of more importance than finish."[236] The *Graphic's* nameplate, for example, featured a camera in front of telegraphic wires on the right and a rotary printing press as icons of the paper on the left in 1873. These various technologies all contributed to an "illustrated record of the world's daily doings" that was achieved by an intermedial production routine: "We paint now by a flash of light; we print with the tireless rapidity of steam; and ... transfer our

233. "Pictorial Newspapers in America." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* 15. Dec. 1855: 6.

234. "Our Illustrations." *The Daily Graphic* 4 Mar. 1873: 2 [erroneously dated 1863], emphases added.

235. "About Ourselves." *The Daily Graphic* 4 Mar. 1873: 2 [erroneously dated 1863].

236. "Our Illustrations." *The Daily Graphic* 22 Apr. 1873: 2.

pictures to the press with even greater celerity than we can put the words of writers and reporters in type."[237] While photo-lithography accelerated the reproduction of images or entire pages for print, illustrations 'after a photograph' were still the only way to reproduce photographs of recent events for mass circulation. This method, however, put in doubt the very advantage of photographs over illustrative media. In order to preserve this advantage illustrators, editors and scientists needed to explain to their audiences how photographs were obtained, how they were to be understood and what could be seen through them - especially when a reproduction failed to offer the same level of detail as a photograph. Because images needed to be adapted for print, the possibilities and limitations of visual reproduction techniques are vital to understand how photographs became distinguished as a special class of objective images. The development of a 'schema of objectivity' needs to start from this material basis of preparing photographs for print publication.

237. "Illustrated Journalism." *The Daily Graphic* 4 Mar. 1873: 2.

The Schema of Objectivity in Photographic Reproductions

The previous discussion has emphasized the disjunction between photographic practices and illustrative practices of visual media like magazines. In order to explain how photographs were gradually differentiated from merely illustrative images in terms of their epistemological and technological superiority, the schema of objectivity entails a material, a scientific and a cultural dimension. The material dimension deals with the manual crafts involved in transcribing photographs to printing plates. As the immediacy of the photograph was lost in the process, engravers found ways to graphically emulate pictorial detail and photographic precision by other means until the halftone substituted manual reproductions with a photomechanical process. The debates at the time signal how important such material factors were for the valuation of reproductions in the same terms like their photographic originals.[238] The scientific dimension of the schema of objectivity addresses the question in what way photographs were superior to other forms of graphic record, how this superiority was negotiated in reproductions and what cognitive advantage photographs offered that could not be achieved by other means. The cultural dimension, then, brings photography in contact with urges to social reform by providing a medium that 'brings to light' what is hidden in society. Exemplified by Jacob Riis' crusade against the tenements in New York, photography is firmly established as a medium of record and reform, of exposure and analysis. While the three dimensions of the schema of objectivity are traced back to the history of reproducing photographs in print, the particular interdependencies of material, cognitive and social dimensions can account for the transposition of the schema itself from photography to journalistic practice in general.

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238. Although photography is primarily associated with its "reproducibility" as distinguished from "unique" images such as artworks, I do not want to perpetuate the discussion about either the originality of the photograph or the 'aura' of a unique object. Walter Benjamin is primarily concerned with the loss of the 'aura' of materially unique works of art in photographic reproductions, also as a prelude to his more prominent concern with moving images in the famous essay (Benjamin, 1969; Benjamin, 2008). Instead, I will turn Benjamin's argument on its head: Early reproductions of photographs needed to *preserve* the 'aura' of the photograph in order to make plausible why it offered a superior form of image of the world.

The Material Dimension: Transposing Immediacy by Hand

Michael Brown has argued that the popular magazines at the turn-of-the-century were "a significant site for the early introduction of images into American culture" because they made prints of famous artworks available to the general public (Brown, 1998: n.p.). For the British illustrated press of the nineteenth century, Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor have found that illustrated news in newspapers differed from magazines and book illustrations. Because fine engravings in magazines retained an air of artisanship they were regarded as a form of art in their own right: "For much of its duration in the nineteenth century, then, illustrated journalism [in Britain] retained a primary association with fine art prints and the art of the engraver who produced it (…)" (2009: 4). Such illustrations made famous portraits and pictures available to the readers of magazines, while illustrations for daily purposes of news reporting were usually inferior in quality and were easily discarded as news became stale. Because American magazine publishers touted the quality and scope of their illustrations and reproductions to attract audiences, the magazines were also pioneering the "mass mechanization of the reproduction of photographs" in the early 1880s (Gidley, 39). Given the dominance of mechanical modes of reproduction in the magazines (engraving, etching, woodcut), the photograph, however, posed a special challenge for illustrators because it was based on an immediacy of exposure that differed from creative illustrations. Since it was yet impossible to simply develop photographs for mass circulation by actinic process (as in the production of individual photographic prints), the older photomechanical process endured for quite some time. Yet engravings, woodcuts and etchings were increasingly qualified in comparison to the new immediacy of photographs. The act of imagination and interpretation, which characterized the manual arts of graphic reproductions, became devalued in face of the new photographic technology.

In the older illustrated weekly papers like *Leslie's* and *Harper's,* photographs were extensively reprinted, but it was a laborious and expensive process to translate them into ink-on-paper reproductions (Davis, 2007: 176). After a sketch artist had transferred a photograph on wood, it was turned into an engraving fit for printing.

> The photographic engravings in the early issues of *Leslie's* and *Harper's* were thus doubly removed - by sketch artist and by engraver - from the optical precision of the source photograph (ibid.).

To preserve the tonal range and sharpness of contrasts in reproductions, irrespective of whether these were based on photographs or artworks, illustrators employed a well-known optical illusion that created a halftone *effect*. Through hatching and cross-hatching lines of varying thickness (also called "swelling line") engravers could emulate a wide tonal range with black ink alone, because the rectangular spaces between lines optically assumed shades of gray. The intensity of gray varied according to the distance between lines. Although there are "no intermediary tones" (Vitray et al., 1973: 158) in line cuts, the impression of gray tones comes from this optical illusion. Using dots instead of lines was called stippling and allowed for even finer transitions between light and dark areas.

This method was widely adopted for the illustration of newspapers and magazines, but ran into intense competition with the halftone process in the early 1890s. Elbridge Kingsley defended the art of wood engraving in 1889, arguing that the creative involvement of an engraver or an etcher in the reproduction of art was on the same level like that of the artists themselves. Technicians of printmaking were equally interpreting the images they wanted to reproduce but it was the spirit of the age that only the etcher was "encouraged in every possible way to put his personality into the handling of his subject" because he worked for fine art reproductions printed in anthologies and books. Wood engravers typically worked for mass market periodicals and were "hedged in by mechanical influences that sap the enthusiasm and deaden the ambition" (Kingsley, 1889: 576). In 1890, the halftone had become such a prominent method in printing that it put engravers like Kingsley out of business. James Best has noted that "halftone illustration … cost $20 to reproduce as compared with $300 for a comparable wood engraving" (Best, 1984: 6). In the age of halftone reproductions, the costly work of engravers was no longer valued. Kingsley wryly noted that "many artists are looking for such a millennium, when the engraver shall become an electric machine controlled by a button, and themselves produced as in a mirror." Given the age's fascination with technology, the artists "may justly feel that they are better reproduced by mechanical

means than be engraving" (Kingsley 578). Despite this vain attempt to defend the art of wood engraving and etching, Kingsley had to acknowledge that the new 'electric machine controlled by a button' had initiated a new age of picture reproduction.

The confrontation of manual and photographic methods of graphic reproduction culminated in the question whether an interpretative act should precede the preparation of a reproduction or whether a reproduction needed to be obtained by the same mechanical means used to create a photograph. Interestingly, a similar debate took place in photographic circles as well. What made a good picture was judged by the standard of how well a picture could emulate the conditions of human perception. This question was addressed by the British photographer Peter Henry Emerson in his photographs of *Life and Landscape of the Norfolk Broads* in the 1880s. Emerson "tried ... to present the central motif sharply and the remaining part of the picture slightly blurred, making use of the depth of focus for the purpose" (Tausk, 1988: 35). Although this approach sounds scientific, Emerson was a chief proponent of exploring the artistic possibilities of photography. In his book *Naturalistic Photography for the Students of the Art* (1890), Emerson criticized that the majority of textbooks of his time "teach to cultivate the scientific side of photography" (9), which was concerned only with exposure times and technical details. His aim was to give practical advice for producing art photographs, for "aesthetic pleasure *alone*" (10), by a method called "naturalism," which meant to reproduce in an artistic fashion images on par with the "standard" of nature (2012: 22).

A similar proposition to judge the "correctness of photographs" had been put forward by Hermann Vogel in an article for *Popular Science Monthly* in 1875. Vogel was concerned with the photographic rendition of objects and their "correct" reproduction, which could be measured only through a comparison with "Nature, and Nature alone" (1875: 710). Because the ability to wage such a comparison required experience of observing nature and mastering photographic technology alike, only the "practised eye" could achieve likelihood between image and object. But Vogel made an important adjustment by pointing out that experience in producing 'correct' photographs concerned primarily the manipulation of all stages of the production and development

of prints.

> But our readers know already that the picture does not make itself, but that it must be first developed, brought out, fixed, and copied. In all these operations there is no precise measure or rule how long the photographer should expose to the light, develop, fortify, and tone the picture. This depends on his option and judgment (…)" (ibid.).

Although an impression was fixed by purely optical means, the final printed images were the result of careful selection of chemicals and decisions on exposure times. The most remarkable point about the "perfectly truthful representation of objects" (711) in photography was, however, the selectivity of objects, composition and perspective before a picture was taken. Too dark shadows and too light surfaces could partly be redeemed in the development process, but what could not be changed in retrospect were the photograph's basic elements. Photographs captured what had been positioned in front of a camera, but they did so indiscriminately. A picture was

> untrue, not because the objects it represents were not present in Nature, but because the accessories are presented too glaringly and too large, while the principal parts appear too small, indistinct, and inconsiderable" (ibid,. 716).

The central qualifier of the correctness of a photograph was its artistic composition and the condensation of characteristic elements. Vogel reaches the surprising conclusion that it is the artist who is "truer than photography" because the artist is "giving prominence to what is characteristic, and dropping what is accessory" (ibid.). A good photograph can only achieve the same degree of condensation, to be a "true picture," if the photographer "take[s] care that the characteristic is made prominent and the accessories subordinate." Vogel sums up this argument by granting photography to provide a "faithful picture of the form" while art is privileged to give such a picture of the "character" of objects, scenes and people (ibid., 717).

Kingsley and Vogel both reject the mechanical automatism that underlies the photographic process. For Kingsley, a mechanical reproduction makes it impossible to interpret a given image for reproduction. For Vogel, the selection of objects for photographs and the careful manipulation of the development process are signs of "art" that go beyond the mere mechanical reproduction of a vista. Both authors argue for the practiced competence in creating and manipulating images - as reproduction or as photograph. Mere mechanical precision is derided as a debased form of culture

precisely because it seems to exclude any expertise, craft or experience. What is crucial to both authors is the condensation of pictorial elements, the accentuation of contrasts and shapes that reveal the 'character' of a scene, an event or a person. With the halftone printing process, such interpretative image making was poised to be relegated entirely to photography, since the process was able to simply translate by photo-optical means all elements of a given picture. The halftone thus allowed for reproductions to be treated in the same terms like photographs, excluding interpretation on the side of the reproduction artist. Judged by the standard of photography, engravings appeared as "a more or less imperfect medium" by comparison to a photograph, which could "give the reader a distinct idea of the real thing."[239]

The adoption of the halftone process for illustrating mass periodicals took about thirty years. First experiments with the process were conducted by Baron von Engloffstein as early as 1861 (Welling, 1978: 177). A commercially viable method was developed by Stephen Henry Horgan's experiments with "perforated cardboard" in the late 1870s and later perfected by Frederick E. Ives in 1886 (Horgan, 1913: 87). The origins of the halftone, however, are still subject to debate, as many printers, scientists and photographers experimented with variants of the same principle. Reed argues that the first published reproduction based on the halftone process was a front page illustration of the *Canadian Illustrated News* on 30 October 1869 (1997: 30). In the United States, the first halftone print of a photograph in a newspaper is ascribed to *The Daily Graphic*, which printed "A Scene of Shantytown, New York" as one example of several graphic processes on a double-spread page on 4 March 1880 (Jussim, 1988: 44f.). However, the same paper had pioneered a "granulated photograph" of Steinway Hall already in 1873.[240] The method had been developed by William Augustus Leggo, who had worked with Horgan on reproduction methods for photographs and was a co-

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239. "Half-Tone Portraits. Photography Has Thrown Many Artists out of Employment." *The Macon Telegraph* 8 July 1900: 2.

240. "A Wonderful Process. Our 'Granulated Photographs' *The Daily Graphic*, 2 Dec. 1873: 202. The editors emphasized that "no engraver has aided in its reproduction: the photographer's negative has supplied the transfer, from which this picture was printed" (ibid.). The picture was printed alongside advertisements on page 208, but was neither associated with any story nor intended as an advertisement.

publisher of the *Graphic*. This print was exceptional and did not become a permanent feature. Yet, it can count as an early halftone because it employed the same photomechanical principle. The 'granulated photograph' in the *Graphic* precedes the common periodization of the first halftone in a newspaper by almost 15 years[241] and the periodization for illustrated dailies by seven years.

The term *halftone* refers only to the effect of gray shades appearing between lines or cross-hatchings in engravings. What was new about the *halftone screen* method was that it could "print images directly alongside text" (Gidley, 2011: 40). The halftone screen consists of vertical and horizontal lines etched into two glass plates cemented at 90 degrees onto each other. A lattice structure of very fine squares is created which has 60 to 150 lines per inch or double the amount per square inch. The screen is positioned inside the camera between the lens and a negative. The picture to be reproduced is positioned in front of the camera. The halftone screen then breaks down "continuous masses [of color] … into small discontinuous masses or dots" (Vitray et al., 1973: 158). The resolution of the original picture is reduced to reproduce the picture in a relief fit for inking and printing. The result of a halftone reproduction is a dot structure where dots vary in size and density, so as to emulate lighter and darker areas of black found in the original. The halftone technique is so fine in its transformation that it "succeed[s] in simulating for the eye the whole tonal range of the original photo" (ibid., 163f.). When exposed, dark areas in the original will not allow much light to react on the negative (negative remains mostly white); light areas will let a lot of light pass through the lens, so the negative becomes almost black. Mid-tones react in a balanced pattern of white and black dots. The subsequent etching of the negative onto a metal plate and printing with ink of the metal plate reverses the pattern. Dark becomes light again because even surfaces carry almost no ink and light is printed dark because deeply etched surfaces

241. The first halftone as a regular feature of a daily newspaper in the United States is attributed to the front page of the *New York Tribune* of 21 January 1897 (Campbell, 2004: 191). Michael Carlebach notes that newspaper publishers "could not long resist the cheapness, speed, and accuracy of half-tones, and by the turn of the century the process was firmly established in the newspaper business" (1997: 29).

carry a lot of ink (165).[242] The halftone process was a way to prepare a relief printing plate by an automated process, in which the photochemical reaction on sensitized surfaces was identical to photographic processes themselves.

The halftone was superior in its "photographic accuracy" in the reproduction of any visual material at hand,[243] and made manual techniques of reproducing images redundant. The loss of pictorial information in the translation to a dot structure was considerably smaller than in the reworking of a picture through engravings. By the end of the 1890s, halftones were "standard practice" (Yochelson and Czitrom, 2007: 201) for the printing of photographs in magazines, which "finally ousted the traditional hand processes of engraving and wood-engraving for all except artists' prints" (Griffiths, 1996: 121). The first halftone in a magazine appeared in *Century* in January 1885,[244] but it was *Munsey's* which started using a Roe rotary press for industrial halftone printing in 1890 (Reed, 1997: 42). The halftone solved the problem of "securing a photomechanical method of reproducing images" in print (Harris, 1979: 197). Harris argues that "in a period of ten or fifteen years the whole system of packaging visual information was transformed, made more appealing and persuadable, and assumed a form and adopted conventions that have persisted right through the present" (ibid., 199).

Despite the facility and accuracy of the halftone process, aesthetic preferences established by generations of engravers still lingered on. The new method did not come unchallenged. A commentator in *Century Magazine* argued that the halftone and other actinic "processes" were still inferior to well-done wood engravings *because* of their

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242. Vitray offers a detailed description of photoengraving by etching, halftone preparation and printing processes (See pp. 157-175). For a overview of printmaking techniques in the reproduction of artworks see also the section on "Photomechanical Reproduction Processes" (Griffiths, 1996: 121-27).

243. "Great Strides in Engraving." *Boston Daily Globe* 20 Nov. 1887: 18.

244. Mott quotes reproductions of "brush drawings made to illustrate John Vance Cheney's ballads in 1884" in *Century* as the first halftone reproduction in a magazine (Mott, 1957: 153). However, in none of the issues of *Centur*y in 1884 are Cheney's poems accompanied by illustrations. The first ballad by Cheney illustrated by halftones appeared in January 1885, "How Squire Coyote Brought Fire to the Cahrocs" (*Century Magazine* Jan. 1885: 393-395), confirming a previous conclusion by Reed (See footnote 12, Reed, 1997: 45). Tichenor dates the first halftone to the May issue of *Century Magazine* in 1885 (Tichenor, 2005: 111), which contained a halftone reproduction that was explicitly labeled as a "process reproduction of a photograph" (*Century Magazine* May 1885: 139). The illustrations for Cheney in January 1885 were simply inserted on finer paper than the rest of the magazine but not captioned with a reference to their reproduction method. Still, they are clearly discernible as halftone illustrations.

mechanical accuracy.

> The process can copy outlines, but it cannot interpret tones; *it cannot think*. How much of the beauty of these admirable cuts depends upon the temperament, the originality, the artistic skill … of the man behind the graver.[245]

William Lewis Fraser, an art critic for *Century* magazine, described the limitations of the new method, which was “largely what its name implies - a *halftone* ; that is, as the deepest darks cannot be rendered by it, nor the highest lights, only the middle of the scale of the drawing can be reproduced.” Consequently, the *Century* employed a method of mixed media, where an engraver would retouch the finished halftone. “For some time it has been the practice for engravers to retouch process plates by re-entering the lines, in order to lighten the tones, and by burnishing, to deepen the darks.” To combine halftone and engraving, Fraser stated, “frankly substitutes engraving where the mechanical process fails.” Although these retouched halftones cost about four times as much as regular halftones, *Century* magazine implemented new photomechanical processes within existing practices of picture production (Fraser, 1895: 479).[246] Both the mechanical process of halftone and the artistic hand were combined to render images exhaustive in detail yet aesthetically within the conventions of the times and the magazine’s style.

The new method of reproducing images for mass circulation did not differentiate between illustrations of prose or illustrations of technical subjects, biographical sketches or scientific discoveries. Yet if photographs could be as easily reproduced by a halftone as an artistic sketch or a painting, how could the authority of photographs be preserved, how could their claim to accuracy and immediacy be sustained *visually* in a reproduction? The retouched halftone offered a chance to distinguish merely illustrative designs and to introduce a new objectivity for photographic images in print. The October issue of *McClure’s Magazine* in 1899 is a very good example to develop this

245. “The Outlook for Wood Engraving.” *Century Magazine* June, 1890: 312, emphasis added.

246. In order to avoid confusion, “mechanic” here refers to the mechanic nature of the photographic reproduction method and needs to be distinguished from the manual mechanic methods such as woodcuts described earlier.

point in the argument. It contained a seemingly inconspicuous adventure story about the "Killing of the Mammoth" (505-514). The dominant style of illustrations was rendered as brush and ink paintings, occasionally with scratches on the canvas as in Figure 1. These images are very expressionistic but have little differentiation in surfaces. To a reader of the magazine, the styleof these illustrations immediately signaled a literary context because literature and prose were typically illustrated by such images. Central scenes in the story are staged as climactic situations as in the image of an agitated mammoth (Figure 1). The illustration consists almost only of solid black, gray and white surfaces with little nuance. Only the long, bent teeth are clearly outlined in a forward thrust that seems to reach outside of the picture's frame, giving the image a three-dimensional effect.

Figure 1. Illustration of "The Killing of the Mammoth" with enlarged detail of scratches on brush and ink painting. *McClure's Magazine* Oct. 1899: 511.

THE KILLING OF THE MAMMOTH. 509

casion we had to portage everything a mile overland to avoid a cañon. We had cut our outfit down to the simplest necessaries, but I had secured from the steamer 500 feet of stout rope, three double-blocks and tackle, augers, a whip-saw, and a few other tools; and these, with our cooking utensils, winter clothing, and a few supplies, necessitated many weary journeys on the portages. And then the mosquitoes! I have had some experience of them, but I have never seen them so bad as they were on the upper reaches of the river during the month of July.

On August 2d—my birthday, I recollected—we came to the blazed tree. There we cached our stuff, pushing on to look out our route and have a peep at the "devil's country." The blaze was deeply cut, and showed plainly, though it was evidently many years old. The dug-out canoe had been washed away by a freshet. The gully was apparently nothing but a depression in the mountain-side, and it terminated in an abrupt declivity. This cliff extended, as far as we could see, to the head of the river. Soon-thai's object in climbing it had probably been to inspect some massive bones which projected from a ledge about fifty feet up. Above this rose an unscalable ascent of rocks and earth. Climbing to the ledge, we found the cave, or tunnel, as it more properly was. It was about 200 feet long, and wide enough for three men to walk abreast. The entire length was literally paved with gigantic mammoth bones, which made even the matter-of-fact Paul exclaim. I experimented on a skull, and also on a piece of spinal vertebræ, and was glad to find that the solid bullet of the .303 drilled through them with ease.

The end of the tunnel was

"We had to use our blocks and tackle to land our stuff at the tunnel entrance."

blocked by a recent fall of rock and rubbish, which it took us some hours to remove. Had we not known there was an exit, we should have turned back, believing this to be a cave. Having effected a passage through, we found the "gully" to be in reality a considerable creek, which had evidently been blocked by a rock slide or an eruption. The water sank into the ground near the exit from the tunnel. I did not notice where the creek joined the river we had just left. Three hours' easy climbing took us to the summit of the divide from the tunnel.

I shall not easily forget the first view we had of the Tee-Kai-Koa River and Valley, as they will now be named on the maps. The sun was low in the sky when we won the summit of the divide, and a high range of snow-clad mountains to the northeast stood out so distinctly that they seemed to be but a few miles away. They were very rugged and precipitous, and dark patches of perpendicular cliffs assumed fantastic shapes against the intensely white background. As I knew the Noyukuk River must rise in these ranges, I estimated the distance to be about 200 miles. Below us extended a valley fifty miles wide, bounded by a range of low mountains which hardly ran above the timber line. This valley ran southward for about seventy miles, when the mountains on either side contracted sharply. I was at once satisfied that Joe's "long lake" was in reality a sluggish river, and I had no doubt I should find a deep cañon where the valley ended. Looking north, the valley showed no sign of narrowing, but turned to the northeast behind the opposite mountain range. From one end of it to the other, as far as eye could see, shining patches of water showed here and there, and the pine trees

Figure 2. Full page layout with dynamic illustration spread over the entire page. *McClure's Magazine* Oct. 1899: 509.

In contrast to this style of illustration in the story, there is one exception, a halftone based on a drawing resembling a technical sketch (Figure 2). The illustration on page 509 depicts two men hauling equipment with a tackle up to a cave. While one of them is seen holding the rope (literally at the bottom of the page), the other is standing near the cave's entrance in the upper middle of the page. The rope is not shown in full but is interrupted by blocks of text. The motion of hauling is implied as a countermovement to the text being read from top to bottom. The seeming factual depiction of the action, accentuated by the visual style of the halftone, distinguishes this illustration from all others in the story (see Figure 2). It appears more similar to technical sketches found in other articles in the same issue of *McClure's*. A further curiosity in this fictional story is an introductory letter appearing as a factual document. The prefatory letter by Horace P. Conradi authorizes the writer of the story to disclose how he had acquired the mammoth's skeleton that was allegedly on display in the Smithsonian museum in Washington D.C. (which it was not[247]). This introduction to the story questions the text as a mere piece of fiction. Both the prefatory letter and the technical sketch place the text between a fictional dramatization and a semi-journalistic exposure story.

247. As Lucas clarifies, the only "mounted mammoth skeleton" at the time was to be found in the Chicago Academy of Sciences (350) and "*not* in the Smithsonian Institution" (Lucas, 1900: 354), see also (Switek, 2012).

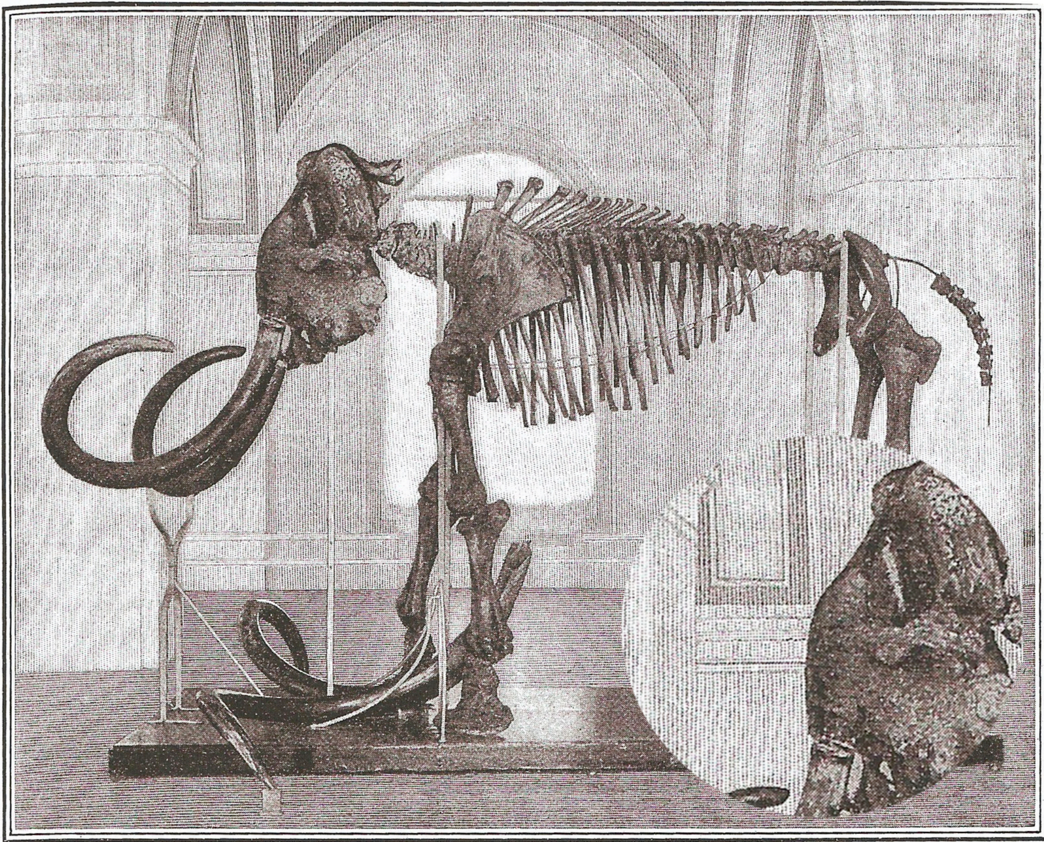

Figure 3. Illustration of "The Truth About the Mammoth" with enlarged detail of photograph of skeleton set against background in fine-line engraving. *McClure's Magazine* Feb. 1900: 352.

At least for some readers of *McClure's Magazine*, this seems to have caused great confusion about the question whether an actual living mammoth had been caught on the North American continent, or not. In its February number of 1900, *McClure's* picks up the story of the mammoth again, this time disclosing "The Truth about the Mammoth." As an editorial note explains, the story of the mammoth "was taken by many readers not as fiction, but as a contribution to natural history;" although it had been "printed purely as fiction with no idea of misleading the public" (Lucas, 1900: 349). The article is written by Frederic A. Lucas, then head of the comparative anatomy division at the National Museum and a leading paleontologist of the time. In contrast to the literary story in the October number, Lucas' article is almost exclusively illustrated by fine-line engravings upon which halftone images have been projected (See Figure 3).

All the illustrations were reproduced "from a photograph" and the aesthetic distinction between both types of illustrations is quite characteristic. While the literary illustrations lacked detail and accentuated action, the reproductions of the photographs,

even though they are composites of halftone and engraving, offer a lot more tonal range, sharper outlines and more detail. The question here is not whether the first story actually confused certain readers or whether it was just a publicity peg for *McClure's* to place yet another mammoth story. The striking contrast of these two stories is their visual style which introduces a different claim to objectivity for images, which were *both* rendered as halftones. There is much more to learn about the anatomy of the mammoth from the halftones, where every dent and bulge of the bones is carefully preserved than from the blotches of gray representing an agitated mammoth in the earlier story. The halftones prepare the object in the picture for an analytic scrutiny and preserve its particularity. Yet, although the image gives more detail, the engravers have made sure that the background does not overwhelm the principal object of interest, preparing, in Vogel's words, a 'correct photograph.' Backgrounds are toned down and appear as an evenly textured canvas upon which the photographic reproduction of the mammoth has been projected. Because this style of reproductions is so distinct from the literary illustrations, it is even more dubious whether any reader ever mistook the fictional account for a factual story. But since the editors could assume such a possibility, the example indicates a moment of transition between images that were regarded as approximate, interpretative illustrations, and images which functioned as scientific proof, because they could be obtained without interference of a human hand.[248]

The example further shows how the halftone as a method of reproducing photographs became associated with the same scientific precision that characterized the taking of photographs themselves. Although photographic images were transposed to a dot structure, this structure remained too invisible to impede the photographic claim to objectivity and immediacy. The tonal range and level of detail were equal to those of photographs, even though on a second glance, traces of the reproduction process are clearly discernible in the original print. By combining an established pictorial convention like engraving with the new method, the illustrators and editors of *McClure's*, and of many other magazines of the time, were able to underscore how

248. I thank Michael Leja and Angela Miller for their support and advice with identifying the print methods used by *McClure's* in both of the mammoth stories.

certain types of images supported a different claim to objectivity, even if they were reproduced with a very conscious interference of a human hand.

Photography was a vital new medium for journalistic purposes. The fascination with the technology, its popularity among amateurs, its scientific objectivity and immediacy all contributed to a growing interest in its journalistic application. But the lack of appropriate media for reproducing photographs in mass periodicals required to accommodate the new photographic record within existing cultural conventions and to use established illustrative techniques. The coexistence of halftones and engravings in newspapers and magazines was not without irony. In a salutary article on the value of news photography in 1899, the author vividly praises the benefit of halftone reproductions of photographs in newspapers, which "[convey] to the eye of the reader the scene as it actually occurred" (Figure 4).

Hon. John Hay, Secretary of State, handing to M Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador, the $20,000,000 due to Spain under the treaty of peace, in four warrants each, the other day at the State Department Here is a remarkable instance of news photography. This important State business was transacted before the camera. The above picture is from a photograph, except the photographer, whose figure was, of course, sketched in by our artist to show where he stood.

Figure 4. A "remarkable instance of news photography," as the author claims. But the photograph is rendered as an impossible illustration of a scene, where the photographer is part of the photograph. Arthur Leslie. "What News Photography Has Recently Accomplished." *Anaconda Standard* 4 June 1899: 19.

However, the article is illustrated with a line cut "from a photograph" as the caption tells us, in which the engraver has "sketched in" the figure of the photographer and his camera, which, by the logic of the medium, could not be in the same scene that was photographed. The illustration here subverts its evidential function, inadvertently

satirizes the great benefit of photography that the article postulates. But this impossible juxtaposition is not an act of satire, it simply reflects the technological conditions under which photography was first introduced by other visual media into mass periodicals.

The Scientific Dimension: Helping the 'Unaided Eye'

Scientific photographs were especially difficult to reproduce because reproductions had to function as evidence and proof, just like the photographs they were based on. Because scientific images are obtained by using specialized microscopic or telescopic technologies they functioned as more than just illustrations of scientific phenomena. The scientific image purports to visualize a reality that is inaccessible for human perception. Reproducing scientific images for mass circulation prominently exposes the conflict between a faithful photographic exposure and its accurate reproduction. As John Tagg has remarked in *The Burden of Representation*, "the coupling of evidence and photography in the second half of the nineteenth century was bound up with the emergence of new institutions and new practices of observation and record-keeping" (Tagg, 1993: 5). The use of photography in science was a contested application of a new technology because the technology itself was still an evolving field, whose limitations and vagaries were detrimental to scientific accuracy. Although photography offered the possibility to visualize for the 'unaided eye' what lay beyond human perception, reproductions of scientific photographs questioned and delegitimized this evidential power of photographs.

In *Objectivity* , Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison have retraced the epistemology of scientific atlases and their makers from the 18th to the 20th century, relating the category of "objectivity" as "a scientific norm" to "a set of practices" for the production of scientific images (2010: 27). Their study is especially suited for the present discussion because they link material practices of photographic production and reproduction to "epistemic virtues" of knowledge production (18). Each phase in the development of objectivity has had a distinct (and often contradictory) relation to the image, the authors argue. In the transition from "truth-to -nature" to "mechanical objectivity" to "trained judgement," scientific images were expected to reveal

'objective' information in a different way. If "to be objective," as Daston/Galison claim, "is to aspire to knowledge that bears no trace of the knower" then atlases are a peculiar form of knowledge, in which "pictures are the alpha and omega of the genre" (17, 22). The visual knowledge conveyed in pictures of bacteria, anatomy, or clouds does not simply "illustrate" a text but it appears as a form of knowledge that nature itself has conveyed without human interference. The scientific photograph appears as the result of direct inscription, exposure, record. The "primacy" of the atlas was to "train the eye to pick out certain kinds of objects as exemplary," and allow researchers to discern typical patterns independent of the morphological variance of natural specimen (22f.).

'Mechanical objectivity' provided the ground for modern scientific objectivity as it demanded a "double reformation of self and sight" (122) of researchers who needed to train their vision to accept mechanically what was conveyed through a camera lens, a telescope or a microscope. They were trained to question what they were seeing only in terms of a properly working apparatus of observation. Daston and Galison define the 'epistemic virtue' of mechanical objectivity as the "insistent drive to repress the willful intervention of the artist-author, and to put in its stead a set of procedures that would … move nature to the page through strict protocol, if not automatically."[249] The transition from artist-author to a form of automatic observer had the effect of "shift[ing] attention to the reproduction of individual items - rather than types or ideals." This shift "required a specific, procedural use of image technologies" which differed from the interpretative, generalizing image practice of the artist-author (121, emphasis removed). The photographic method offered "images free of human interpretation" (131) as far as the recording itself was concerned but photographs now needed a photographer and technical staff to develop the images. Contrary to the claim that the "camera apparently eliminated human agency" (187) the infrastructure of preparing, processing, and analyzing photographs depended on even more human agents.

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249. In *Techniques of the Observer*, Jonathan Crary similarly argued that observation always implies an "observing subject who is both the historical product and the site of certain practices, techniques, institutions, and procedures of subjectification" (Crary, 1991: 5). In the context of scientific photographs, this subordination of observers to the observing apparatus becomes especially apparent.

Daston and Galison remark that 'non-intervention' in the act of recording was a central epistemic virtue of photographs that set them apart from handmade drawings. In the early times of photography, scientific drawings were still valued for their ability to emphasize significant details, and to teach observers in distinguishing characteristic elements and coincidental occurrences. As Ian Hacking remarked in his review of *Objectivity*, "mechanical objectivity rejects the ways in which naturalists and their artists can adapt nature to suit their beliefs" (Dear et al., 2012: 23), yet it substituted human observation by a form of automatic recording that would become the new basis for interpretation. Photographic processes reversed the claim to objectivity of handmade images because they provided photographs or negatives as another material support for analysis. Photographs needed interpretation *after* an exposure was made whereas drawings needed interpretation *before* they were actually produced. Kelley Wilder has argued that the status of scientific images once they were recorded as photographs needed to be ascertained by inference, deduction and observation precisely because they foraged into realms beyond human vision. This involved the continuous experimentation with imaging technologies as a new central element to document scientific experiments and visualize results.

> To make a thing visible to the unaided human eye out of objects too small, too large, too fast, too slow, and too far outside the spectrum of human vision is only the precondition for observation, and dozens of small decisions go into the process of giving these ephemeral phenomena form. All of these decisions impinge on the final shape of the visual output that then becomes an object of study, or of contention, or even of historical import (Wilder, 2011: 351).

The substitution of observation by mechanical recording necessitated to interpret 'procedurally' acquired images for publication. The shift towards mechanical objectivity entailed a crucial move from the definition of types (generalizing from observing many individual specimen) to mechanically record evidence in its plurality (seeing each specimen in its particularity) that was presented as if it had been recorded without human intervention.

The use of photographs as scientific evidence underscores the argument presented here on the discrepancy between photographic productions and their reproduction in print media. Especially images of small or moving objects, in which detail was central

to sustaining an evidential claim of the photograph, were often unsuitable for reproductions to convey the full range of visual information of their originals. When scientific photographs were prepared for reproduction in mass circulation periodicals the question was rarely whether the photograph accurately depicted an aspect of the world but whether the same information that was conveyed in a photographic original could be reproduced in print. Since a large part of the public would typically first encounter scientific problems or discoveries through perusing the pages of popular magazines, the following examples will highlight the contested process of legitimizing photographs in print as a form of evidence of a reality that was inaccessible to the 'unaided human eye'.

One important quality of photographic pictures was their ability to arrest motion and to present fluid processes as sequences of distinct events. As shutter speeds approached a thousandth of a second, this ability became central to the use of photographs for scientific purposes. One could argue that the development of photography had been driven since its inception by the wish to arrest motion, to freeze time and to use images of fleeting processes for scientific analyses. Henry Fox Talbot, the inventor of the calotype, described the moment of his discovery in his book *The Pencil of Nature* (1844). Using a camera obscura near Lake Como, Talbot pondered ways to fix the image seen on the rear side of his camera. He wanted to retain the "inimitable beauty of the pictures of nature's painting which the glass lens of the Camera throws upon the paper in its focus - fairy pictures, *creations of a moment, and destined as rapidly to fade away* (1844: 4, emphasis added).

This analytic use of the camera and photographic method was especially interesting for scientists. One of the best researched examples of this application in the nineteenth century was Eadward Muybrige's study of locomotion in the late 1870s and 1880s. As is widely known, in 1877 Muybridge had provided a conclusive evidence for the sequence of a horse's gait. Through a battery of cameras with rapid shutters, released upon contact with the horse's hooves, Muybridge was able to take a sequence

of images of the horse's motion and prove scientifically that horses had all their feet off the ground at one point in the movement. Through his experiments at the Palo Alto race track of Leland Stanford in 1878, Muybridge could disprove the theory of "unsupported transit" and support Stanfords conviction that horses did not need to have a leg on the ground during gallop (Leslie, 2001). After breaking with Stanford over a copyright issue, Muybridge's technology was refined and institutionalized in the University of Pennsylvania in 1884, where he photographed thousands of sequenced images of humans and animals in motion. Excerpts of his research were published in 1887 in eleven bound volumes as *Animal Locomotion,* which for the most part contained studies of semi-nude humans performing simple actions like walking up stairs, swirling objects, dancing or fencing (Brown, 1992: 232).[250]

The scientific value of Muybridge's photographs was seen in their ability to transform a fluid movement into a series of discrete events that could be analyzed individually. In a review of the book, Talcott Williams in *Century Magazine* wrote that locomotion studies were an "important addition to the instruments of scientific research, by extending observation along a path where the limits of human sense had barred advance." Muybridge's invention was the "addition of a new method of research, which put before the eye what it could not see unaided" (1887: 356, 358). The camera was seen as a tool that could provide images of a world beyond human vision. The quality of Muybridge's photographs was also crucially linked to rapid, mechanic shutters, highly sensitive dry-plates and appropriate lenses. As a commentator on "Instantaneous Photography" had noted earlier, short exposure times were key to capture motion lest the object appeared blurred in the final print: "In so brief an exposure, although the body to be photographed is actually in motion, yet the distance *it moves in so brief a period is so slight as not to be perceptible in the photographed image.*" (Brown, 1882, emphasis added). In order to be taken for accurate depictions of an event occurring in a

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250. About the same time like Muybridge, the French scientist Jules-Etienne Marey conducted experiments with analyzing and recording animal motions. As Martha Brown has shown, there is no conclusive evidence that Muybridge knew about Marey's work until Leland Stanford obtained a copy of Marey's *Animal Mechanism* in 1874, which supported Stanford's theory about the horse's gait. See the chapters "Reinventing the Camera: The Photographic Method" (42-149) and "Marey, Muybridge, and Motion Pictures" (228-262) in (Brown, 1992).

sequence of motions, photographs could not show signs of blur, which would indicate the actual motion in front of the camera. Yet, although Muybridge took images of motions in rapid sequence, he could not approach the fluidity of movement as film later did.[251] In their analytic sequentiality as discrete events, the images presented static objects and subjects that needed to be cognitively associated with a motion, a motion that was not part of the images themselves.

In 1882, George Waring wrote about "The Horse in Motion" in *Century Magazine,* reacting to the publication of Stillman and Stanford's book of the same title, that used Muybridge's photographs as a base for lithographic illustrations.[252] Waring's article included three types of illustrations: schematic line engravings of a sequence of a horse's gait, heliotypes made from Muybridge's photographs, and a variety of popular depictions of horses and riders in fine-line engravings. Apart from a minute analysis of the horse's movements, Waring was especially concerned with the value of images for analytic and scientific purposes. The schematic illustrations, Waring admitted, "are not absolute reproductions; but in drawing them the greatest care was taken to preserve the outlines of the original." Because they were derived from photographs, they offered an "unquestionable analysis" of a horse in motion although not every part of the motion could be depicted. Waring felt urged to explain the images: "It is to be understood that the horse is at full speed, and that the illustrations here given (…) represent positions at intervals of two feet" (Waring Jr., 1882: 382). The static shots of a sequence of events did not show motion, as it had been customarily depicted in popular illustrations. Waring asserted that the viewer needed "the confused whirl of the wheels to complete the illusion" of motion of a horse coach. When a method such as Muybridge's proposed

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251. Muybridge invented the zoopraxiscope in 1879 as an attempt to remedy this deficit. The zoopraxiscope was based on the mechanism of a phenakistoscope, consisting of a round cylinder on which images of brief motion sequences were painted or printed. When the cylinder turned, the quick succession of images created the effect of motion, reversing the fragmentation of motions in photography through an optical illusion. The zoopraxiscope was an especially powerful visualization device during Muybridge's public lectures in Europe and America (Brown, 1992: 48).

252. Muybridge was traveling in Europe, when the book appeared without giving him credit for the taking of the pictures. Although he was furious over the publication, the fact that Stillman and Stanford's book had used mainly lithographs, convinced him that the illustrations were "absolutely worthless for scientific or artistic use" when compared with his photographic negatives (quoted in Brown, 1992: 231).

a new ways of seeing "our conventional natures revolt at the innovation," Waring wrote (387).

The analytic gaze of the camera was vastly more objective than mere perception but its objectivity revolted against convention. The photo created an "absurd truth" (ibid.) where the observer's eye had to fill in the gaps between images, even if those were taken in quick succession. By convention the horse should be depicted "as we see him in life, not as he is shown when his movements are divided by the five-thousandth part of a second" (388). Waring defended the established pictorial conventions of using blur as an indication of motion against the static objectivity of Muybridge's photographs. In a final note he cautioned that "enthusiasm over a new discovery [and] devotion to a purely theoretical 'truth,'" should not ignore the "limitations … to represent action by passive objects and lines" (ibid.). This criticism in a way reflects the difference between the outlines of an object and its 'character' that was discussed in relation to the halftone process. For Waring, the photographs are accurate depictions of the contours of a horse in motion, but in their sequentiality the photographs betray what they seek to depict - motion. In his view, the willful blurring of pictures to connote motion is vastly more effective and closer to a galloping horse's character than were Muybridge's scientific pictures.

Waring's view can be seen as emblematic of the conflict between scientific images and established cultural conventions. Although they were scientifically more objective than artistic paintings in popular illustrated media, photographs were not self-evidently accepted as more objective images. Although Muybridge was more scientifically objective in his methods of depicting horses in motion, the images of the illustrator Frederic Remington were vastly more popular. Whether it was Remington or Muybridge who first depicted a horse with all its feet off the ground is not the question here. Remington was a well-know illustrator of the time, who frequently depicted images of frontier life including images of horses of settlers and native Americans alike.[253] For Estelle Jussim, the conflict is itself the "paradigm of the entire publishing

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253. See, for example, Remington's sketches of galloping horses - suspended in midair - in (Remington, 1966).

experience" of images in nineteenth century print publications (Jussim, 1983: 215). Although Muybridge could show that the horse was completely suspended in mid-air, his scientific photographs could not be published *as photographs* in mass market media. Muybridge published only a limited edition of his book *Animal Locomotion* (1874) which featured original negative reproductions of his photos. Moreover, his scientific findings could only be disseminated in 'translated' form through popular media, where they violated against convention and moral convictions. Whereas Remington served the popular taste of his audiences, Muybridge offered a 'naked' truth in his locomotion studies that was objectively obtained yet unfit for publication beyond the limited readership of his bound volumes. Jussim sums up the conflict in the following way:

> The obvious truth was that a Muybridge photograph, however scientifically correct and valuable, could not very well be adapted to use *as illustration*, since a picture of a naked man on a horse (and the preponderance of Muybridge's models were, for the sake of scientific accuracy, naked) could not very well be adapted to use, say, as a mounted cavalry officer of the Mexican Army (Jussim, 1983: 234, original emphasis).

Photography may have offered more accurate pictures but it could not "simplify information sufficiently to transfer it usefully to a reader" (ibid., 235). Remington did not depict raw motion broken up in sequences but emulated the *perception* of motion in all its fuzziness. Muybridge used photography to study motion as a sequence of discrete events but his objective images revolted against the cultural conventions in the perception of motion (apart from their dubious immorality).

Another prominent application of photography for scientific purposes in the nineteenth century was its ability to visualize objects or phenomena that could not be perceived by human vision at all. The discovery of Roentgen rays in 1895/96 brings this use of photographic processes to a peak. A participant of a conference on the new discovery in 1896 remarked that "X rays, though making no impression on the eye, exert a very powerful action on the photographic plate." The special value of Roentgen rays was that "sharp and clear photographs [could] be made, which may be examined at leisure" ("Photographing the Unseen", 1896: 124f.). The new method exposed the structures of human anatomy, or the contents of sealed containers. X-rays could be used

as a method of discovery and as a tool of medicine. Experiments with Roentgen rays conducted at Princeton by W.F. Magie, exploited the fact that X-rays were reflected differently according to the density of the tissue they exposed. Accordingly, the most promising application of the new method was seen in "locating foreign matter in the flesh, such as bullets"[254] but the same method of visualization could also aid "the manufacture of arms." Because alloys of metals were often faulty and thus prone to fail under stress, X-rays could "show in the photographic reproduction all inequalities that exist in the structure of metals, such as fractures and cavities."[255] In distinction from more abstract scientific images, the X-ray soon became a popular fascination due to its "pictorial" qualities (Wilder, 2011: 361). A veritable "X-ray craze" marked the year 1896, when photos of skeletal structures became both alluring and scientific artifacts of a new aesthetic based on a revolutionary picture technology. As Pamboukian argues, the new x-ray imagery "allied the weird macabre world of spiritualism, with the scientific and the progressive" (2001: 71; cf. Natale, 2011).

The ability to photograph structures of the body hidden from human vision also informs the strange case of thought photography in the late nineteenth century. Sabine Flach argues that X-rays here served as a model which "culminated in the idea that thoughts could be reproduced on the plate indexically."[256] The photographs produced by Hippolyte Baraduc, a chief proponent of thought photography and precursor to neurobiological research, were intended to visualize mental states. Baraduc applied the photographic analogy to the functioning of the brain, by reasoning that the image of a bottle was retained in the brain *as an image* which could be photographed. In his photographs, the image was rendered as a vague contour approximating the shape of a bottle (or, for that matter, any other longish object). Flach argues that "with the

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254. "The Roentgen Discovery." *New York Times* 7 Feb. 1896: 9.

255. "The New Photography. Remarkable Outcome of Prof. Rontgen's [sic!] Discovery." *The State* 28 Jan. 1896: 3.

256. The same analogy to X-rays is present in experiments in the 1880s on thought photography by Commandant Louis Darget. Darget assumed that "V-rays" (short for vital rays) were "the vital fluid of man" which could "affect photographic plates in the same manner as ordinary light." Darget sought to capture thoughts animated by these rays by simply holding photosensitive material on a subject's forehead ("Human Thoughts", 1913).

indexical image came the idea of producing truthfulness about immediacy and impressionability in general" (Flach, 2010: 449). Baraduc wanted to create a 'correspondence' between photographically produced images and mental states and the fact that he had developed by photographic means an image that actually presented a shape was regarded as a proof of depicting mental states visually. Because the image was produced by photographic means, Baraduc counted on the evidential power of the technology to underline his theory.

The value of photographs to sustain scientific claims to truth is also essential for ghost photography which spurred considerable controversy around the turn of the century. Because ghost photography is probably the most dubious scientific application of photography, this case illustrates especially well how photographs served as a form of evidence - despite their contested nature. John Durham Peters has argued that "spiritualism was one of the chief sites at which the cultural and metaphysical implications of new forms of communication were worked out" especially as photography offered a way to provide a medium for ghosts to materialize and become visible (Durham Peters, 1999: 100). One of the most prominent cases in this respect had been the trial against William H. Mumler, a ghost photographer in New York, who was exposed as a charlatan yet not convicted of the forgeries he had produced in his studio. Michael Leja has argued that the Mumler case had "educated those following the trial in the technical processes of photography and the opportunities they provided for chicanery" (Leja, 2004: 57). The trial was unable to prove that Mumler had produced frauds but inadvertently publicized all the technical knowledge that was necessary to create photographs with a ghostly appearance. Leja concludes that "the case helped to consolidate an experience of photography as a medium simultaneously of truth and illusion" (ibid., 58).[257] This ambivalence is in part explained by the contested status of photographic evidence for spiritualistic ends which the Mumler case had exposed.

Amateurs began experimenting with the illusional potential of photographs, "freak

257. See also the richly illustrated collection of original documents about and by Mumler in (Kaplan, 2008).

photography" as the *Boston Globe* called it in 1893.[258] Especially double exposures showing an identical person in various spots in a photograph were a popular play at the impossibility of such an arrangement in real life. Perspectival illusions such as foreshortening also made photography into a medium, which could explore the impossible, unrealistic dimensions of perception. Stories about murderers and their victims still haunting the crime scenes achieved another dimension of chilling entertainment once the uncanny horror could be visually re-presented in seemingly scientific photographs. One source of such "ghostly appearances" seems to have been the practice of accidentally exposing plates again that were believed to be new, or of using improperly cleaned plates still carrying traces of former photographs.[259] In most of these ghost stories, the photos' authenticity is not only achieved by their seeming scientific method but by actual witnesses confirming a given account of ghost appearances. This discursive structure is exemplified in the case of Rev. Charles Tweedale, who in 1916 photographed a ghost by the lunch table "although invisible to the normal vision of himself and his son." The "definite objectivity" that Tweedale (and the *Times*' writer) ascribe to the photographs is grounded in a properly functioning photographic apparatus, which by itself recorded only what was present in front of the lens.[260]

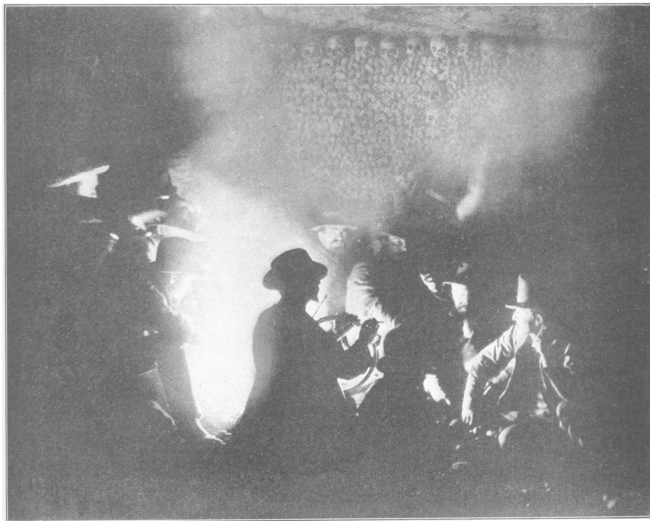
The evidential power of photographs and their conflict with reproduction media is epitomized in an article on the "Invisible World," which appeared in *Everybody's Magazine* in 1906. The author invokes the age's fascination with scientific modes of explanation as a background to the renewed interest in supernatural phenomena: "A skeptical age; we do not believe in much of anything - unless, indeed, it bears the trade-mark of science" (Thompson, 1906: 330). The author asserts that "science … has reached the point where it does not ignore the unseen world" of spirits and ghosts (333). As a principal method of analysis and proof of psychic phenomena, the article features

258. "Freaks of Photography." *Boston Daily Globe* 16 July 1893: 27.

259. "Freaks of Photography: Explanation of Strange Figures that Appear in Pictures." *The Washington Post* 30 May 1897: 24.

260. "Vicar Says He Took Picture of Ghost." *New York Times* 21 Mar. 1916: 7.

photographs and illustrations reproduced by the halftone process. A photo of "devil worshipers in the catacombs of Paris" shows men gathered around a fire, their faces sharply illuminated while their bodies are merely silhouettes (333). In the background, skulls and bones are aligned on the wall, as if staring from a netherworld (Figure 5). The presence of the skulls is part of the mis-en-scène of the photograph, documenting the gathering of the worshippers in Paris as an illustration.



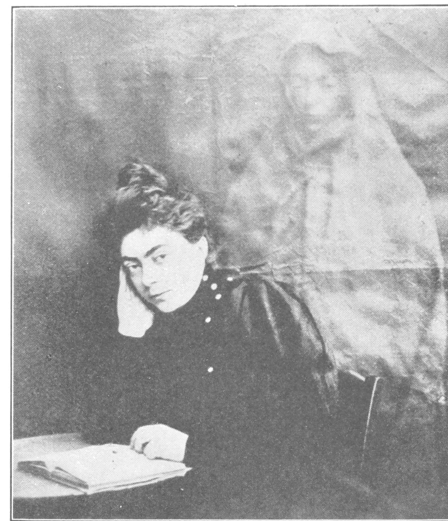
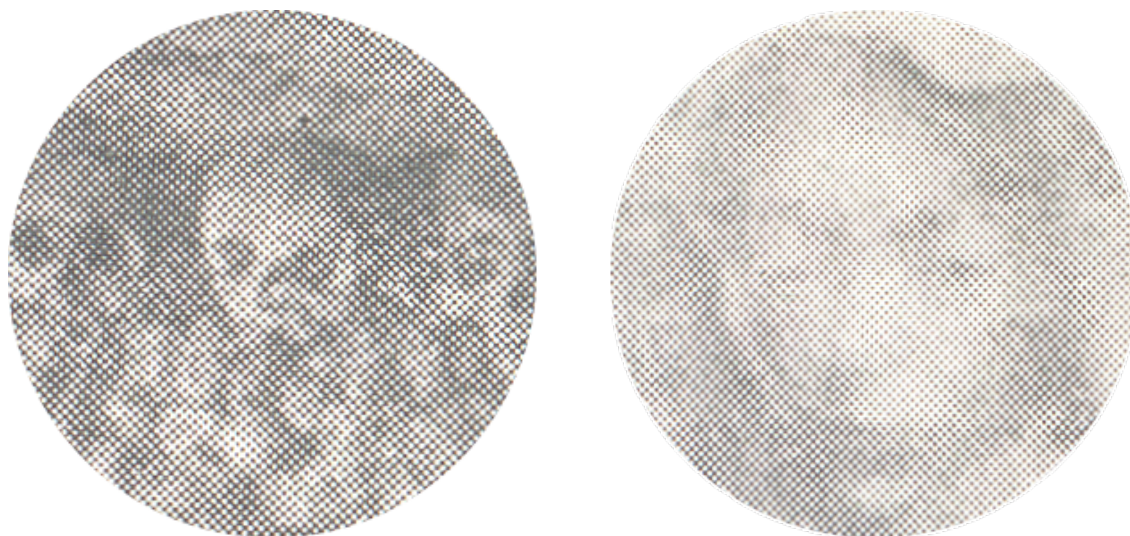


Figure 5. Figurative co-presence of the living and the dead as devil worshippers gather in Paris. Halftone illustration in Thompson. "The Invisible World." 1906: 333.

Figure 6. Evidence of an actual co-presence of the living and the dead, as a ghost looks over a reader's shoulder in an 'authentic' ghost photograph. Halftone illustration in Thompson. "The Invisible World." 1906: 335.

Another image, a "curious photograph" as it is captioned, depicts a woman seated at a desk, distracted from reading a book (335). She is looking away from the book towards the bottom right corner. The object of her gaze seems to lie outside of the picture in the reader's space (Figure 6). Behind her left shoulder is a ghostly figure of a young woman clad in a hood garment. The article explains that Sir William Crookes "photographed his ghostly visitant" and that a "Colonel de Rochas" attested the picture's "authenticity" after an investigation of the case was conducted (338). In both pictures, the aesthetic of a ghostly appearance is similar. The skulls and the ghostly visitor appear in lighter tones

of gray, set against a dominant foreground in which objects appear in stark contrasts and in high definition of pictorial detail. In the first picture, the skulls are part of a scene - the article does not claim that apparitions of ghosts took place during the gathering. In the second picture, the photographic record of a ghostly figure is regarded as proof of supernatural phenomena.



While the article on “The Invisible World” ascribed different evidential functions to both photographs (figures 5 and 6), the halftone reproduction technique effectively annihilated such differences as can be seen in these enlargements.

Figure 7. Detail enlargement of the halftone illustration in Figure 5, showing the gradation of gray tones as the result of a dot structure. From Thompson. “The Invisible World.” 1906: 333.

Figure 8. Detail enlargement of the halftone illustration in Figure 6. From Thompson “The Invisible World.” 1906: 335.

Although both reproductions do not differ much in tonal range, contrast or level of detail, the authenticity of the ‘ghost picture’ is created discursively by referring to persons of good repute who vouch for the authority of the photograph as an authentic document. The gradation in tones between the woman in the front and the ghost in the back resembles the tonal range in the image from the catacombs in Paris (see figures 7 and 8). Yet, the ghost picture implies an *actual* co-presence of the living and the dead through a skilled double or long exposure, while the skulls and bones evoke such a co-presence *figuratively*. While the photograph from Paris is an illustrative image, the ‘ghost photograph’ gains evidential power through its discursive placement in the story.

With the growing popularity of composite photography in the 1890's, the uncanny side of double exposures was supplemented with an analytic angle. Based on experiments by Francis Galton in 1877, composite photography superimposes different images of a subject or object on top of each other, either by exposing several subjects consecutively on the same plate or by superimposing negatives on top of each other during the development of prints. If a negative took ten seconds to expose, a composite could be made by layering ten images, each exposed for one second. A composite is "the result of blending a number of photographs to obtain the average type of the group depicted," wrote Washington Adams in an article for the *Boston Globe*. Because accents in faces will be strongest where they overlap in most cases, the composite image will bring to the fore features that all individual parts have in common (Adams, 1890).

John T. Stoddard contrasted composite photography to the work of an artist, who created from memory and imagination types of characters or persons, which could be recognized by viewers through characteristic features of either profession, social status, or gender. The difference between an artist's image and a photograph was that the camera created "objective and permanent" images which were of scientific value (Stoddard, 1887: 757). The sum of all images yielded a characteristic image of a particular type, e.g. a group of students, of families, or of professions. But composite photography also marked a divergence from the purely analytical uses of photography. As Stoddard implies towards the end of his article in *Century*, by superimposing several images of the same person "the passing and often constrained or conscious expression, which frequently renders ordinary photographic portraits unsatisfactory, would be eliminated, and a somewhat idealized likeness be obtained" (757). The method thus becomes valuable not only for its analytic potential, but for idealizing the images of those it depicted.

Arguably, composite photography marks a crucial point of divergence between the scientific and the illustrative uses of photography found primarily in advertising. In 1890, a commentator criticized the "Abuses of Photography" in a time that was hungry for more and more images:

> The rage for advertising with photographic illustrations has reached such a pitch that many cheap and unscrupulous photographers do not hesitate to sell pictures of their sitters, especially if they happen to be young and attractive.[261]

An article from 1896 reports on house maids investing considerable parts of their wage to "test [their] looks in the unerring eye of the lens,"[262] often choosing from many different prints those which best suited the sitters. From this pastime it is but a small step to the fascination with public personas and the beginning of the star as cultural idol (See Ponce de Leon, 2002). The deceptive, public appearance, abhorred by the likes of Henry Adams, became a new value promoted chiefly by the new uses of photography (See Lears, 1981: 32f.). "Publicomania," or the "craving for publicity," wrote an observer at the time, "is not satisfied with anything but a paragraph in the newspaper; then it wants a column; and finally it demands a whole page with illustrations."[263] It is beyond the scope of the present study to outline the development of photographs from scientific record to idealized image. But composite photography seems crucial here to understand how a particular photographic form served as a basis to find ideal types (as in portraits and in advertising) as much as it lent itself to the scientific and disciplinary classification of individuals as a means of social control.[264]

The last example highlights how different kinds of illustrations could coexist in scientific articles even when they were not all based on photographs. The photograph began to function as the norm of scientific evidence and, as the example will show, began to qualify other media in terms of its own accuracy and immediacy. The contested nature of the scientific photograph reproduced for popular media here becomes especially apparent. Mechanical objectivity referred to the operation of the

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261. "The Abuses of Photography." *Chicago Daily Tribune* 3 Mar. 1890: 4.

262. "Servant Girl Photography: A Big Business in Cheap Sun Portraiture for House Maids." *Los Angeles Times* 21 Apr. 1895: 10.

263. "The Craze for Publicity." *Century Magazine* Feb. 1896: 631.

264. In *The Disciplinary Frame* (2009), Tagg singles out prison photography and the archive as two core innovations for the technological basis of government power and social control. The "instrumentalization of photography as a means of surveillance, record and evidence" (Tagg, 2009: 26) subjects delinquents to a shock of exposure; the archive submits individuality to a cruel standardization of categories, which becomes the basis of managing social processes.

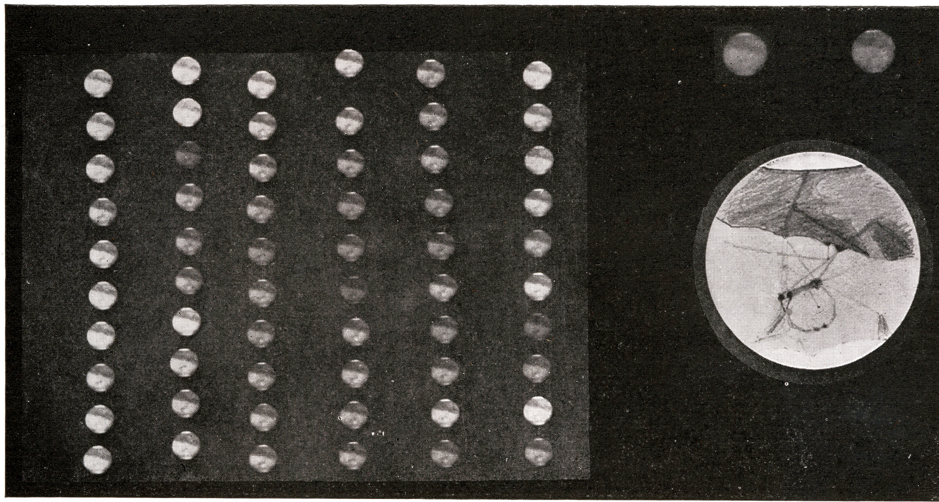
camera alone, but this objectivity of photographs needed to be discursively recreated once photographs were transferred to different media. In *Nature Exposed* (2005), Jennifer Tucker has documented the peculiar case of the astronomer Percival Lowell of Flagstaff, Arizona, who claimed to have found indications of life on Mars in the last decade of the nineteenth century (Tucker, 2005: 213-28). For the present argument, Lowell's use of photographic evidence for scientific purposes underlines the crucial difference between photographic immediacy and the limits of contemporary techniques of picture reproduction. As Tucker points out, Lowell was especially concerned about preserving the quality (i.e. resolution) of his photographs of Mars while preparing his series in *Century Magazine*, titled "Mars as an Abode of Life," published in seven installments between November 1907 and June 1908. Reproducing Lowell's photographs of Mars meant that much of their evidentiary power was lost and thus needed to be sustained and recontextualized by other means. The question whether life was possible on Mars had occupied the public for some time and it was Percival Lowell's series that sought to assess scientifically, whether proof of such life was possible by observation and scientific analysis. The main question here is how Lowell employed photographic evidence obtained through his telescope to sustain his point about life on the red planet.

Photographs were valued by Lowell because they offered a way to fix a fleeting observation and preserve it for prolonged scrutiny. Lowell sought to convince the public through this analytic ability of photographs: "A photograph can be scanned by everybody, and the observation repeated *until one is convinced*" he wrote laconically. (Lowell, 1907a: 304, emphasis added). The problem with taking photographs of Mars in the first place was that they could only be obtained every two years and that they needed to be taken from a position near the equator to reduce atmospheric blur. Lowell admits that "the whole disk of Mars prior to magnification occupies a space only 1/11000 of an inch across" on the human retina (ibid.). The recording and magnification of photographs of such a tiny object required a screen for isolating the yellow spectrum of light and specially prepared photographic plates. The distance to the planet and the

earth's rotation required further that exposure time was extended or that magnification in the telescope was "kept down" in order to reduce either effects of blurring caused by movement or overexposure caused by too much light reaching the plate and letting only the grain of the film appear in the developed photograph (306-307). The camera needed to follow the movement of the planet through a telescope to capture enough light for an exposure that yielded a reasonably sharp image.[265]

In his articles, Lowell presents photographic evidence of Mars's surface obtained through the complicated arrangements he has prepared. In the installment of December 1907, Lowell includes tables of tiny images of Mars, which both imply a sequence of observation, yet are too small to yield any decisive scientific knowledge. Although sequences of different portions shaded in gray tones are discernible, the images themselves are unreadable. The information they are supposed to convey, in spite of its scientific accuracy, is completely lost in the reproduction. In order to remedy this deficit, Lowell adds *drawings* of individual views in enlargements that portray certain regions of Mars in greater detail.

265. The combination of photography and telescopes through a tracking mechanism was regarded as a major breakthrough in astronomical photography. The photography of distant celestial objects provided a "record [which was] a permanent one, the details of which can be examined at leisure, whereas a view through a telescope is a passing one, and if an object is not noticed the particulars for that moment are lost" ("Photography of the Stars Reveals Return of Halley's Comet Months Before it Can Be Seen." *The Grand Forks Herald* 7 Oct. 1909: 11).



No. 1. TAKEN JULY 13, WHEN MARS WAS NEAREST THE EARTH. THIS PRINT REPRESENTS THE UNIFORM SIZE OF THE PLATES USED, BUT THE NUMBER OF IMAGES VARIES, DUE TO DIFFERENCE IN MAGNIFICATION

REGION OF "ELYSIUM." LONGITUDE OF THE CENTER OF THE PHOTOGRAPH, 215°. PROFESSOR LOWELL'S DRAWING OF HIS CORRESPONDING VISUAL OBSERVATION AT THE SAME DATE. ABOVE ENLARGEMENTS OF THE IMAGES TO 2 DIAMETERS

Figure 9. Halftone illustration of the "doubt-killing bullets from the planet of war" - photographic vignettes with little evidential power once they were reprinted. *Century Illustrated Magazine* added "Professor Lowell's Drawing of his Corresponding Visual Observation" to explain what was to be seen in the photographs (Lowell 1907b: 306).

The illustrations are captioned by the magazine's editors as, for instance, "Professor Lowell's Corresponding Drawings" or "Professor Lowell's Drawing of His Corresponding Visual Observation at the Same Date" (306) implying a simultaneity of observation and recording that was possible in photographs, yet impossible to realize by drawing, which was necessarily produced asynchronously from the event observed. The telling irony of this intermediality here is of course that the photographs were obtained by a form of automated and direct exposure, yet their resolution did not suffice to explain the point that Lowell wanted to make about the possibility of life on Mars. He needed to resort to a drawing of his own observations to illustrate that straight canals found on the surface of Mars "reveal to laymen and astronomers alike that markings exist on Mars which cannot be explained on any other supposition than that life able to fashion them is present there at this very moment" (309). Although Lowell poetically and confidently called his vignettes "doubt-killing bullets from the planet of war" (309) they were too small to be understood. They "[demanded] minute scrutiny to read the message they convey" (308).

The photographic technology here is crucial to underpin the truth claim of Lowell's observations, precisely because photographs are "no meaningless articulation of black and white, but the portrait in its entity of another world, *imprinted there by that world itself*" (310, emphasis added). The same automatic procedure that distinguishes photography from other practices of image production is used to sustain a truth claim about lines which look like canals. The straightness of the canals, by deduction, must have its origin in the designs of an intelligent life form, at least for Lowell. As he has amply described in the first part, effects of contraction and corrosion on the surface of planets (or apples, for that matter[266]) never appear in straight lines. The canals thus cannot be ascribed to the contraction of the planet's surface during the cooling period.

Although he uses photographs as evidence, Lowell resorts to a combination of personal eye-witnessing and automated documentation. For him, "the testimony of the eye is that the straightness [of the canals] is more pronounced than appears from the photographic imprint" (Lowell, 1907a: 309). When the "granular capacity" of film stock has reached its limit to record meaningful images, only the "greater fineness of texture" in the human eye can remedy the deficiency of technology. The photographic film "puts to silence all assertions that the canals are diffuse streaks" (309) but in order to "reveal" the secret of Martian constructions, the eye needs to be trained and observations made by Lowell alone need to be rendered as an immediate image, drawn from observation. In the final part of his series, Lowell then claims that the canals he has found on Mars are "proofs of life," a proof that rests entirely on the immediacy of the photographic record he has provided and the inference he has drawn from his own observation. The lines he discovered had a "non-natural look" and were "uncommonly regular," but above all, he is confident of their significance because the lines "have actually been photographed." The question, according to Lowell, was no longer whether the lines existed but what they meant (Lowell, 1908: 294).

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266. In the first part of his series, Lowell whimsically includes an image of a dried, crumpled apple (Lowell, 1907a: 118) to underscore his point that planets show signs of contraction (mountains, ridges, plateaus) once they cool down. The analogy here is purely visual, because Lowell simply assumes that signs of contraction produce irregular, non-geometric traces which are similar in apples and planets.

Lowell's argument is deeply tied to the evidential power of the photographic image and its limits. These limits are not only exposed as the photographs are reproduced, but they are manifest in the very granularity of the film that is used. Although created by a strictly automated procedure, the photographs need interpretation to sustain Lowell's point, even with the help of drawings, which are obtained in a similar fashion like photographs. Especially because Lowell's articles are hybrids of emergent and dominant visual forms, the example can draw attention to the ambivalence accompanying photographic evidence in popular media. The supposed evidentiality of photographs needed to be discursively embedded through other media forms, through reference to an authority or to a first-person observation. This legitimization of photographic evidence is also central to the use of photography in journalistic realism.

The Cultural Dimension: Photography and Journalistic Realism

Apart from a material and a scientific dimension in the 'schema of objectivity', the cultural dimension linked photography to a journalistic function. But here again, the cultural significance of photography relied on the material aspects of technologies of image reproduction technology and the scientific understanding of 'mechanical objectivity' in order to sustain a claim to objectivity in journalistic realism. In *The Age of Reform* (1955), Richard Hofstadter has emphasized how the progressive movement of the turn of the twentieth century can be seen as a conservative countermovement against the hazardous effects of rapid industrialization and urbanization. Powerful institutions like corporations, unions, parties and public administration were pervaded by a sense of opportunity in this fast growth period, that left Christian values like chastity, moderation and charity behind. Broad opposition grew in the early twentieth century against corruption in society in all its forms. Hofstadter argues that news media were central to the reformers' public mission as much as they were necessary to forge a sense of solidarity between a range of diverse interest groups: "the Progressive mind was characteristically a journalistic mind," Hofstadter concludes (1955: 185).

Progressive journalism relied on the "practice of exposure," although it did not pioneer such a practice that eventually became known as 'muckraking' journalism. Hofstadter emphasizes that muckraking was new in "its nationwide character and its capacity to draw nationwide attention" (Hofstadter, 195) as it was spread through new popular magazines like *McClure's*. Exposure journalism also catered to the disorientation felt by rural and immigrant readers trying to make a living in the sprawling city. The stories of exposure journalism were calculated to boost circulation of the magazines, which relied on advertising as a chief source of revenue. Empathy was crucial to increase circulation. Hofstadter concludes that the muckrakers' "chief appeal was not to desperate social needs but to mass sentiments of responsibility, indignation, and guilt" (ibid.). The strategies used to create such sentiments were borrowed from literature and photography alike. The muckrakers used the lure of the familiar by offering detailed accounts of persons, institutions and places. As Robert Cantwell notes "the writing of the muckrakers was packed with local color." The familiarity of audiences with features of people and places served as a frame for the exposures of corruption in society. This setting was the actual innovation of the muckrakers. "People knew all the scandals," Cantwell writes, but they "liked to read about towns they knew, characters they recognized, and a setting they understood" (1968: 23).

Magazine editors created a form of exposure journalism using a "mode of 'realism'" that lent "an aura of legitimacy" to their articles (Wilson, 1983: 43). Because editors and readers of the new popular magazines no longer shared a common value system or were part of the same social strata as the readers and editors of genteel magazines, the editors needed a new common ground for legitimizing journalistic practice. This common ground was found in the age's fascination with science and technology. As the quickly changing times absorbed a feeling of a common experience, the fascination with technology became a new way to understand (and control) social change. The spirit of the time began to realign the real with the technical in journalistic realism, bypassing the centrality of human mediation in processes of public

communication. This attitude, eventually, became apparent in photojournalism (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2000: 77).

> Journalistic realism, at the receiving end, projects an audience that can neither blame journalists nor take effective action in the public sphere. Thus, the regime of photojournalism contributes to a sense of powerlessness and fatalism in the face of intractable social problems (...) . Certainly a kind of visual intelligence disappears when readers forget about the *authored artistry of pictures*, and succumb to what philosophers call naive realism (78, emphasis added).

Photography suited this abstraction by displacing the human engraver or an on-site observer with a technical apparatus. With the halftone process the photographic principle was applied to reproductions of photographs, thereby sustaining a claim to objectivity in both photographs and reproductions. While objectivity carries strong scientific overtones, the term "realism" builds on a rich tradition in fin-de-siècle literature in the United States. Realism as a narrative strategy was an answer to the unsettling effects of rapid industrialization and its social effects. By reconstructing through a meticulous arrangements of details a new order of experience, realism sought to overcome the "epistemological crisis" that questioned traditional understandings of the individual's role in society (Fluck, 1992: 28).[267]

In photography, 'mechanical objectivity' characterized the act of photographing, even if what was photographed was arranged and selected to produce a particular effect. Likewise, realism in photography was achieved by closely emulating the human field of vision through perspective and central, ocular focalization. Similar to the realist writers, photography offered a selective arrangement of visual details, but these details were not the fancy of an author but had been mechanically recorded by the photographic apparatus. Alan Thomas has noted that "the primitive power of photography, the faithfulness of replication of whatever is put before the camera, assists the disruption of context and erosion of categories" (Thomas, 1978: 20f.). Photography created images which could be dealt with as individual objects. Its disruptive power thus served the realist ambition of recreating an experience through visual elements, which had been

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267. On the connection of literary realism and journalism see also (West, 2008), who emphasizes that the trend towards "objective" journalism was regarded as a form of commodification that appalled writers like Herman Melville. On the narrative conventions of literary journalism as opposed to news journalism see also (Frus, 1994; Hartsock, 2002; Underwood, 2008).

detached from their respective contexts yet maintained a mechanical analogy to these contexts. Realism created a new context for photographs where they could serve both as documentary evidence and illustrative material. The disruptive effect of photography ushered in an "epistemological crisis" of the image as illustration in mass-circulation periodicals. Endowed with a superior form of objectivity, photographs and mere illustrations needed to be differentiated especially when both classes of images were reproduced by the same media like engravings or touched-up halftones.

The photographic implications of realism can be seen in the use of photographs as documents in mass-market magazines, as exemplified by long-running series in *McClure's* such as "Human Documents" and "Real Conversations" apart from individual series like the richly illustrated biographies of Napoleon (started in November 1894) and Abraham Lincoln (started in November 1895)[268] by Ida Tarbell. According to Harold S. Wilson, Tarbell's biography of Napoleon was "originally intended to be only a text for reproductions of famous paintings of Napoleon" (Wilson, 1970: 72). The articles in the series are overwhelmed by the reproductions which often enough drive the text to the margins of the page. Such articles "interlocked with actual 'documents'" and fostered "'scientific' authenticity" in magazine journalism (Wilson, 1983: 57). Photographs as a form of documentary evidence prefigured a strategy of publishing 'inside' information to the general public in a well-calculated, managerial effort to sustain and expand readership. By reproducing illustrations in print which conveyed a "feel of scientific documentation" McClure's developed a popular style of journalism that showed "with 'facts,' how things were really done—how they operated" (ibid., 58).)

In *McClure's Magazine* the section titled "Human Documents" featured reproductions of photographs of famous people at different stages of their life. Often qualified by the caption "reproduced from a daguerreotype," these images emulated the scientific uses of photography to present different stages of a developing process. By placing reproductions of photographs from different stages of life next to each other, the

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268. The series was discontinued and taken up again in 1898-1899, see (Mott, 1957: 590f.).

series presented an experience, which could not be encountered in the real world. Barnhurst and Nerone point out that these images were intended to illustrate the gradual realization of characteristic features of an achieved public persona, from infancy to old age. In a time, where the outer appearance was regarded as the manifestation of inner values, reading other people's printed portraits meant to assign a chronology to the formation of character through documents of previous life stages. Previously unique daguerreotypes were adapted for mass circulation and became part of a realist strategy to differentiate the photograph from mere illustrations. The rise of the "realist ethos" in journalism (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2000: 61) was closely connected to the increasing use of photography as a highly technological and seemingly objective way of observation. How realism achieved to embed the medium's objectivity in a journalistic function as evidence is exemplified most tellingly in the case of Jacob Riis' crusade on the tenement slums in New York in the 1880s and 1890s.

It is debatable whether Riis can count as "the first muckraker and the first American social documentary photographer," as Daniel Czitrom argues (Yochelson and Czitrom, 2007: 119). The genealogical line from Riis' war on poverty in 1889 to, for example, the muckraking classic the "History of the Standard Oil Company" by Ida Tarbell in 1902-1904 is not obvious. Riis was motivated by Christian piety, influenced by his experience as a desperate immigrant, and inspired by his job as a police reporter before speaking at public lectures about the misery in the tenements. Eventually he became a magazine writer, book publisher and social reform icon: "Riis was fundamentally a preacher," writes Bonnie Yochelson (227), who was especially successful by using photography, reproductions, lectures, and lantern slide shows to convey his message.

Riis stands in marked contrast to muckraking journalists like Ida Tarbell, who criticized the effects of corrupt business practices in her native Pennsylvania in her most famous story on the Standard Oil Company (See Wilson, 1970). Tarbell started as a staff writer of biographical articles and foreign correspondent for *McClure's*. The illustrations that accompanied both her biographies of Napoleon and Lincoln as well as the

installments of the "History of the Standard Oil Company" were very conventional, picked for editorial purposes to give local color, add technical detail and personalize the stories. The editors of *McClure's* called the article series on the Standard Oil Company "a straight historical narrative backed by documents."[269] Such documents were for the most part portraits of the protagonists in the story, genre scenes of the sites and technical drawings of machinery. The only evidential documents were printed in the text *as text*, not as photographs. In the second part of her series, for example, Tarbell provides evidence of the secret arrangements of Standard Oil with shippers, crude oil manufacturers and railroad agents. *McClure's* republishes a "pledge" of secrecy from the *Tribune*, containing a list of shareholders and their assets in the company (Tarbell, 1902: 122f.). The document is reproduced in smaller type and is visually embedded into the written narrative. In contrast, Lincoln Steffens' muckraking article on "The Shame of Minneapolis" appeared in the issue of January 1903, but it featured actual 'fac-similes' of pages from a swindler's notebook listing bribes to city officials (Steffens, 1903a: 227, 228). Tarbell's and Steffens' articles make use of documents as a form of evidence, yet to actually print photographic evidence as image remains the exception in muckraking articles. Rather, the articles feature portraits of characters in the story, similar to those biographical "human documents" found on other pages of *McClure's*.

The muckrakers used photographic evidence scantly, preferring rather to literally 'unearth' secret documents, share personal observations and stand up as public critics of political corruption. Photography itself does not play a role as a form of investigative reporting.[270] However, the muckrakers' strategy of exposure was indebted to much earlier practices in which photographic technology *had* become analytically charged with an evidential function. Jacob Riis' media campaign for the improvement of the tenements established a journalistic schema of exposure, in which the presence of the camera served as a technology of social change. At a time when photography was just beginning to become a standard practice, Riis can count as an exemplary figure to

269. "Editorial Announcement of Miss Tarbell's History of the Standard Oil Company—Part Second." *McClure's Magazine* November, 1903: 111.

270. See for example the total absence of any reference to photography in Miraldi's study on *Muckraking and Objectivity* (Miraldi, 1990).

associate light and prosperity with a particular technology. The example of Riis illustrates how the scientific uses of the camera were transposed to social observation and reform, creating a realist documentary aesthetic that served a particular political narrative.

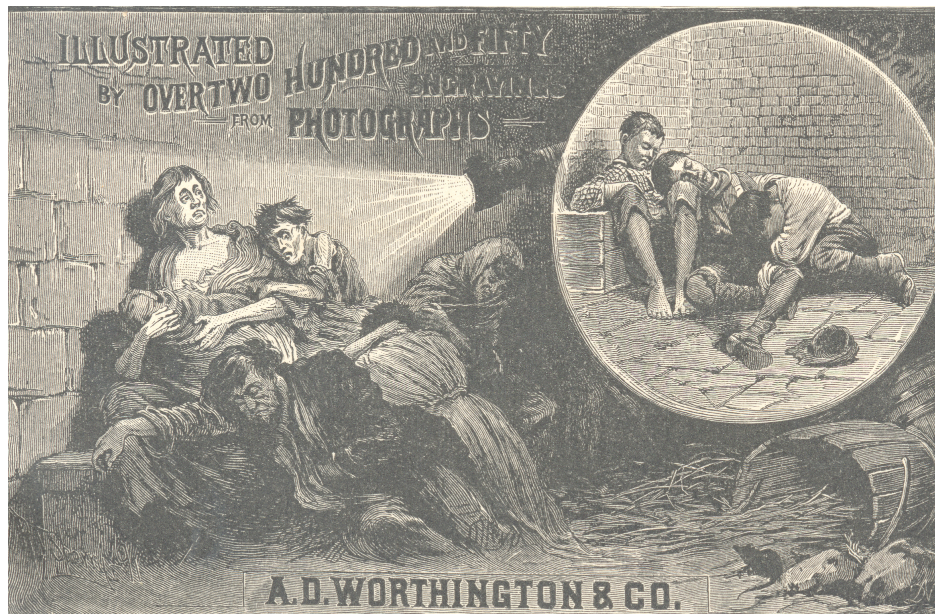

Figure 10. Detail of frontispiece from Helen Campbell *Darkness and Daylight* (1897), with a bull's eye lantern obtrusively illuminating a scene of misery hidden from public view in a tenement cellar.

The cultural dimension of the schema of objectivity, as it was developed by Riis and others, is succinctly illustrated in this frontispiece detail (Figure 9) from Helen Campbell's *Darkness and Daylight* (1892). It brings together all central elements which characterize the valuation of photography for reform journalism. The frontispiece detail is itself a hybrid image of a main scene of exposure into which is inserted an image of street boys, presented as if seen through the viewfinder of a camera. The round image features the popular motif of three street boys cuddled into a corner of buildings or a yard, which was taken from Jacob A. Riis' book *How the Other Half Lives* (1890). This hybrid image is telling in three respects: it brings together photographic aesthetics reproduced for mass print, photographic technology as a means of exposure and the imperative of a social purpose for using photography as an instrument of criticism and

social change.

The three boys in the inserted image appear as if distributed at random on the cold, stony surface. Although the scene exudes an air of tranquility, their sleep does not appear wholesome. The evident lack of homely attributes dramatizes a conflict between the serenity of repose and the toughness of the surrounding environment. Related by the motif of an uneasy sleep is the larger picture of several persons lingering on a bench in a cellar-like abode. Surrounded by rats, the group seems to emerge organically from the straw, twigs, and debris of broken barrels scattered on the cracked surface of the room. Graphically, this connotation is sustained by an engraving technique used to give shape to the coats and the straw on the ground. The group consist of an older woman slouched to the right side, an unidentified person, and an older man kneeling on the floor. A younger man is depicted in agony, clinging frantically to the arm of the central figure - a haggardly woman holding a baby in her arm. This arrangement again recalls a photo by Riis ("Ragpicker, Italian Mother and her Child"), in which Peter Hales has emphasized the "resemblance to Renaissance paintings of the Virgin and child" (1984: 191). The seemingly evidential reproduction of a photograph is contextualized within an existing cultural schema by emulating a dominant aesthetic of poverty and piety transposed from popular art.

In the image from *Darkness and Daylight* all elements are grouped around the mother with her child, however, the intrusion of light marks a significant departure from the dominant aesthetic. If the rendition of the scene in the engraving perpetuates a number of graphic and cultural conventions, the prominence of the light source in the middle of the illustration places not the persons in the foreground but the act of illuminating, of "bringing to light" their living conditions, which were shrouded in darkness before. The light source in the picture thus emblematically condenses the entire act of exposing to light, to make visible the urban netherworld of underground dens, abodes and shelter houses for the poor. In the image, the source of light is most likely a police lantern, commonly called "Bull's Eye", due to its thick magnifying

lens,[271] yet the rendering of this object suggests certain similarities with the lens of a camera (from which no light would typically emanate).

The frontispiece detail represents the changing evidentiality of photographs during the 1890s. Although many forms of illustrations had existed in journalistic media before this period, photography and its rendition through photomechanical and photochemical printing processes endowed journalistic realism with a new claim to mechanical objectivity. The schema of investigative journalism of “bringing to light” combined an optical recording technology with a social-political mission to reform society. Beyond its metaphorical implications, photographic technology began to serve journalistic claims to authority by helping to document and authorize a first-person, eye-witness account of affairs from which the witness had disappeared behind a neutral recording apparatus.

The motif of the ragged street boys, for example, signals the transforming use of photographic technology. Images of streetboys have a long cultural history, starting from the newsboy as a self-reliant entrepreneur to Horatio Alger’s stories of smart street boys striking it rich. Alan Thomas has pointed out that photography of the poor in Victorian Britain usually depicted “studio-composed scenes.” Oscar Rejlander, a prominent mid-nineteenth century artist of the genre, would depict poor boys or girls “in poses expressive of pathos” (Thomas, 1978: 141-43). A similar pathos, or even romance, pervades the images of sleeping homeless children in Campbell’s book: “A Sleeping Street Boy,” resting on a willow basket; “Homeless and Friendless,” a boy in torn clothes sleeping on the steps of a lodging house (Campbell, 1897: 154f.). The same motif can be found in Riis’ initial article published in *Scribner’s Magazine*, printed as a halftone reproduction, and titled “Street Arabs in Sleeping Quarters” (Riis, 1889: 655). However, Riis’ use of photography transferred the cultural convention of the studio-based genre photography to scenes taken in the tenements and slums; he “manipulated

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271. Cf. (Blühm and Lippincott, 2000: 162f.). The centrality of the lantern in the illustration is adapted from a print produced by Gustav Doré for the illustrated book *London: A Pilgrimage*, which Doré and Blanchard Jerrold published in 1872. In Doré’s illustration, the lantern is held by a police officer; in Campbell’s frontispiece, the holder is hidden behind the inserted image thereby moving the technology of illumination (and revelation) itself to the center of attention.

his representation of poverty to reflect a preconceived image of the poor" (Orvell, 1989: 98). With the increasing use of cameras for outside use, Riis effectively transposed the established studio aesthetic to the documentation of actual misery in the streets and courts of the tenements.

Figure 11. "Nellie Brady—Age 7." Reproduced from Campbell, 1897: 183.
Figure 12. "Nellie Brady" Reproduced from Campbell, 1897: 184.

The analytic use of photography to analyze discrete events as steps in a continuous development was especially useful for the purposes of social reform photography. In Campbell's book, homeless boys are shown in rags, looking worn-out, hurt and destitute. Captions read: "Patrick Lacey — Age 10. (...) Face cut, bruised, and swollen by beatings from drunk parents" (175), or "Michael Nevins — Age 10. (…) Face bruised and swollen by constant beating" (180), or "Nellie Brady — Age 7. As found by the society's officers [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children]" (Figure 10). Nellie reappears a page later depicted "after a day in the Society's care" (Figure 11). This last example underscores how improvement could be read in the visible surface of the person, mediated by and arranged for the photograph. Both images of Nellie show a girl with her right hand resting on an architectural structure (fence vs. Roman

balustrade). Her hair is all curly, unkempt in the first image, then washed, combed, and braided in orderly tails. In the first image she wears no shoes; in the second her boots are polished. Her ragged, torn clothes have been replaced by a clean, plaided costume and so on. Nellie's facial expression has also changed to a more optimistic, cheerful outlook. The images are not only used to portray or document misery, but they are placed in a discursive function to lend evidence to the Society's success in improving the life of children left to themselves by their parents.[272] Development is vividly supported by the scientific, motion-arresting use of photography to display discrete instances in the improvement of the children's lives.

The same objectivity that identifies the photographs as a privileged medium of observation can be claimed for the engravings used to print the photographs. The images of Nellie introduce a sequentiality in the order of events that they portray. The images adopt the schema of objectivity as it was used in science (sequentiality, objectivity of camera) assuming that such a schema was no longer in need of explanation. As Estelle Jussim has argued, for a reader in the late 1890s seeing woodcuts based on photographs "was as good as seeing the real thing" (Jussim, 1988: 43). Yet in the production of engravings, *something* was inevitably lost and needed to be reconstituted discursively. In her preface, Campbell devotes ample space to underline that the engravings were not based on "imagination" but on photography. Only through the immediate recording of a camera was "utmost fidelity" between a scene and its image preserved (Campbell, 1897: ix). The illustrations revealed the life of New York "*not* AS IT WAS, but AS IT IS TO-DAY" (xi, original typography). The "camera's merciless and unfailing eye" (ibid.) had exposed subjects hidden in the dark to the readers of the book. The book and its illustrations performed a double movement by confronting a reader with a reality hidden from sight, while the photographers had

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272. James Guimond has argued that the use of before/after images became increasingly popular in advertising in the early twentieth century. Especially food companies used the schema to convince buyers of the benefits of their morning cereals. In 1910, Quaker Oats contrasted "photograph-like drawings of two sour-faced, poorly dressed youngsters" and "three alert, neat, well-dressed youngsters" to visually evidence the benefit of its cereal. Given the prominence of such images in popular culture, the documentary photographer and child rights activist Lewis Hine, in response, re-appropriated the advertising images in reverse fashion to underline what child labor made of well-nourished children (Guimond, 1991: 79-81).

confronted their subjects involuntarily with an intrusive medium of exposure. The immediacy of photography here serves as a voucher for the accuracy of the pictures, which in turn legitimizes the reproductions in the same terms like actual photographs.

The analytic uses of photography were central to Riis' article "How the Other Half Lives, Studies among the Tenements," which appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* in December 1889.[273] In Riis' article, the objectivity of his photographs needed to be embedded in the cultural conventions and material restraints of the day, in which halftones had not yet become the standard of photographic reproduction. *Scribner's* commissioned in total 15 engravings, and included only six halftone illustrations for the article. At least the engravings by Kenyon Cox carried notes reading "After Photograph" which, according to Yochelson, "emphasize the value of the photograph as evidence" (2007: 157). But in terms of their evidential function, nothing distinguishes the engravings from the halftones, except that some engravings reference the photograph as origin. Often, the halftones appear as *less* detailed than engraving, and are thus *less* expressive due to their marked lack of contrast. In the process of adapting the photos for print, the pictures were obviously transformed, not only through traces of the engraving technique but also in more 'editorial' ways of condensing images into micro-narratives. Yochelson points out that "photographs were not copied literally; the artists corrected flattened perspective, eliminated out-of-focus areas, and added narrative incident" (154f.). If the halftone appears actually as inferior in narrative dramatization to the engravings, what role does photography play at all for Riis' narrative?

Due to its limited capabilities in reproducing nuances, the engraving technique privileged strong contrasts of dark and light, which replicated graphically the narrative opposition of the dark tenement alleys and the shining front facades. This opposition of light and dark is reflected narratively in Riis' article. He writes that the tenements were "in the shadow of the great stone abutments" (Riis, 1889: 643), "like ghosts of a

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273. After Riis had published the first version of his article in *Scribner's* magazine in December 1889, the first book-length edition was produced by Scribner's Sons in 1901, which differs markedly from the widely known re-edition by Dover publications in 1971.

departed day" in which the gardens of yesterday were now nothing but "a dark and nameless alley" (644), "sunless and joyless" (645), peopled by homeless crowds who "shun the light" (651). In Riis' account, the dichotomy of light and shadow unfolds as an antagonism of good life/wretched life, health/illness, prosperity/poverty in conjunction with the illustrative contrasts of his photographs rendered primarily in engravings. His fascination with the actual and metaphorical uses of light can be called almost obsessive. In an article in 1896 ("Light in Dark Places") Riis narrates how "the morning sun shone upon the rough pavement, long hidden from the sight of man" after it had been cleaned from rubbish (Riis, 1896: 247). Light is a luxury in the tenements, where small rifts between buildings allow for only limited circulation of "whatever of sunlight and air reached the rear houses" (251). After the tenements were reformed, Riis writes in "Letting in the Light" for the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1899: "It is that the light has come in and made crime hideous. It is being let in wherever the slum has bred murder and robbery, bred the gang, in the past" (Riis, 1899: 505). As Steffens writes in an article for *McClure's Magazine*, Riis "relieved the hideous darkness and density of life among the poor" and he "demanded light for dark tenement hallways … and thus opened one hiding place of vice, crime, and filth" (Steffens, 1903b: 419).

Riis was not interested in photography as such but the technology is reflected in his writings as a technology of exposure. Yochelson argues that "photographs had no meaning for him independent of his narrative; they served only to enliven his stories and substantiate his arguments" (2007: 218). Light is charged first as a means to illuminate the scene for his photographs, then metaphorically employed by exposing to the public a hidden secret of the city, and eventually reappears as an aim of reform to improve living conditions in the tenemements. For the taking of his pictures, Riis hired two other members of the Society of Amateur Photographers, Dr. Henry Granger Piffard and Richard Hoe Lawrence. Together, they went into the dark basements to shoot with "magnesium flash powder loaded into cartridges in a revolver," which made taking pictures in complete darkness possible (Yochelson, 129). As a contemporary observer noted, magnesium powder had freed photographic practice from the necessity of

controlled lighting in the studio.

> Contrast this [the times of studio photography] with the possibilities of to-day, when in the darkest of dark caves or cellars, or on the blackest of nights, the tyro photographer, armed with his little camera, and pistol loaded with magnesium cartridge, can obtain a picture full of vigor and marvellous in detail (Champney, 1889: 357).

The flash light allowed to approach regions of the city hidden from daylight. For the actual exposures Riis used stereoscopic negatives, which were recorded with a double-lens camera that produced two images slightly askew from each other. Stereoscopes and stereographs were a popular medium in the nineteenth century, used to simulate the three-dimensionality of scenes from foreign lands, cultures and tourist attractions. The stereoscopic viewpoint emulated the position of both human eyes through receding horizontal lines, such as street scenes in the big cities, where "the viewer often gets a sense of looking *into* a scene" (Gidley, 2011: 36) rather than observing a scene from afar. "The stereograph creates its dramatic effect because it reproduces binocular vision" and emulates "depth perception" in a two-dimensional plane (Newhall, 1949: 92). The benefit for the photographer was that stereoscopes were well tested and offered two views of an identical subject, which could be adjusted to preference in the development of the photographs.

There are basically two styles in Riis' photographs: the careful arrangement of subjects, usually in central perspective, and "ambush" pictures by flashlight in the dark. As Bonnie Yochelson emphasizes, Riis actively influenced the composition of his images, sought out and created picturesque scenes, and did not simply mechanically record an external reality (2007: 139-43).[274] This active composition of photographs served him to appeal to feelings of piety among his audience, by placing mechanical recordings within an existing aesthetic of poverty. To raise awareness of the tenement situation, Riis also began to speak at amateur photographer clubs about his 'flashlight photography' using lantern slides based on his stereographs. The photographs "represented imagery already current in urban visual culture" using the "pictorial

274. Riis is outspoken about this method. As he reports in his article for *Scribner's*: "One particularly ragged and disreputable [tramp] sat smoking his pipe on the wreck of a ladder with such evident philosophic contentment in the busy labor of a score of ragpickers all about him, that I bade him sit for a picture, offering him ten cents for the job" (Riis, 1889: 654).

conventions" of the times (Stange, 1989: 2, 13). Riis's strategy was both to depict and narratively frame the scenes he encountered in the street. "Poverty is granted a picturesque and sentimental aspect," writes Mick Gidley, combined with a "strong voyeuristic element" (Gidley, 2011: 100). Peter Hales argues that Riis' experience as a police reporter "had given him a quick eye for the manipulation of cultural symbols and prejudices" (1984: 175). Relying on the objectivity of his photographic record, Riis used the technology to create images that supported his reform agenda by drawing on established visual conventions and media.

Although the interests of amateur photographer clubs lay mainly in technology and the photographs taken, Riis began to turn his lectures into visual excursions to encounter the "other half" of the city's population. His way to enlist support was to use the most current media of public communication at the time, which included lectures, books, magazine articles, and photographs. By mounting the photographs in his lectures in a narrative framework, he presented his excursions from the perspective of a first-person narrator who employed the "language of tourism" to draw his audience into the shady rear streets of the tenements (Stange, 1989: 16). By looking at the tenements through photographs, the audience could at once be emotionally involved and be entertained at a safe distance. Riis' narrative "objectifie[d] its subjects" (ibid., 24) and the objectifying effect of photography served his purpose of appealing to Christian piety and to urge for reform. "What are you going to do about it?" (Riis, 1971: 2) was his mission and the images he used were created expressly to support his point about human suffering, the desperation of the slum and the social devastation it bred.

This message and slogan run through all of his works, including the collections of essays in *A Ten Years' War* (Riis, 1900) and *The Battle with the Slum* (Riis, 1902). These articles contrast the old situation in the tenements with the more healthy and airy developments that had replaced them. As the preface notes in *Battle with the Slum*: "[The stories] are fact, not fiction. If the latter, they would have no place here." Photography served this claim to present facts, which he had in person obtained on the site (n.p.). Even if photographs were adapted for engravings, their origin in a

photograph legitimized their use as evidence because they had been recorded mechanically on location. Within the narrative of reform, Riis speaks with authority because he himself is both an eye-witness and a reporter who provides material evidence of the hidden evil in the city. By disrupting the context in which his images were taken and reconstituting a realist context for them in his lecture, Riis emblematically negotiates the power of photographic pictures to serve political ends. This constellation completely bypasses the question, whether the photographs were 'accurate' or 'objective' because within his narrative, they were accurate and objective as narrative elements which sustained his authority as a speaker.

The Schema of Objectivity and Journalistic Practice

The previous outline of the 'schema of objectivity' sought to complement the normative, historical and philosophical debates about the status of objectivity in American journalism by focussing on the cultural evaluation of photography before the advent of genuine photojournalism. It was argued here that photography became associated with a particular understanding of objectivity, primarily through reproductions of photographs in popular magazines of the 1890s. The 'schema of objectivity' valued photography as a journalistic medium and it entailed three main dimensions. First, material practices of reproducing photographs for print constantly questioned the immediacy and automatism of the new medium, which needed to be reinstated by other graphic or narrative means. Second, the epistemic virtue of 'mechanical objectivity' in scientific research needed to be preserved discursively in reproductions of scientific photographs in order to maintain the superiority of photographs over other visual and graphic media. Third, the cultural valuation of photography in journalistic realism transferred cultural conventions of studio photography to recording 'objectively' the hidden netherworld of urban misery. Yet, although the three dimensions of the schema of objectivity evolved in relation to photography, they did not remain restricted to value photography alone as a new journalistic practice. The schema of objectivity was transposed to re-evaluate journalistic practice as a professional activity in general at a time when American journalism was seeking ways to professionalize and regain trust in its public function, as many of the researchers on objectivity have emphasized. Based on the findings presented here the transposition of the schema of objectivity from photography to journalistic practice can be explained in terms of the particular value of halftone printing as a reproduction process for the dissemination of photography.

Estelle Jussim's ground-breaking study *Visual Communication and the Graphic Arts* (1983) focusses on methods of reproduction in visual media, primarily in fine prints of art works. Contrary to subject-based approaches, Jussim compares the ability of different graphic media to reproduce "information rich" images such as paintings and

photographs. Her factor of comparison is inspired by information theory: "informational bits per square inch" (Jussim, 1983: 1). Jussim argues that the finer a reproduction emulates the density of pictorial information of an original, the higher is its information density. She contrasts manual techniques of reproduction, which introduce a "'syntax' of the subjective eye and … hand," with the "mechanically produced images in the 'syntax' of so-called objective reality" in photographs (6). Her argument allows to foreground how a method of reproduction such as the halftone endowed the reproduced photograph with the same 'epistemic virtue' of objectivity that characterized original photographic prints.

Jussim starts her study by refuting William Mills Ivins argument in *Prints and Visual Communication* (1969), where Ivins postulated that photography was the result of a quest to achieve comparatively higher levels of density in pictorial information than in the manual graphic arts. By contrast, Jussim posits that "photography and its accompanying phototechnologies … redefined the nature of artistic expression and of information transfer" by altering conceptions of "'truth,' 'knowledge,' and 'reality'" (8). The claim to a higher level of objectivity in photography was a direct response and emerged coextensively with the reproduction of photographs for mass circulation. Reproducing images in large quantities could be done by developing prints from one negative or by lithography for fine prints. But in periodicals, where text remained the dominant medium of communication, "pictorial communications multiplied by any of the intaglio methods had to be manufactured separately from verbal communications" (45).[275]

Production and reproduction techniques shaped the content and cultural meaning of a photographic message as the previous examples have shown. A photograph in print often needed explanation, if the method of reproduction questioned the immediacy and authenticity of a photograph. Jussim here proposes a framework in which the mutual constitution of reproduction traces and photographic objects become comparable by

275. In intaglio printing processes "the artist cuts the lines to be printed, rather than cutting away the nonprinting surfaces" as in the older relief printing techniques (Lee and Mandelbaum, 1999: 58f.). Intaglio methods include engravings and etchings as opposed to planographic processes such as all variants of lithography.

distinguishing between a *code*, or the ‘syntax’ mentioned earlier, and a *message*, or the pictorial content of a photograph.[276] Even if a code of reproduction is visible, such as swelling lines or cross-hatchings in engravings, the examples presented before show how viewers were inculcated to look beyond the code and see only the message. Jussim regards the code as a trace of the production process, which constantly revolts against claims of an objective picture. Although methods like lithography or chromolithography already reduced traces of reproduction processes to a minimum, halftone reproduction became the first technology in which “the *code* as distinct from the *message* could be below the threshold of human vision” (14). The dot structure of a halftone allowed to have a fine-grained reproduction with subtle shades of gray, accents and blended surfaces which approximated the tonal range of a photograph. The halftone as a reproduction method for photographs reached a similar level of resolution, also because it was itself based on a photographic process. Jussim concludes that “photographic coding is subliminal” (Jussim, 299) because the code of production is not easily discerned in prints based on chemical emulsions. The halftone as a medium of photographic reproduction could claim for itself the same ‘mechanical objectivity’ like photographs because the halftone process introduced a perceptual equivalence between a photograph and its reproduction. The code of reproduction had disappeared to the molecular level.

In a halftone picture it takes a magnifying lens to perceive of the structure of dots while the object of the picture will literally disappear in this magnification. In turn, the production code of the picture vanishes when looking at the picture from a distance, leaving only the photographic object in the foreground. When Barthes writes that a photograph is a “message without a code” he is himself exemplifying how pervasively the code of reproduction has inscribed itself in his perception of photographs. Although dotted, black-and-white pictures invoke a technical code of reproduction, perceptual inculcation has obliterated the difference between the code and and the message in

276. Neil Harris argues that the halftone did “translate–or code–the original picture in a new way,” different from the conventional engravings although he emphasizes that the parallel existence of mixed visual media throughout the late nineteenth century offered a “true multimedia experience” (Harris, 1979: 198).

halftone reproductions. As Jussim argues, “we learn to interpret the stylistic conventions of each new visual mode of communication” (14) and learn to accept the effect of a particular technique of reproduction on a photograph. This difference between ‘code’ and ‘message’ is more significant than as a mere scholarly abstraction. It literally shifts the focus from the photographic object to the way this objects is practically produced. This shift intentionally brackets the perennial question on the veracity of the image in relation to an external reality by pointing to the material and cultural practices which gave rise to such an equation of photograph and reality in the first place. The confluence of ‘code’ and ‘message’ in the fine-grained structure of the halftone or the chemical emulsion of the photograph serves to elucidate why it took such a long time for the objectivity of photographs, established in the sciences and by curious amateurs, to play any significant role in journalistic practice. The examples in part two have sketched how this long process can be understood as a gradual inculcation on the properties, functions and benefits of the new medium photography. Especially because the inculcation depended on reproduction media, which were regarded as an ‘imperfect medium’ for photography, this dependence of photographs on reproduction media has so far escaped scholarly attention.

Apart from the code established by reproduction techniques, perspective was another perceptual and aesthetic property of photographs which inculcated viewers to equate photographs with a human viewpoint. Jussim argues that photography “imitat[es] human vision, with the notable and all-important distinction that it represents the world as flat rather than three-dimensional” (299). The illusion of perspective, which transforms “psychophysiological space into mathematical space” as Erwin Panofsky called it (1997: 31), is both a cultural convention and a particular mode of representing the world in an attempt to order and control an expansive visual field that lacks any permanent focal point in human perception. Both the perspective of a single lens and the seeming absence of a code of reproduction create the “optical illusion which we learn to accept as surrogate reality” in photographs, even if they are just printed reproductions of

photographs (Jussim, 299).[277]

Photography established its own material practices, cultural conventions and 'epistemic virtues', which gradually shifted from recording and analyzing an external reality to serving as base for altering this reality, as was indicated in the case of composite photography. As a technology of analysis, documentation and categorization, photography embodies a modern paradigm of perception, of knowledge and control of an external world. Don Slater writes that

> photography brings modernity to a culminating point in that the means of representing the world, the means of knowing it and the means of producing or transforming it are brought together within a single, conceptually unified technology of vision (Slater, 1995: 222).

Because photography "reduces the world to objectively described surfaces with no inherent meaning: to facts" (223) it became especially useful for journalists at a time, when journalistic practice sought ways to establish itself as a profession. The 'epistemological crisis' of modernity, negotiated through realism, professionalism and scientism called for 'epistemic virtues' that seemed prototypically achieved by photography and its cultural valuation as an objective medium. Scott Walden has tried to differentiate the higher epistemological value of photographs over hand-drawn images, by arguing that photography "excludes direct involvement of the mental states of the image maker" in the moment of exposure.

> This exclusion of the photographer's mental states renders photographs objective, and since photographs typically also satisfy the similarity requirement, learning about the world via photographs is perceptual learning (2005: 259).

The 'epistemic advantage' of photographs derives from an "objectivity of perception" (265) that is independent of mental states of both the producer and the viewer of photographs. A photographer is free to pick the scene and angle, choose the film and its treatment, but in the moment of exposure, the photographic process takes place independent of an interference, free from interpretation or conversion. Walden

277. The ignorance of the conventionality of photographic practice and its dependence on reproduction techniques is illustrated in a typical comment on the "objectivity of photography" by Green on the early landscape photography by Timothy O'Sullivan: "[W]e accept the photographs as almost anonymous, self-generated images, as pictures that have been called forth by the very land itself without the intermediary of the camera or a specific human eye and viewpoint" (Green, 1984: 10). In Green's comment, the primacy of perception (both of O'Sullivan's camera and of the viewer of his photographs) is conducive to sustain an argument on the exceptionality of the primordial American landscape.

concludes that both the objectivity of their production as much as the 'objectivity of perception' make photographs a privileged medium in journalistic practice. Press photographs are the product of a photographer's decision "about how to use the objectivity of the medium in the service of communication" (272).

Walden here points to a crucial function of objectivity for journalistic practice because he rejects the normative, ethical or epistemological premises of objectivity that have so far oriented the debate. Objectivity - or more precisely, the schema of objectivity - characterizes photography not in an epistemological sense, but as a function to legitimize a particular form of journalistic discourse. Allan Sekula has further elaborated that press photographs are framed by written narratives through other images, text, and captions. These textual elements together with images create a photographic discourse whose function is to disappear and present itself as an unmediated statement about the world. Sekula writes that "the overall function of photographic discourse is to render itself transparent" (1982: 87). This transparency of discourse, likewise, prefigures the automation of journalistic reporting which aims to establish procedural and epistemological objectivity analogous to scientific inquiry. As the reproduction code of the image disappears in halftones, so does the 'objective' reporter disappear behind his news article, he becomes a "spectator" or a "spirit behind the mirror" (Lee, 1900: 231), unseen by the audience. The seeming neutrality of photographic recording here historically coincides with the anonymity of the reporter writing news accounts. Prior to 1920, personalized bylines of news articles, for example, were still considered inappropriate style in newspapers.[278] As Barnhurst and Nerone point out, both photography and expert-based, factual journalism rely on the "effacement of the observer" because only the product of observation is presented in public, not the process of its production. The authors see a particular irony in the fact that "the effacement of the observer accompanied the rise of the byline" because "bylines simultaneously assert authorship and guarantee that authorship does not

278. Reich has argued that personal bylines in news articles of the *New York Times* were still uncommon before 1920. Articles were either accredited to news agencies or the editorial office in general - if at all. See his tables on the frequency, type, and position of bylines between 1900 and 2000 (2010: 710f.).

matter” (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2001: 176). It was the newspaper which recorded and presented ‘all the news of the day’, not its journalists.[279]

As photographs were established in the news media as a privileged form of image, the schema of objectivity was transposed to journalistic practice in an attempt to sustain journalistic authority. The benefit of this transposition was that journalists could retreat into a mode of observation, that was based on scientific ‘epistemic virtues’. The mechanistic abstraction of the photographic apparatus likewise served to automate news gathering, just like the guidebooks and codes of conduct instilled a sense of protocol to a highly volatile and unpredictable practice. Reporters still had “no professional standing” (64) but were experienced as “recorders of the daily life of the people” (Davis, 1906: 72). News gathering remained primarily a “craft” learned on a ‘beat’ while investigating a news story (ibid.). An ideal of journalistic professionals as ‘recorders’ was even more pronounced in Issac Pray’s description of a reporter as a “mere machine to repeat … in spite of editorial suggestion or dictation” to convey only the “exact truth” to readers (Pray, 1855: 472). The exactness of the machine is based on automation and repetition. The reporter is seen as emulating this exactness to achieve a form of truth that is not based on editorial conviction but on mechanical precision and neutral observation. The scientific automation of journalistic observation explains why in 1891, William Henry Smith could extol “photographic minuteness” and “photographic accuracy” as ideals of journalistic work, even if this work was not associated with photographs at all at the time (Smith, 1891: 531f.). Although the schema of objectivity developed in conjunction with the proliferation of photographs in printed periodicals, its usefulness was not restricted to valuing photography, but allowed to legitimize journalistic practice in analogy to the objectivity of photographic media.

The establishment of the Associated Press wirephoto network 1 January 1935 by the Washington Post and 38 other newspapers marked the advent of the era of realtime media in journalism (Gidley, 2011: 58). Topicality and images were joined as a new

279. The presence of news anchors on television does not significantly alter the effectivity of the schema, making an impersonal form of communication only more consumable through a “face-to-face” contact with news, see (Baym, *From Cronkite to Colbert*, 2010).

cultural form, which centrally relied on an ideal of objectivity developed in conjunction with photography in print. While experiments with the telegraphic transmission of images had taken place as early as 1900,[280] the commercial breakthrough for the technology came with the establishment of the wirephoto and its application for journalistic purposes. At a transmission rate of "an inch a minute, or about seven or eight minutes for the average news picture photo"[281] the wirephoto would "make significant changes in the reading habits of millions of Americans" (Berchtold, 1935: 20). The continuous inclusion of topical, visual material, reproduced by a photographic code began to turn "the printed word [into] a secondary symbol" (ibid., 30). Telegraphic technology for wirephoto transmission would eventually foster the development of television technology - the dominant realtime medium of the twentieth century.[282]

As argued before, the schema of objectivity was not restricted to photographs and photographic reproductions alone. Its metaphors of light and darkness lingered on as moral imperatives for a free press; its mode of 'exposure' became a strategy of investigative journalism; its analytic capacities transferred epistemic virtues of science to journalistic practice. This transposition of the schema of objectivity to professionalize journalism[283] can be traced to one of the most influential works on the role of journalism in society. In *Public Opinion* (1922), Walter Lippmann sought to formulate an ideal of journalism and its public function in response to the growth of government and private propaganda after World War I. Lippmann conceded that, as he would later phrase it in *The Phantom Public*, "to the realm of executive acts, each of us, as a

280. The origin of the picture telegraph is ascribed to Arthur Korn in Munich around 1900, who experimented with selenium as a semiconductor material which could convert different light intensities into varying intensities of electric current ("Telegraphic Photography." *Baltimore American* 22 Feb. 1907: 8).

281. "Wires to Flash News Pictures To D.C. Tuesday." *Washington Pos*t 31 Dec. 1934: 4.

282. A combination of a photographic apparatus and a phonograph was an early form of a televisual recording apparatus in real time. In 1890, the *Chicago Tribune* reported early experiments by Thomas Alva Edison to send sequentially recorded images over a wire to a neighboring room and display them there. "Thus the exact appearance of the speaker, with all his gestures and play of features, is exactly reproduced, while the phonograph simultaneously delivers the speech." ("Pictures over the Wire. Marvelous Success of Mr. Edison's Latest Experiments." *Chicago Daily Tribune* 2 Feb. 1890: 4).

283. In his essay "Two Revolutions in the American Press" Lippmann conceded that journalism "ha[d] never yet been a profession" and it was the role of the "new objective journalism" to overcome the limitation of journalism as a "dignified calling", a "romantic adventure", or a "servile trade" (Lippmann, 1931: 440).

member of the public, remains always external" (Lippmann, 1925: 52). The journalists' task was to get access to the inner circles of politics and render the political process transparent for an 'external' public. During this time, the power of publicity agents was felt to be a "menace to journalism" as agents sought to influence public opinion through journalists directly (Brown, 1921). In the words of Edward Bernays, public relations agents worked as an "*unseen mechanism* in society ... an *invisible* government" (Bernays, 2005: 37, emphases added). Preferring to publish information directly through journalists, the press agents both needed and manipulated the press for the benefit of those they represented. The press agents were "*operating invisibly behind the scenes* through their control of the instruments of communication," as Louis Wirth phrased it (1938: 23, emphasis added). In the age of photographic exposure, what remained hidden and unseen was quickly becoming the nemesis of democratic liberty.

Lippmann defended a functional elite to manage public affairs, but in a free society journalists had to make visible the powers that 'operated invisibly behind the scenes' of political bargaining. The identification of darkness and secrecy with evil and disease and the equation of publicity with health, truth and light recall Riis' rhetoric. The same metaphorical substitution can be found in Woodrow Wilsons's programmatic book *The New Freedom* (1913). In the chapter on the role of the press in a free society, Wilson advocates to "open the doors and let in the light on all affairs which the people have a right to know about" (Wilson, 1913: 111). Light is regarded as a "cure" of politics similar to its use in tuberculosis treatment (113). Publicity will serve as "one of the purifying elements of politics" (115) but remains hard to achieve "so long as our methods of legislation are so obscure and devious and private" (123).

The constellation between invisible forces and journalists as a medium to expose such forces to public view is also central to Lippmann's argument in *Public Opinion* (1922). In this most influential work, Lippmann contrasted "the world outside and the pictures in our heads" as the title of the introduction ran. Lippmann was especially

concerned with stereotypes[284] as mental states which cognitively structured perception of the outside world. Even though stereotypes were simplified perceptions, Lippmann had to acknowledge that they had an elementary cognitive function for individuals by reducing complexity. Photography here served him as an analogy to regard stereotypes as a form of mental image. While the stereotype had its benefits for the individual, Lippmann criticized that photographs and moving images were too reductive in their capacity to represent the complexity of the world. Through the growing dominance of visual and audio-visual media, the stereotype was given a medial form, which coalesced with the individual proclivity for simplifying a complex outside world. Lippmann writes with respect to the moving images in newsreels:

> Photographs ... seem utterly real. They come, we imagine, directly to us without human meddling, and they are the most effortless food for the mind conceivable. Any description in words, or even any inert picture, requires an effort of memory before the picture exists in the mind. But on the screen the whole process of observing, describing, reporting, and then imagining, has been accomplished for you (Lippmann, 1922: 61).

The critical stance on the proliferation of images is very prominent in this passage. Tellingly, Lippmann associates the photograph (or its animated form, the motion picture) with a technology that 'observes, describes, reports and imagines.' In other words, photographs are presented as a medium which apparently favors a primacy of sensory perception over intellectual understanding. The stereotype as a mental state is reproduced in the image's objectivity to portray an outside world as it is, even if this image is a manufactured representation that supports a particular viewpoint.

Lippmann saw the press as an institution whose public duty was to correct such stereotypes, to select and present issues of national importance in such a way, that they became "intelligible enough for a popular decision." He coined the phrase that the newspapers' task was to serve as a "beam of a search light" (229) and provide scientifically gathered, objective facts. The passage, which contains the oft-quoted

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284. The use of the term stereotype as a synonym for prejudice is often accredited to Lippmann. The transposition of a method of duplicating identical newspaper pages (See chapter 2) to the description of mental states would, however, warrant further exploration. The *OED* indicates that "stereotype" became transposed from a "method or process of printing" to its more general usage coined by Lippmann. In the latter sense, stereotype was a "preconceived and oversimplified idea of the characteristics which typify a person, situation, etc." ("Stereotype", 2012). Lippmann's use of the term coincides with the increasing use of photographic stereotyping (photozincography) of entire pages of magazines in the early 1920s, pioneered by the *Literary Digest* in 1919 (see "Photography and Printing." *Anaconda Standard* 14 Oct. 1919: 6.)

phrase, is replete with references to light as the purveyor of truth. Lippmann here evokes Jacob Riis' photographic crusade against darkness, the "objective" nature of photography as a medium of vision and exposure, and above all the necessity to submit society to continuous observation.

> The press is not substitute for institutions. It is the *beam of a searchlight* that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another *out of darkness into vision*. Men cannot do the work of the world by this light alone. They cannot govern society by episodes, incidents, and eruptions. It is only when they work by a *steady light* of their own, that the press, when it is turned upon them, reveals a situation intelligible enough for a popular decision (229, emphases added).[285]

The use of light in this passage is more than metaphoric. It refers back to a cultural history of thirty years in which the "writing with light" became a central cultural form of apprehending an outside world. From the Bull's Eye lantern that illuminated the night shelters of New York to Riis's "ambush pictures" by magnesium flash it is but a small step to the emergence of photojournalism and the customary use of images in journalistic reporting.

The findings presented here have sought to retrace why particularly the news image became associated with a form of objectivity, that, as Hall argued, served to legitimize the entire journalistic profession. But contrary to Hall, this association was not traced back to properties of the photographic medium itself, but to the methods of photographic reproduction in popular media. The fact that the objectivity of photographs in reproductions was primarily discussed in popular magazines may explain why the photographic legacy of journalistic objectivity has so far escaped the attention of journalism scholars, who focus rather on newspapers as their main source material. By choosing the angle of reproduction media for photographs, the three dimensions of the schema of objectivity have delineated a non-normative but practical understanding of the currency of the concept towards the 1920s. In the structural

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285. The metaphor of light continues to this day to be associated with critical and politically engaged journalism. The mission statement of ProPublica, an investigative journalism venture, echoes Lippmann's 'searchlight' metaphor: "Our work focuses exclusively on truly important stories, stories with 'moral force.' We do this by producing *journalism that shines a light* on exploitation of the weak by the strong and on the failures of those with power to vindicate the trust placed in them ("About Us"). See also the typical association of light, truth and photography in Rothstein's characterization of photojournalists, who have "the power, duty, and privilege to bring light to a darkened world, the light of understanding" (1979: 13).

homology of photographic recording with journalistic reporting, the schema of objectivity serves as a key concept to understand the photographic legacy in journalistic practice. As the 'searchlight' exposes scene after scene, as in Campbell's vignette of the cellar, only the source of light remains visible but not the operator. The ideal of objectivity, in which protocol and standardized procedures organize journalistic practices of news-gathering, has here the similar effect: the journalist and medium disappear, the pictures speak for themselves, and efface the process of their production - or the code of their reproduction.

4: Transposing Journalistic Practice: Blogs and Social Media

> Eighty percent of email traffic is spam. (Lasica, 2009: 15)

> A printed paper was a bundle. A reader who wanted only sports and stock tables bought the same paper as a reader who wanted local and national politics, or recipes and horoscopes. Online, though, that bundle is torn apart, every day, by users who forward each other individual URLs, without regard to front pages or named sections or intended navigation (Shirky, 2012).

Between the early beginnings of modern American journalism in the penny press and the present lies a period of 180 years. Between the postulation of professional journalistic ethos based on the schema of objectivity and the present is a period of roughly 100 years. The previous 'archaeological' case studies of formative periods of modern journalism as a structure of public communication have recuperated the emergence of topicality and objectivity in their historical specificity. In both cases, journalistic practices were innovated by responding to a different cultural, economic and social environment. New media of journalism emerged wherein new schemas of cultural valuation were developed. The importance of these schemas for explaining the present cultural crisis of journalism is that they gave shape to journalism as a structure of public communication: the penny press broke the bond of private correspondences as the primary source material of news; photography introduced a schema of objectivity that was transposed to journalistic practice as an attempt to differentiate and professionalize it. Under the present conditions of networked and digital communications, it is especially these two schemas that have come under increased pressure and no longer legitimize journalism as they used to.

The first case study presented an archaeology of the schema of topicality as it developed in the penny press of the 1830s both as a daily production cycle of news and a schema of usefulness, which established the newspaper as as daily resource of information for readers. The necessity to renew contact to audiences created narrative and communicative practices, which in the long run sustained journalism as a privileged structure of public communication. The penny papers habitualized readers to valuing

the daily newspaper as a resource of topical information. The second case study retraced the schema of objectivity to the proliferation of visual material in popular magazines, in which photographs became distinguished as a particular class of images. Contrary to political or normative interpretations of objectivity, the study sought to reconstruct the cultural valuation of photographic technology in illustrative practices found in popular magazines. The tension between photographs and their reproductions was an important field where the schema of objectivity was negotiated. This schema served journalism as a blueprint to legitimize its own practices in terms of a technical perfection of observation, to become a 'mere machine to repeat' and in the process of communicating to efface its own procedures of production. Through the schema of objectivity, journalistic practice emerged as a distinct performative discourse of public *communications*, which had severed its ties to more general forms of *communication*.

The previous studies themselves are not sufficient to explain the institutionalization of U.S. journalism as a long-term development. Their contribution to the history of journalism is that they retrace the institutionalization of certain practices that are still constitutive parts of journalism as a structure of public communication. Topicality and objectivity continue to structure journalistic practice; they extend into the present despite the specificity of their origins. In the cultural crisis of U.S. newspaper journalism, these two schemas are now subject to a radical re-valuation because topicality is no longer the exclusive domain of journalism and because objectivity has been exposed in its conventionality through the permanent, simultaneous availability of competing views in online environments. In a radically immersive environment of online communication, practices of detached observation seem like an anachronism. The cultural crisis of journalism is then also a failure to adopt traditional practices to a new environment. The aim of this last part is to analyze how the transposition of journalistic practices from the domain of professional to private communication can serve as an explanation of this current cultural crisis of journalism.

Marcel Broersma and Chris Peters have argued that there are principally two developments in the present that infringe on the exclusivity or journalism as a structure

of public communication and that render its established practices of production, performance and distribution problematic in the digital age. First, the online environment creates more opportunities for any kind of information to be publicly available on a global scale. Any individual with an Internet connection is potentially able to produce any kind of information and disseminate it widely. In the age of mass media, newspaper journalism could in no small part monopolize the production and dissemination of information by tying access to information to a material artifact that needed to be renewed on a daily basis. News consumers were "charged for the whole package" irrespective of their individual information needs (Broersma and Peters, 2013: 4). By focussing on the package as its prime product to attract a wide audience, "journalism itself, as both practice and discourse, [was] structured by industrial logic" (7). In the digital age, as the introductory quote by Clay Shirky indicates, the 'bundle is torn apart' thus dissolving journalism's central product. Moreover, the production of information is now "de-industrialized" as Broersma and Peters argue, which puts in jeopardy the entire industrial form of organization in which the material artifact is both an interface to information (for audiences) and a medium of advertising (for business clients). Concomitantly, individualized forms of accessing online information from various institutional and private sources contribute to a "de-ritualization of news consumption" (8f). Instead of adapting their daily schedules to the production cycles of media, audiences of digital content have become accustomed to "tune in" at any convenient moment (11), assuming that at any given time content serving their information needs will be available. These two points about the 'de-industrialization of information production' and the 'de-ritualization of news consumption' can be related back to properties of digital communication.

Media of public communication used to involve separate and usually highly specialized technologies. Benjamin Day could still print his *Sun* on a fairly simple bed-and-platen press. Two years later, steam presses already made printing an expert job, which required a different infrastructure of services, supplies and expertise. Reproducing photographs and illustrations for print, likewise, required to use a

diversified array of technologies in a publishing house, as DeVinne described. The production of public media was gradually becoming more specialized in the course of modernity, in which media existed as distinct material artifacts produced in industrial dimensions within geographically limited spheres of circulation. As the Internet "has increasingly become embedded in everyday life" (Wellman and Haythornthwaite, 2002: 7) and computing capabilities are build into more and more devices, network communication technology has arguably reached its highest level of complexity and specialization. However, this specialization has also annulled the previous reliance of newspapers on material artifacts as means of accessing public communication, emulating rather the logic of radio and television where a privately owned technical unit allows access to broadcast information services. What used to be accessible *only* through a material object is today accessed through a digital network, a personal computing device and an information infrastructure.[286] As the traditional connection between a daily renewed object and its content is severed in online environments, the continued audience practice of using news services increasingly bypasses cultural gatekeepers.

The integration of previously separate media forms into one common digital standard has created a convergent media sphere, where public or private communication is no longer differentiated by a type of medium and is represented by the same protocols, code and graphic technologies. Digitalization contributes to a *dedifferentiation* of forms of information. News by journalists becomes just one form of 'content', just one type of information in an information-saturated environment. This dedifferentiation of information is an effect of the transformation of previously distinct media and media forms into a homogenous digital format, where socially meaningful information becomes pure data on the level of computing. As Luciano Floridi points out, data in computers is represented as binary data (I/O; on/off) to the system while being semantically meaningful (as letter, word, command) to a user. Binary data

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286. As Manuel Castells argues in *The Rise of Network Society* (2nd. ed., 2010) "the formation of a multimodal, multichannel system of digital communication that integrates all forms of media" has become a new standard in global communications systems (Castells, 2010: xxvii).

encoding thus has the advantage that it "provide[s] the common ground where semantics, mathematical logic, and the physics and engineering of circuits and information theory can converge" allowing for a machine that "manipulate[s] data in ways which we find meaningful" (Floridi, 2010: 28f.). In digital information systems, the binary logic operating at machine level and the semantic logic operating at the level of natural language converge. While the machine level remains obscure to most users of digital technology, the universality of digital code establishes new relations between types of information which used to be separated in material space - either by technology, by sphere of circulation, or by type of usage.

The dedifferentiation of information on the level of the digital also contributes to a radical *decontextualization*. Information as data can be reassembled into many new combinations, up to the point where the social context in which an information was generated is lost in purely functional data operations. Linking a bus timetable to the weather report and one's personal calendar can create a new form of use that integrates many resources of information to manage daily life. Yet each information originates in a different social network - the bus company's planning staff, a meteorological research team and my own social network. Benkler argues that "information is both input and output of its own production process" (Benkler, 2006: 37), it is transformed and recombined only to serve as new input for further operations. As a public good, information is "nonrival," meaning that it cannot be used up (Benkler, 2002: 404). Its 'liberation' as data creates the opportunity to *recontextualize* information in unforeseen new ways and create new rituals and forms of usage, communication and interaction.

The dedifferentiation of information as data has a further powerful cultural effect: it obliterates social, geographical or media-specific spheres of circulation and presents all information within the same communications space. As journalism is dealing in one of the most perishable goods of an information economy, its 'news' is barely different from the news created by individuals through social media, mobile messages, or blogs. Lisa Anderson describes this transposition of a professional practice of information management to the lay individual as as process of disintermediation:

> Facts, or what pass for facts, are hardly a scarce resource, and everyone is equally capable of relating them together in some way, sharing the resulting worldview with millions of other people, and acting together with likeminded people in their neighborhood or across the globe (Anderson, 2012, n.p.).

Disintermediation thus has both a technical and a cultural component. It is based on the homogenization of different forms of information as data, which can be accessed through computing devices and it fosters the bypassing of cultural gatekeepers by putting media of public communication in the hands of individuals. Among the many forms of networked communication the weblog has drawn most attention from scholars because it seemed to embody the logic of digital, networked communication and was for a while regarded as a new form of journalistic medium.[287]

Weblogs (or blogs) have been regarded as "natively digital" (Dean, 2010: 36) media of communication because they crucially rely on the disintermediated, digital network to produce online content. Blogs are simple web site editors that also continue earlier functions of bulletin board systems as "on-line community-oriented discussion forums" (O'Sullivan, 2005: 68). The medium joins elements of private communication (chat, email), website editing (layout, publishing) and information sharing (listservs, mailinglists) in a new media form, "combining the hypertext of webpages, the multiuser discussion of message-boards and listservs, the mass syndication ability of XML and e-mail."[288] Because they converge many communicative function that used to be restricted to different media, blogs "make the idea of a dynamic network of ongoing debate, dialogue, and commentary come alive," argue Kahn and Kellner (2004: 194). After a phase of experimentation with personal websites in the early days of the Internet in the 1990s, the rise of "the blogosphere" in the early 2000s marked a point where providers like wordpress.com or blogger.com began to offer templates of websites that could be easily edited and adapted to individual uses. These templates no longer

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287. Barlow states that blogs are a "participatory platform allowing people to bypass cultural gatekeepers of all sorts, helping loosen control of the content of communication pathways that has for so long rested in the hands of commercial elites" (Barlow, 2008: 114). See the quite opposite argument by Lawrence Lessig in *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* that new methods of gatekeeping either focus on the control of internet architecture (the 'pathways') or the control of content diversity through proprietary copyright legislation (Lessig, 1999).

288. XML is short for Extensible Markup Language, which has become a standard programming language for dynamic content retrieved and combined from databases. XML allows to connect different sets of data dynamically through categorizations of classes of data in similar formats.

required users to have expert knowledge of webhosting, HTML or dynamic web programming. As a software service, blogging platforms centrally managed the technical side of online publishing, creating intuitive, graphic user interfaces to their servers. The main formal feature that distinguishes a blog from other types of website is that topical articles (or 'postings') are placed in the upper part of a page.

Blogs quickly became identified as news media because their formal design puts a premium on recency and topicality of postings, which are presented in reverse chronological order.[289] The blog seems to emulate journalistic topicality by carrying headlines and a date of publication. While these graphic properties liken blogs to a journalistic medium, the blog as a convergent media form sits somewhat uneasily between different formats like the diary, the chat, a journalistic article or a mailinglist entry. Because of this hybridity the blog as a form can be applied to many uses - from very interactive to reactive to one-way communication. The technology driving blogs enables the quick production of postings through graphic website editing and the quick dissemination of content through links.[290] If they are not determined by authors to remain private (or under restricted access) blog posts are immediately public, in the sense that they can be identified and accessed by a link, distributed by email, social networks or RSS feeds.[291] These technical capabilities seem plausible to explain why

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289. Another popular definition of the blog format describes it as "an easy-to-use, web-enabled Content Management System (CMS), in which dated articles ('postings'), as well as comments on these postings, are presented in reverse chronological order" (Bross et al., 2010: 672).

290. The link - or Uniform Resource Locator (URL) - was designed by Tim Berners-Lee as a "universal medium for sharing information" (Berners-Lee and Fischetti, 2000: 84). The link structure of the web introduces a universal referencing schema for information and documents, based on the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). As Berners-Lee points out, HTML as a programming language "should convey the structure of a hypertext document, but not the details of its presentation" (41), making the language applicable to content compiled in other programming languages. The social effect of HTTP and HTML is that data stored in different formats and on different locations can be flexibly combined into new forms of usage (Flanagin et al., 2010). The Web's "generativity" of such new forms is seen as its greatest advantage over proprietary systems of communication (Zittrain, 2008).

291. RSS is the abbreviation of "Really Simple Syndication," which allows users to obtain an automated notice about updates on websites. RSS feeds are especially useful for keeping up with websites that are updated infrequently. O'Reilly dates the origin of RSS to 1997, "out of the confluence of Dave Winer's 'Really Simple Syndication' technology, used to push out blog updates, and Netscape's 'Rich Site Summary', which allowed users to create custom Netscape home pages with regularly updated data flows" (O'Reilly, 2005). By pooling RSS feeds in a reader - a "central clearinghouse" for information on the web - updates on different websites can be sorted, tracked and displayed. Bloggers were considered the "pioneers of RSS feeds" in 2006 (Lenhart and Fox, 2006: 21).

blogs were seen as public media of communication that had transposed formerly exclusive journalistic functions to the online environment. Because they focused on topicality through the very design of their interfaces, blogs were regarded as a serious challenge to established journalistic forms of public communication.

Apart from its technical features, blogs as media of public communication run by individuals were quickly identified as an organized form of "participatory journalism" and were prominently featured by mainstream journalists on national news in the early 2000s. Axel Bruns argues that "the continuing trend in journalism away from investigative reporting and toward pundit commentary also makes blog-based commentary on the news highly compatible with mainstream news content" (Bruns, 2006: 11). A few prominent bloggers like Markos Moulitsas and Matt Drudge were themselves becoming contributors and commentators of journalistic news coverage. The sudden prominence of bloggers and the popularity of blogging among millions of amateurs, was soon seen as a challenge to cultural gatekeepers like journalists, who defended their professionalism against the perceived amateurism of bloggers. Andrew Keen defended professionalism as a value for public debate in his book *Cult of the Amateur*. Keen compared the successful blog *Drudge Report* [292] as an emblem of amateur and alternative journalism with individual bloggers aspiring to similar fame.

> These four million wannabe Drudges revel in their amateurism with all the self-righteousness of religious warriors. They flaunt their lack of training and formal qualifications as evidence of their calling, their passion, and their selfless pursuit of the truth, claiming that their amateur status allows them to give us a less-biased, less-filtered picture of the world than we get from traditional news. In reality this is not so (Keen, 2007: 48).

In a similar way, the sociologist Eric Klinenberg doubts that blogs can be an alternative to mainstream journalism. He argued that although "bloggers have enriched the cultural content of the Web, there is little reason to believe they will provide an adequate alternative to mainstream news" (Klinenberg 2005: 11). Surprisingly, many similar assessments of the emergence of blogging drew a similar conclusion by focussing on

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292. The *Drudge Report* (www.drudgereport.com) was started by Matt Drudge in 1996 and serves as an aggregator for news from other websites. Its main page consists of a minimalist layout that basically only contains links to topical stories in the upper part and links to public figures' websites, news agency channels and other English-language media. The page advertises around 12 million unique visitors per month (as of November 2013).

the admittedly subjective content of blog postings.

But the similarity between bloggers publishing their private views of national politics and its coverage by mainstream media is far more structural than a focus on content alone would allow to see. Dean warns that comparisons between bloggers and journalists "fail because they focus on the content of blogs rather than *the practice of blogging*" (Dean, 2010: 49, emphasis added). Dean foregrounds that a blog "is *a medium and practice of communication*" (46, emphasis added); as a practice blogging shares a number of structural similarities with journalistic practices. The main difference, however, between both practices is that as a 'natively digital medium' blog authors use the internet itself as a primary source of news. In light of the important distinction between information and data, blogging as a practice can be seen as an attempt to connect bits of digital information through voicing an individual experience and making it public. Similar to what Williams claimed to be the prime function of artists, a blogger 'organizes and continues to express a *common* meaning' in an environment where other forms of common experience are on the decline. Rettberg tries to dissolve this seeming antagonism between a private and a professional practice of public communication by stating that "blogs rely on personal authenticity, whereas traditional journalism relies on institutional credibility" (Rettberg, 2008: 92).

In order to go beyond the antagonism between bloggers and mainstream journalists, it is necessary to focus on structural components of blogging as a social practice. Brian McNair argues that "subjectivity," "interactivity" and "connectivity" are principal differences between blogs and mainstream media. Weblog authors are avowedly personal in their approach to information and they link across a vast spectrum of sources while building a community of fellow writers and audiences (McNair, 2006: 121-34). In *distinction from* professional journalism, most blogs center around individual viewpoints. Mark Deuze has pointed out that in digital culture bloggers and journalists both engage in bricolage and remediation of existing cultural elements. Just as a journalist transfers diverse materials into common media forms (from interview to written or televised account) bloggers pick up information from online sources and

weave these bits into articles with a personal viewpoint. Bricolage as "an emerging practice" of digital culture lays the ground for practices of remediation (Deuze, 2006: 71). Despite these similar practices "webloggers tend to do what they do in personal distantiation from what journalists do, while remediating some of journalism's peculiar strategies, techniques, and even content" (ibid., 69).[293] The proliferation of journalistic and proto-journalistic practices in network media like blogs since the early 2000s thus marks a historical moment where "certain cultural practices (particularly those associated with media industries at their historically most concentrated moment of development) can be redefined from protected commodities back to everyday culture" (Uricchio, 2006: 87).[294]

A possible explanation for the growing popularity of media like blogs is offered by Barry Wellman, who relates the proliferation of network media in private contexts to a new cultural condition which he termed "networked individualism" (2002: 34). Individuals are given the possibility (and responsibility) for presenting themselves publicly through such media. They are embedded in social networks built on online interactivity, communication and the exchange of information. The decline of public institutions like journalism here coincides with the disruptive effect of digital communications in social interaction. Where individuals are free to collect news from a multitude of sources, digital technology further enhances a sense of fragmentation. The "dispersion of attention" and "fragmentation" of audiences (Benkler, 2011b: 370-76) evokes the need to find new structures, new orders, new institutions which can re-establish continuity in a period of accelerated technological and social change. After the 'de-ritualization' of news consumption, blogs can be seen as personal media that 're-ritualize' news consumption through a heightened emphasis on interaction. Social networks and blogs re-embed digital fragments in meaningful communicative structures

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293. Likewise, journalists are as reluctant to open their practice to more interactive forms of audience collaboration (Singer, 2005). Mark Deuze has argued that the challenge for journalists working in a multimedia environment is to confront a user, "who is at once switched and switched off, engaged and complacent, informed and ignorant, increasingly reliant on journalism and inclined to bypass journalism altogether" (Deuze, 2004: 147).

294. Of course, the new digital environment also changes institutionalized practices of journalism as "craft distinctions between different genres of news work that historically organized the field are beginning to blur" (Klinenberg, 2005: 53f.).

that endure over time. Joshua Meyrowitz argued with respect to television that electronic media increased “social fragmentation” but at the same time created “new patterns of social integration” (Meyrowitz, 2006: 155). Blogs and other social media can be seen as a way to integrate personal experiences, volatile networks of social acquaintances and information into a new stable communicative structure. For subjects “condemned to individualization,” as Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argued, blogs can contribute to new forms of social integration that absorb the social fragmentation experienced on an individual level (2002: 4).[295]

The transposition of journalistic practices from a professional routine to a generalized practice of public communication in blogs must be regarded in structural terms, rather than on the level of individual blogs or their content. To explain the cultural crisis of journalism in the present, the following part will highlight how blogging emulates the formerly exclusive structure of public communication defined by journalism through its emulation of topicality and its reversal of objectivity. The first part will explain the transposition as a changing function of news in a digital and convergent media environment, in which the publication of ‘news’ as a generic journalistic type of text is reduced to its mere topicality, a topicality which is now rooted in interactions among individuals. The next part will retrace this transposition in more detail, arguing that the text-based logic of network communication goes back to the early Internet where publication and interaction instated a new schema of communication. The text focus of network communication continues in the blog as a publishing medium, explaining many of the dynamics that relate the blog to other

295. Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim argue that “individualization means disembedding without reembedding” in “Second Modernity” (2002: xxii). Because subjects need to rethink the conditions of their existence constantly, they are “forced” to individualize and see the freedoms of self-creation as “precarious freedoms” (ibid., 6). On the “new social cohesion” of social media as a reaction to social fragmentation see also (Dijk, 2012: 188-95).

publishing media.[296] The third part distinguishes between two schemas of blogging that value the blog in social practice. In its application of alternative journalism, the blog serves as a medium that opens access to he production of journalistic news to the general public by relying on collaborative forms of peer-production. In its use as a medium of self communication, the blog replicates a structure of public communication to structure private interactions. The conclusion to this chapter will delineate consequences of the described transpositions of schemas and resources for the constitution of privacy and publicness, reading journalistic practices after journalism as a emergent but fragile new liberty of public communication.

296. The blog as a digital medium is not restricted to displaying text, but can include visual and audio-visual material as well. Before such possibilities existed, however, the predominant form of interaction online was based on the publication of written language. The legacy of this early period is that many forms of online communication are still biased towards text-based forms of communication, although video and image sharing platforms can take over journalistic functions just as well. The focus on the blog here does not imply that blogs are the only network medium sustained by the transposition of journalistic practices. The blog is here the most prominent example of the structural homology of professional and private journalistic practices, a homology that can be found across the range of social media and networking platforms.

News in a Convergent Media Environment

News is probably the most generic kind of text associated with journalistic practice. Since the early days of the penny press, the concept of news has come to include the active production of topical information on a regular basis, oriented to a broad consumer market. Or, as Graham Meikle puts it, “producing news ... is an industrial process of creating and distributing non-fiction drama, of giving shape and structure to raw information” (Meikle and Young, 2012: 8). Blogs emulate this process as a practice of private communication, in which data collected online is reassembled into narrative forms and embedded in social interactions. Just as an interaction between a journalist and an expert becomes news when published, the blog as a publishing platform of individuals presents news as an interpretation of formerly unconnected bits and pieces of digital data.

The difference in reach or scale between blogs and mainstream commercial media does not explain the structural similarities of journalistic practices as they apply to blogs and newspaper journalism. Meikle points out, “news is not just a product, it is also a complex of practices” such as practices of production, distribution and reception (Meikle, 2009: 18). Instead of defining news in terms of a particular content or product, Meikle shifts the meaning of news towards structural properties of *news-based communication*. This includes that news has first of all, a social component of conveying at a given time what is not known to a general public. News becomes news by transgressing a threshold between information shared in small circles or private networks to become an object of public debate. As Gaye Tuchman argued in reference to journalistic practice, “news imparts to occurrences their *public character* as it transforms mere happenings into publicly discussable events” (Tuchman, 1978: 3, original emphasis). While journalism could for the most part of its modern history claim a monopoly on giving form to this ‘public character’ the basic dynamic of passing a threshold applies to individually circulated topical news as they proliferate in blogs as well. Accordingly, Nick Couldry has asked: “What if social networking sites induce a shift in our sense of what news is - from public politics to social flow (...)” (Couldry,

2012: 23). In a convergent media environment, news becomes defined in terms of its topical relevance in a given sequence of interactions between a limited number of participants. The very interactivity of blogs and other social media generates news on the level of the individual by passing the threshold of private interactions to become a public document accessed through a unique link.

In blogs, “immediacy” and “interactivity” become constitutive for the relation between audiences and producers of content (Barlow, 2008: 10). A discussion can be documented in close proximity (both temporally and graphically) to individual posts. Interactivity in online communication is marked by a duality of reference and content. Because content and reference are represented in the same medium, network technology is supposedly more interactive than analog media of communication. As messages can be exchanged within a short time, the temporality between messages is also crucial to determine their level of interactivity. Interactivity in online publishing suggest that the reference (represented through a time code or link) is a necessary component of the message itself. Email and web sites here share the same structure: a header part (or ‘envelope’) contains referential and address data, whereas the body of an email or a website contains the content or message. Both header and body can only exist together to be meaningfully communicated in computer networks, but it is typically the content of the body that attracts attention from users.[297]

In such an interactive environment, news is defined in its temporal sense as a time marker in an ongoing interaction. Topicality in blogs becomes a schema of sustaining interactive relations within social networks. In his review of concepts of interactivity, Rafaeli makes the connection between news and interactivity and their often commonsensical definitions: “interactivity, like news, is something you know when you see it” (Rafaeli, 2009: 23). In a general and abstract way, Rafaeli defines interactivity as the “expression of the extent that in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions” (22.f). Rafaeli cautions that full

297. For a technical description of the protocols, structure and programming of email and its infrastructure see (Tanenbaum, 1996: 643f.).

interactivity is different from "two-way communication" or "reaction" because the referencing of previous interactions must occur within the same medium, what he calls "medium transparency" (27). The medium in which interactivity is to be achieved has to be sufficiently transparent to its users. Interactivity does not have to be limited to interactions taking place in short intervals but can include "user-to-documents interactivity" as well, which includes forms of "parasocial interaction" as in television viewing to actively engaging in the collaborative production of content (McMillan, 2002: 169-72).

In many respects, interactivity changes the meaning and significance of news. Papacharissi states that "blogs frequently combined the display of personal and social or *news-related* information, thus challenging and personalizing the conventional news format" (emphasis added). The dynamic of communicating publicly through references to other public media while addressing a more restricted audience is ascribed to the blog form itself: "blogs are oriented toward providing individuals with a public forum that can be used to provide news of a personal or a general nature" (36). It is easy to confuse the dimension of 'news-related' responses to mainstream media with news as a continuous "life" text, narrated in installments and generated out of interactive exchanges.

Exchanging common references to news media content through blogs and other social media thus gives a "sense of connectedness and social participation that comes with attention to news" (Bird, 2010: 420). Such exchanges are not restricted to referencing mainstream news media, but can include references to *any* source found online. Bird finds that "the rise of newsgroups and other online forums offers new possibilities for everyday *news-related interactions*" (421, emphasis added). The modification Bird introduces here is very relevant to regarding blogs as a journalistic medium that goes beyond a mere commentary function in its inclusion of interactive elements. By referring to and including news through links blogs show how interaction with news can in turn become news itself. Mark Tremayne argues that "blogs give readers the impression that they are getting unmediated raw information" (Tremayne,

2007: xiii). The possibility to join news references with commentary and links to additional sources creates news-related interactions, which can be referenced within the same medium. Thus interactivity in blogs redefines the topicality of news both as a reference and as a sequence within ongoing interactions.

The blog format illustrates how convergence of communications media creates new social practices. The term *convergence* encompasses mainly two different meanings. On the side of technology, convergence marks the point where previously distinct technologies and capabilities are joined in new devices.[298] Quite often this recombination of technological forms is also seen as a precondition of modifying social uses, as when photos can be taken by a mobile phone. Often enough, however, use patterns of technology prove more resistant to innovation than industry leaders wish to accept.[299] Convergence in media technologies entails the "gradual integration of three types of communication: tele-, data- and mass communication" bringing together the fields of "conversation" among individual people, communication on the basis of "bits and bytes" between computers, and classical mass media "allocution" of audiences (Dijk, 2012: 54). Out of this broader definition of convergence, follows a second definition. According to Henry Jenkins, the merging of various forms of previously separate forms of private and public communication has created a form of "convergence culture," which encompasses the constant reinterpretation, remixing and rearranging of cultural artifacts on a global scale, based on the capabilities of digital and network technology. Convergence culture describes "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences." Convergence marks the breaking down of boundaries between consumption, production and the dissemination of media content. Convergence culture is a form of "participatory culture," where hierarchies between audiences and producers are reconfigured in more active terms (Jenkins, 2008: 2f.). Jenkins' example are fan cultures of popular idols and products, who become part of the cultural

298. In a broader sense, a precondition of media convergence is the consolidation of industries, technologies, media forms and regulatory frameworks. See also (Dwyer, 2010).

299. On the conflict between futurist visions of convergence (and progress) and the resistance of social practice see (Morley, 2007).

industries' production routines while maintaining a level of independence from its revenue schemes.

Expanding Jenkins' interpretation of convergence culture, Meikle and Young argue that convergence principally describes the connection of digital technology with networks of communication. Convergence encompasses "media content, industries, technologies and practices that are both digital and networked" (Meikle and Young, 2012: 2). The dual emphasis on digital technology *and* networking capabilities marks the fusion of two separate strands of technological innovation into a new media form. Convergence entails disintermediation to the degree that the "dividing lines between the audience and broadcaster, reader and publisher, are beginning to blur" (Tredinnick, 2008: 105).

If convergence characterizes a new way of relating to cultural products, a definition of audiences as consumers of news becomes inadequate. Convergence entails the possibility to produce news beyond the admittedly more active notion of "audience response" as detailed in the work of Janice Radway or Elizabeth Bird (Cf. Couldry, 2000: 114f.). Terms like "consumer," "reader" or "viewer" evoke historically defined practices of cultural participation which are based on a discrepancy between production and consumption (or reception). The term "user" is even more tied to a consumerist idea. Axel Bruns has tried to go beyond the admittedly more active producer-consumer that Alvin Toffler had described as a "prosumer" in 1981 (cf. Toffler, 1981: 265-88). In Bruns' view, the 'prosumer' was never more than "merely the perfection of the feedback loop from consumer to producer" (2008: 12). The prosumer was only an unpaid consultant for business to improve products. Instead, Bruns proposes the term "prod-usage" to capture the potentials of networked production spaces, arguing that in a network producers and consumers are "both simply nodes in a neutral network and communicate with one another on an equal level" (14). This definition is based on the fact that networks do not have central instances of control; their infrastructure does not determine the path a given message may take from producer to consumer and vice versa. However, drawing such an analogy between a technical infrastructure and its

particular valuation for certain tasks means to short-circuit the form with the function. 'Prod-usage' assumes *too much* freedom for participants in networks. A number of factors like power-law distributions in online traffic, or the new semantic and cultural hierarchies of search limit the potential of 'former audiences' to become producers in *every* domain and *every* interaction.

By contrast, Yochai Benkler's definition of user keeps both consumption and production separated. In *The Wealth of Networks*, Benkler posits that "users are individuals who are sometimes consumers and sometime producers," individuals who are "substantially more engaged participants ... [in] terms of their productive activity and in defining what they consume and how they consume it" (Benkler, 2006: 138). Benkler's definition retains a more nuanced image of social hierarchy in the production and consumption of digital content, which stresses productive and consumptive practices as temporarily available roles that can be taken up by individuals. This maintains the possibility that a productive role is not taken up at all, or that a consumptive role is outrightly rejected. Benkler is able to account for the new possibilities of convergence culture while retaining a sense of hierarchy and limitation. For this chapter, the term user should be understood in Benkler's sense.

News in a convergent environment shares a number of characteristics with traditional journalistic news as a topical genre of text. But the blog as a news medium relates topicality back to interactive relations between members of a given network. In his futurologist classic *Being Digital* (1995), Nicholas Negroponte had envisioned personal filtering devices for news which expanded the core function of a newspaper as an "interface to news". Negroponte proposed an "edition of one," which readers could compile as a "personalized summary" of news provided wholesale by mainstream media (Negroponte, 1995: 153).[300] This vision still remained within the industrial paradigm of news production, challenging only a particular material form of news *distribution*, although it accorded more agency to individuals. But in a broader definition of news, the entirety of the Web now becomes a source of news. As Jonathan

300. Such services with personalized newspapers can be obtained from sites such as www.news.me.

Stray observes, “in the future, news will be personalized and it will also be personal: the machinations of my social network may not be newsworthy to a journalist, but it’s certainly newsworthy to me. The entire concept of ‘news’ is undergoing a transformation” (Stray, 2009). In a similar vein, journalism scholar Jo Bardoel contends that “information in itself is less important than information shared with others.” (Bardoel, 1996: 297). As the sources of information converge, the production and consumption of information becomes part of an ongoing interaction between individuals.

Internet scholar Clay Shirky has characterized this convergence of news forms as a shift “from news as an institutional prerogative to news as part of a communications ecosystem.” Users of network technology and online publishing tools employ similar technological resources as established media and are competing in the same network: “The individual weblogs are not merely alternative sites of publishing,” Shirky argues, “they are alternatives to publishing itself” (2008: 66), understood as a structure of public communication pervaded by industrial logic. Instead, blogs are a form of “social software ... that supports group *interaction*” (ibid., emphasis added). While the software can be used for interactive ends, it is by no means restricted to such uses. “Weblogs are not necessarily social,” Shirky argues, “although they can support social patterns” (Shirky, 2003).[301]

In conclusion, weblogs as a convergent medium present news as a structuring element in an ongoing interaction between users. Graham Meikle has emphasized that in such a convergent environment, journalists are no longer the exclusive producers of news: “the practices of journalism are, self-evidently, what *journalists* do; but the practices of news include things in which we *all* participate - story-telling and argument; reading, viewing, listening and discussing.” Although Meikle here equates general practices of communication with particular practices of journalism, his emphasis that “news ... is too important to be left only to the journalists” (Meikle, 2009:

301. Recently, Shirky has argued that “the use of a social technology is much less determined by the tool itself; when we use a network, the most important asset we get is access to one another,” which is arguably more desirable than the “social surrogate of television” (Shirky, 2010: 14).

18) sums up forcefully why such separate forms as news article and reader-response now vie for attention in the same media by adopting similar journalistic practices of news production, selection and distribution.

The transposition of practices from 'legacy media' to network media can be attributed to the link structure of the Web as a primary resource of online communication itself. The link embodies the network logic of hypertext, which was prefigured by Ted Nelson's *Xanadu* project and has been subject of philosophical debates about the epistemological structures of modernity, exposed, for example, in postmodern literature. Literary hypertext was imagined as a text without a center, as a constant interplay of references and temporal structures which eventually questions the authority of a writer as creator of a literary text. The American novelist Robert Coover, himself a representative of the genre, pointed out that

> hypertext presents a radically divergent technology, interactive and polyvocal, favoring a plurality of discourses over definitive utterance and freeing the reader from domination by the author. Hypertext reader and writer are said to become co-learners or co-writers" (Coover, 1992).

Marie Laure Ryan has remarked that "hypertext is like a construction kit: it throws lexia at its readers, one at a time, and tells them: make a story with this" (2002: 589).[302] While hypertext remained a philosophical inquiry into non-hierarchical ways of writing, it was its authors that became the prodigy of a new tradition - not their readers. By contrast, taken as a technical description of a reference-based communication system, hypertext does actually allow different "lexia" of events to appear in an interactive environment as text. In the digital production of text, a reference is represented within the same medium as the content that is referenced. Reader response is no longer technically distinct from the text it responds to.

The network of hypertext links becomes a resource of communication. This network of referenced documents was used as a means to establish relations between individuals in early online communities like the *WELL* and *Usenet*. Before the advent of graphical user interfaces, text-based communication was the standard in online

302. For a theoretical interpretation of hypertext as a genre of postmodern literature and its reflection in contemporary media art see George Landow: Hypertext 3.0. Genres in Hypertext writing.(Landow, 2006).

networks. This legacy of the medium still informs the use of blogs as media which are both a publishing and an interaction platform of individuals. The blog thus supports forms of interactions which connect individuals through publication to other individuals sharing similar interests, continuing forms of interactions which date back to the early days of the Internet and the Web.

The Cultural Valuation of the Network as a Text-Based Resource

> The universality of digital language and the pure networking logic of the communication system created the technological conditions for horizontal, global communication (Castells, 2010: 45).

Network communication greatly enhances the possibilities of individual actors to connect to, become aware of and share information offered by others. The network is regarded as a model of social organization and production, in which interactive communication allows for more individual connections on more levels than was possible with analog or even early electronic media. But despite the variety of communication services that are available in non-text forms such as video calls, most of the interaction in network contexts remains powerfully bound to semantic competencies based on text and natural languages. Although digital language is universal in that it creates a uniform data format which is seamlessly integrated into any electronic device, natural languages and their grammars still structure the way users interact with media and information. The blog as one network application is itself a largely text-based resource and the way it is integrated into interactive networks is reminiscent of text-based applications for social networking which characterized the early Internet. Before the advent of search engines, online directories and edited link compilations, finding information online meant to engage in interactions with other users, who could provide links and references. By sending messages through bulletin board systems, mailing lists or later in *Usenet* involved addressing an unknown number of participants in the hope of finding like-minded individuals. The way early online communication joined public notices around common interests and forms of interaction is significant to understand how the network is valued as a resource of blogging as a practice.

The Internet is not a medium in the same way a book or a radio broadcast is a medium. It is as much a cultural form as other media, yet what most users encounter as the Internet on their networked devices is usually an interface designed to allow or

structure access to a vast pool of informational resources.[303] The Internet is foremost a global technical infrastructure, connecting many national, commercial and restricted networks. As one of its many applications, the Internet supports the World Wide Web, what most users see, when they open a web browser or 'go online'. This distinction is important to stress the difference between the now dominant graphical user interface (browser, point-and-click input devices) and its underlying technical infrastructure. The Internet derives its name from 'internetwork protocols' (Ryan, 2010: 34) which regulate the exchange of data between the military ARPANET and other civil networks in the 1970s and '80s.[304] Today, the Internet is identified mainly with the hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) which regulates the display of webpages.[305] The Internet is a network of satellites, cables, servers and routers which connects many other media and applications (software programs, protocols, websites) of the World Wide Web and other networks. The Web, as it is primarily accessed through web browsers using HTTP and HTML (hypertext markup language), has become the dominant form after the late 1990s.[306] The difference between the Internet and the WWW, or web, is that the first operates on binary code, the latter is accessed through natural languages.

Similarly, a hyperlink (or link) is programmed in HTML by the ‹ahref› … ‹/ahref› command. In its usage, however, the link as a seemingly haphazard combination of letters, numbers and other characters does not even draw attention to itself as a likewise structured reference. The link is experienced only in its function to access an online document. In its social usage, the link establishes a connection not just between a user and a document, it creates a connection between two members connected to the same

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303. The Web is composed of four layers - "the transmission medium, the computer hardware, the software and the content" - which explains its difficult position as a medium (Berners-Lee and Fischetti, 2000: 129f.).

304. Histories of the Internet and its origins in the ARPANET include (Abbate, 1999; Naughton, 1999; Ryan, 2010) and (Gitelman, 2006: 89-150).

305. Other protocols include the File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) for email, and the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP/IP), which describes data packets and verifies their secure and complete transmission.

306. As Tim Berners-Lee argues in his memories of *Weaving the Web*, the original design of his markup language was intended to give thousands of scientists at CERN a common way to connect vastly different technological applications through a common meta-language, which did not necessitate to change already running systems (Berners-Lee and Fischetti, 2000: 57).

network. In a confluence of a technical operation and a social practice, the link has a social dimension, especially when it references documents transparently ascribed to other individuals as in blog posts or websites. Apart from its mere utility in a digital operation, the link is the smallest part of online networks which connect individual actors. Yochai Benkler thus defines the network as “a particular way to describe systems of human interaction that emphasizes both individual action and structural patterns” (Benkler, 2011a: 725). In online interaction these patterns are significantly set by technical parameters, but this does not limit the practices of interactions to only one form. When a link is exchanged between two persons, the link has simultaneously a technological, a referential and a social dimension. Rebecca Blood wrote that “weblogs ... run on links” (Blood, 2002: xi), which does not just refer to the inclusion of links in individual blog postings, but draws attention to blogs connecting individuals to others through postings. What is published is also a reference to some other author, some other individual connected in the same network.

The network architecture of the Web is based on links which become meaningful only when they are part of social interactions. Such interactions then build the value of the network for its users. Apart from the technical meaning of network, Benkler’s focus on “systems of human interaction” signals that the social dimension of the network has been just as important to shape its cultural significance in present debates. This social dimension has been forcefully argued by Albert-László Barabási, who underlined the Internet’s foremost ability to bridge social and geographical separation (Barabási, 2003: 25f.). By creating new connections between individuals, the Internet was envisioned as a realm of opportunity. When Mark Granovetter presented his influential sociological study on the benefits of informal social networks of “weak ties,” he did not have the Internet in mind (1973). But the perspective on ‘weak ties’ as a resource of opportunity became a dominant schema of network communication, which continues to fuel the unabated popularity of social media platforms like Facebook.com. Complementary to Granovetter’s reliance on ties stands Ronald Burt’s study on *Structural Holes* (Burt, 1992), which assumed that successful entrepreneurs exploited the gaps between

networks (rather than ties) for their own profits. Granovetter and Burt offered sociological network analyses of interactions, which highlighted how the openness of networks created economic opportunities.

The term *network* in relation to communication, then, comprises at least three meanings in its current usage: an open, flexible, technical infrastructure that allows individuals to connect to each other through links, offering the potential opportunity to find profitable or at least rewarding forms of interaction. This particular connection of different meanings of network shows a structural bias towards anti-authoritarian and hedonistic-opportunistic practices, rather than stressing control, surveillance or dependency. The civic uses of online networks have long left the military "integrity of command" schema of the original ARPANET behind.[307] This departure from authoritarian control toward opportunistic interaction can be explained by a particular intellectual climate, which placed information technology at the center of counter-cultural ideals of self-sustenance and spiritual liberation in the 1970s.[308]

Fred Turner has portrayed how a utopian, countercultural dimension of protest and societal reform became connected to the technological affordances of networked communication in a particular climate in the San Francisco Bay Area. Turner goes back to Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Network* which "assembled a network and publications that together brokered a series of encounters between bohemian San Francisco and the emerging technology hub of Silicon Valley" in the late 1960s and later in the 1990s (Turner, 2006: 3). Brand joined a vision of an alternative, back-to-nature lifestyle with a new form of community-building through electronic communications. The "New Communalists," as Turner calls them, were attempting to join the capabilities of electronic communications with a countercultural ethos of "collective transcendence,"

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307. Lawrence Lessig raises a similar doubt about the Internet as a network free of control: "That *cyberspace* was a place that governments could not control was an idea I never quite got. The word itself speaks not of freedom but of control. [...] Cybernetics had a vision of perfect regulation. Its very motivation was finding a better way to direct. Thus, it was doubly odd to see this celebration of non-control over architectures born from the very ideal of control" (Lessig, 1999: 5).

308. See also Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron's essay "The Californian Ideology" which criticizes the dot.com hype in the late 1990s as a movement which "promiscuously combine[d] the free-wheeling spirit of the hippies and the entrepreneurial zeal of the yuppies" (1996).

not by the means of self-centered hedonism of the first counterculture of the 1970s but through a collective effort to find new ways of sharing information and building networks of collaboration that could exist outside the "mechanistic forces of bureaucratic America" (123f.) which they perceived.

Brand's "network forums" brought together members of the information and technology industry, the San Francisco art scene and cultural critics. The aim of these forums was to establish a common vocabulary around new media to create entrepreneurial opportunities. Participants in these forums "created new rhetorical tools with which to express and facilitate their new collaborations" (72) and developed a new entrepreneurial model. The settlers of the "electronic frontier," as Rheingold (1993) and many of his fellows saw it, developed a vision of life and work, where electronic communications media stood at the center of a lifestyle that was both alternative to mass society and could be sustained on an entrepreneurial basis by commodifiying the elements of this lifestyle (fashion, software, books) for a mass market. Turner attributes this communal spirit already to the research environment of Xerox Parc in Palo Alto in the 1960s and '70s where "industry engineers and hobbyists lived and worked side-by - side ... surrounded by countercultural activities and institutions." This environment created a climate of collaboration in the early days of computer and network communications research in California, where the "ideals of information sharing, individual empowerment, and collective growth ... did not so much compete with as complement each other" (Turner: 106).

Stewart Brand founded the *WELL* in 1985, a "teleconferencing system within which subscribers could dial up a central computer and type messages to one another in either asynchronous or real-time conversations" (Turner: 141). The community quickly "became known as a gathering place for advocates of counterculture ideas and free speech" (Abbate, 1999: 203). Based on a subscription system, users gained access to a community of likeminded users that they may have never met in person. Howard Rheingold describes the *WELL* as a "self-sustaining online salon" (1993: 42). Discussions were organized into groups which reflected the "intellectual diversity" (56)

of the entire community. Rheingold points out that the *WELL* served as a personalized guide to the Internet through the individuals who engaged in discussion and contributed references to interesting material. On the *WELL*, “the people who have the information are more interesting than the information alone” (ibid.). The *WELL* personalized information and thereby allowed to connect individuals via shared interests.

The *WELL* catered specifically to those who relied on information for their living; it was a “living encyclopedia” (57) where connections between people were founded on the continued exchange of information. Because the *WELL* connected many to many, an information given into a forum also allowed to receive information from the community. As Rheingold describes it, the *WELL* was the “marriage of altruism and self-interest” (58); information was not only exchanged but became the central point of conversation among its members. Since this ‘conversation’ was text-based, it acquired properties between “a form of conversation and a form of publication.” Individual entries on the forums of the WELL blended “aspects of informal, real-time communication with the more formally composed, write-once-read-forever mode of communication” (61). Although group discussions were organized around subjects, the different schemas of real-time conversation and asynchronous publication merged into a form of published interactive conversation.

A similar example of a communications network was *Usenet*, which had started in the early 1980s. Usenet was intended as a discussion forum for programmers of the Unix operating system - a ‘poor man’s ARPANET’ as it was called. Rheingold stresses that Usenet was organized around “postings” made by individuals which circulated through the distributed network of hosts connected to *Usenet* via simple telephone connections. Each host could retrieve such postings from other hosts and be itself a host. The route of information exchange between a multitude of hosts remained largely obscure, ensuring almost complete anonymity for its users.[309] A public posting would thus travel around the world and be visible to millions of users. Replies to postings were equally public, giving way to a “conversation in text” (Rheingold, 1993: 118). *Usenet*

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309. The decentralized, distributed *Usenet* infrastructure survives to today largely as an illegal filesharing network.

organized postings and replies in newsgroups which users could access through a news reader program on their computer. The difference of this network to the restricted access network of ARPA was that “ARPA discussion groups were essentially mailing lists” whereas “Usenet was constructed on the opposite basis - that individuals decided which News groups they wished to subscribe to.” John Naughton sees this participatory element of communicating in an open network as “‘democratic’ in spirit,” which made *Usenet* news a model for other news related applications on the Internet (1999: 180). Its success is attributed to the fact that *Usenet* “offered new possibilities for social interaction” (Abbate, 1999: 201) and by 1992, the number of users had grown to 2.5 million (Rheingold, 1993: 120).

Feenberg and Bakardjieva point out that the Internet succeeded as a “community technology” because the software enabling early online communities was designed to “facilitate the transposition of community-oriented virtues from the face-to-face environment to the network” through archiving of previous group discussions, watching over group boundaries and through fostering an open exchange among its members (Feenberg and Bakardjieva, 2004: 7). Up until the release of the Mosaic browser in 1993 and HTML becoming the dominant protocol for the Web, such communities had relied on text-based interactions. Many of the terms describing blogs can be traced back to ‘postings’ on Usenet and the ‘reverse chronological order’ of messages and replies in mailing lists. The civic uses of the military ARPANET had converted a line-of-command infrastructure into a collaborative open network, in which command-line interfaces[310] were the key to access a network of millions of distributed users. Early applications for communicating over the Internet like *Usenet* and Internet Relay Chat (IRC) contributed to shaping a schema of the network as a communications space free from hierarchical constraints. This schema of communication is still dominantly based on text or textual elements, where the boundaries between conversation and publication are converging.

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310. A command-line interface is a very basic form of interacting with a computer program by writing commands in text, rather than clicking on graphical symbols. Remnants of command-line interfaces are, for example, putting a URL in a web browser and pressing the ‘return’ key.

In an environment, which continuously produces news on all kinds of levels, filtering is a necessary condition to be able to navigate and keep track of information. In the early networks personal contacts were needed to find content online. Today, search engines have become the main form of access to information. Because search engines are text-based applications, semantic competence remains a key to access this information. In addition, the dominant browser-based, graphical interface to the web has privileged search engines over other means of accessing the Web. Because search engines treat information as a string of characters, natural language terms and their social contexts in which they circulate are decoupled from each other. Information in a search engine appears as in an encyclopedia: it is accessible based on the uniqueness of a term but not attributed to an author, a field of knowledge or interaction. It appears as a pure fact. In contrast to early 'community technologies' search engines disrupt network communication by treating information only as an operative variable, put through algorithms, to ease access to online content. But such operations are not technically neutral; they have powerful social effects.

In her analysis of the development of the search engine industry since the mid-1990s, Elizabeth van Couvering concentrates on how search engines from the start began to "build audiences" around "traffic as the core unit of exchange" on the Web. Search engines were "sorting, classifying, and constructing a lens through which we view other content on the Web" (Couvering, 2008: 179). This lens, however, had an in-built language bias in the results it delivered, depending on the language the engine was programmed in.[311] By catering to commercial customers as their primary source of revenue, search engines were designed as a "supply chain for media audiences" (ibid., 186). In the period between 1997 and 2001, search providers and established media corporations had favored the portal model of web content. The portal offered selections of weblinks, shopping opportunities and interactive tools in diverse fields of interests. The portal was for a short time a front page of the Internet, fully controlled by a portal

311. Alexander Halavais adds that search engines have a national bias towards sites from the United States and sites in the English language (88f.) Because historically many sites have existed in U.S longer and are better linked, they show up in search results as authoritative. Search engines have a tendency to "reproduce" this authority (Halavais, 2009: 90).

provider like Yahoo, aimed at keeping viewers within the “walled garden” of the provider for as long as possible (ibid., 190f.). After a phase of vertical integration of content and search providers this restrictive model of web access was replaced by free search. Advertising was no longer placed along predefined selections, but could be placed flexibly along with search results or was syndicated to other websites through search engine providers. The acquisition of the social networking site *Myspace* through Rupert Murdoch’s NewsCorp in 2005 and Google buying the video portal *Youtube* in 2006 mark two points of consolidation in this vertical integration process.[312]

Alexander Halavais posits that a search engine “represents a nexus of feedback of control” that learns from user behavior which information it should regard as relevant. Instead of imposing classificatory schemes on information, as in scientific taxonomies or bibliographic records, search engines adopt their classification dynamically in response to the billions of search requests from users and their eventual selections. Instead of presenting the plurality of the Web, search engines are a “largely conservative force, increasing the attention paid to those people, institutions, and ideas that have traditionally held sway.” As users select increasingly what is presented first in their results, they reinforce the bias towards those sites which are most popular. Search engines thus focused attention more like “telescopes,” relegating less connected content to a subordinate position (85).

Against the ingrained hierarchy of search engines, blogs and similar social media serve as a “counterweight to the hegemonic culture of the search engine” (116). Although search engines implement “technological practices” which “depend on social interactions” (160), this sociality is only a means to aggregate and direct user behavior in the service of advertising customers. By contrast, “blogging has spawned a host of social software that is designed to help to connect people together, and those

312. With social networking sites the portal structure, however, makes a return. Since these sites usually require users to register beforehand, they effectively shield off interactions taking place within the site from non-registered users and from search engines, which are thus limited in their capacity to mirror the entire web, the so called invisible or “deep web”. In his computation of the size of the deep web, Michael Bergman (2001) estimates that the deep web is “400 to 550 times larger than the commonly defined World Wide Web.” One reason why deep web applications like academic text databases are not indexed by search engines is that “deep web sources store their content in searchable databases that only produce results dynamically in response to a direct request.”

connections mean new ways of finding experts and locating expertise" (161). In what Halavais calls "sociable search," the detachment of information from individuals holding or publishing that information presented through search engines is reversed. Through 'sociable search' individual connections are built on an overlap of search terms which "suggests a move from goal-oriented searching for information, to a desire to build both explicit and tacit connections between people" (175).

Beginning around 2003, social media and blogs began using their own collective systems of categorization for online content. The novelty was that such 'metadata' was no longer just part of a websites header fields, it became an information provided by users themselves about websites. These tags, as they were called, were attributes for content which could be freely formulated in natural languages. The benefit of such metadata creation was that no central authority regulated which terms were applicable to a particular site or piece of information. The "shared, distributed, and decentralized practice" (Halavais: 172) of applying metadata by millions of users would eventually yield appropriate terminologies by the sheer frequency of particular terms. The shift to creating metadata for online content can be regarded as a "core aspect of Web 2.0 developments" (173). What became known as *folksonomies* marked a useful application of social software as a practice to determine relevance in a highly chaotic network that brought individuals together around common issues or tags. The tag cloud, which displays terms of metadata according to their frequency, is a "heterarchical folksonomic knowledge structure" (188) which does not distinguish between more or less important terms. It only graphically represents their frequency. The folksonomy of metadata proved more flexible for sorting and filtering online content, especially content created by individuals on an irregular basis, because it involved only a small contribution from individuals but benefited from the combined effort of millions of users.[313]

Social metadata thus remedied a deficit of search engines which privileged only very prominent sites and has meanwhile been integrated into search as an indicator of a

313. Bruns argues that the "traditional expert-based paradigm of classification according to fixed schemata is unable to cope with the range of information and knowledge now available within the global knowledge space" (2008: 192).

site's popularity. With the numbers of users increasing exponentially, the early social applications of the Internet gave way to technical categorizations based on mere coincidences of search terms. While *Usenet* had been a text-based communications platform, search engines disrupted the context of interactions and information, of producers and the information they offered, by treating information as a purely technical variable in a computational routine. This disruption was partly reversed through social metadata, which again connected individual content to those who provided it. Search engines, web editors and networking platforms became important technologies to process, filter and distribute information from an increasing number of users. As these services became offered through websites, rather than through separate scripts, many of the earlier forms of networked communication migrated and converged in web-based applications like social networks,[314] chat programs and blog editing software.

As a web-based service, a blog editor is embedded in an array of communicative technologies, which are accessed from a stationary or mobile device. With graphic browsers and multitasking software, the screen of a computer is becoming more than just a display of information; it "is not simply a 'medium' for the transmission of messages and information. It is a building site on which a whole ... epistemological world is erected," as Cetina and Bruegger argued in their analysis of online traders (Cetina and Bruegger, 2002: 395). By running several applications like a website editor, a browser, an email program or chat protocol in parallel, users operate a personal media system that is at once physically located while being in constant perpetuity with input and output from the network. This personal media system thus contains means to search, store, and filter information, present and edit images or video, and distribute messages and links through web-based services like email or blogs. Castells argues that the ubiquity of "social software" has enabled users to build "their own system of mass communication, via SMS, blogs, vlogs [videoblogs], podcasts, wikis, and the like" (2007: 246f.).

Because social software combines all elements of a public communication system

314. For a history of the development of social networking sites after 1997 see (boyd and Ellison, 2007).

in the hands of an individual, Castells is concerned that blogs, for example, are "closer to 'electronic autism' than to actual communication" (ibid., 247). Castells has coined the term of "mass self-communication" (248) to describe the practice of communicating in public through electronic media as an individual. In its emphasis on "mass" Castells accounts for the similarities in these individual strategies, structural patterns of communication which are both technical and social. Castells summarizes that 'mass self- communication' results from "a culture that emphasizes individual autonomy, and the self-construction of the project of the social actor" (249). The personal media system introduces a convergence between vertical and horizontal networks in which "mass media and mass self-communication" are both "interacting in the practice of communication" (252). This practice of communication is reflected in blogs as a publishing form which emulates journalistic practices, yet places a premium on the interaction with others through content. The blog thus is part of a personal media system in which the performative modes of "mass self-communication" function as a way to connect, collaborate and communicate with an increasingly heterogeneous field of other social actors. 'Mass' in this sense is not only a categorization of seemingly identical behaviors, it refers to the similarity of practices of public communication which have been transposed from being the exclusive domain of journalism to the realm of private communication. Yet, since the analogy to 'mass media' and its centralized production and distribution practices can obviously not be ignored, it is preferable to speak simply of 'self-communication' emphasizing that user roles are flexibly changing between producer and consumer, and between public and private modes of communication.[315]

The network logic of collaboration which spawned the first applications for communication on the Internet continued in the creation of metadata and social search. The blog combines a publishing medium with an interactive network based on tags formulated in natural languages. The format ties information offered online to a social agent who is embedded in a social network of relations - online and offline. The blog is

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315. In the new foreword to the second edition of *Network Society*, Castells emphasizes that mass self-communication is "*self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception* by many who communicate with many" (Castells, 2010: xxx). He does not entertain the possibility to simply dispense with the mass aspect of his diagnosis.

thus social in its connections and personal in its form. The next part will present these two schemas of blogging practice as an example of “peer production”. In the schema of “collaborative production” the practice of blogging is sustaining alternative journalism as a structure of public communication. The second schema values the blog as a means of ‘self-communication’ through the continued publication of private news to sustain a structure of interaction. Both schemas value network communication as a text-based resource in different ways.

Two Schemas of Blogging as a Social Practice

The early social networks like *Usenet* established a particular schema of interaction on the basis of publishing commentary and articles to a global community. With metadata creation, an indirect filtering mechanism was found that harnessed the abilities of millions to rank, classify and evaluate online content. This mechanism relied on contributions made by individuals to a common task of organizing the heterogeneous content of the web. The legacy of the *WELL*'s community lived on in a new economic model of production which gained popularity under the heading "Web 2.0" or the "Social Web". Tim O'Reilly's article on the different economy of the Web 2.0 emphasized a shift from proprietary, copyright-based software development to a stronger emphasis on the "perpetual beta"[316] as the new standard in collaboration between entrepreneurs and their user communities. After the bust of the New Economy in 2000, O'Reilly was summarizing a community discussion to find new "business models for the next generation of software" (2005). Among these new software applications, O'Reilly mentions blogs as a medium of user-driven innovation, which challenged media enterprises and their established practices of broadcast communication. At the time, the antagonism between both structures of communication seemed unbridgeable.

> While mainstream media may see individual blogs as competitors, what is really unnerving is that the competition is with the blogosphere as a whole. This is not just a competition between sites, but a competition between business models (ibid.).

In many respects, the emergence of the social web exemplifies a commodification of earlier media forms which relied on interactive collaboration like *Usenet*. In this commodified environment, blogs as personalized media outlets became identified almost from the start as an alternative publishing medium that stood in competition to already established journalistic outlets. As argued before, the particular legacy of early social network applications had created the association of publishing and interaction,

316. "Perpetual Beta" describes a different philosophy of product development, where the "beta"-version of a software, the last version before a public (commercial) release, becomes the perpetual final release. Companies use user feedback to continuously debug and develop a piece of software instead of offering a final product on the market.

which continued in the blog format. Blogs appeared as a new form of journalism, which was however limited in its public appeal and reach. The emerging publishing practice was often compared to its institutionalized form, although both practices operated with very different resources.

This chapter argues for a distinction between blogs as part of an alternative journalism movement, which became identified as "the blogosphere" around 2005, and the general practice of self-communication in blogs. The first use of the blog can count as an innovation *within* journalistic practice. The second form of usage of blogs indicates the transposition of an entire structure of communication, in which the blog is valued as a medium of interaction. The two practices of blogging are valued by two different schemas but both rely on publishing and interaction in varying degrees. The journalistic practice of blogging can count as a form of "commons-based peer production" (Benkler, 2006), but the blog can also sustain practices of self-communication within rather limited social networks. With the pluralization of sources for online news, collaboration to find, select and edit information becomes a basis for an alternative journalism which competes with mainstream media in the same network. Yet the same practices of searching, selecting and presenting information apply as well to self-communication in personal media systems. Blogging as a social practice creates different emphases on either the content of a blog or the (temporal) function of blog entries within a structure of interaction. The blog is both a social and an individual medium of communication, valued by two different schemas. The first schema highlights how blogs were used as a collaborative form of alternative or "participatory" journalism; it stresses the "production"-aspect of collaboration. The second schema underlines how peer-production connects to self-communication; it stresses the "peer"-aspect of blogging as a social practice. On the collective and the individual level each schema values the blog in different ways. This valuation cannot be deducted from the blog form itself but only from the meaningful dimension of its social uses.

Peer-Production and Blogs - Alternative Journalism

In the creation of *Usenet*, software and network development together created new ways to connect individuals through public messages and information. The developer of the operating system Unix, Richard Stallman, had envisioned free software as a form of "free speech," which meant the "user's freedom to run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the software." (Naughton: 198). When AT&T, as the proprietor of the Unix source code, turned the software into a commercial product in the early 1980s, Stallman began developing a new operating system which was later called Linux. The development and eventual success of Linux must be attributed to the fact that "it has been debugged and tested to destruction by a larger army of skilled programmers" who together provided more resources than any single software company could muster (Naughton, 1999: 204).[317] As Linux is still a community project, it became an emblem of collaboration online, an icon of production in a networked environment strongly associated with the ideals of free speech, non-proprietary creation and online freedoms of communication.

The *WELL* and *Usenet* were early forms of online communication which fostered a different understanding of connecting through news to other individuals. The development of a software like Linux became an example of how new means of communication created new kinds of products, products which were themselves products of interactions between members of a community. The software served as an example of what James Surowiecki has termed the "wisdom of crowds," a new form of collaboration enabled by networked contributions to a common project. "Linux is owned by no one," Surowiecki writes, because many millions have had a part in its creation (2005: 72). By spreading the actual workload onto many contributors, the cost of developing the software was reduced. In her study on how network architectures enable technological innovation, Barbara von Schewick finds that "the most important applications in the history of the Internet have been developed by users," from the scientific users of the early ARPANET to the developers of the open-source Apache

317. For a practice-based approach to the development of the Internet and the Linux software community see also *Networks of Innovation* (Tuomi, 2002).

Web Server, which is still the most widely used software on network hosts (Schewick, 2010: 336f.) The spirit of collaboration in the interest of the free dissemination of information still drives activities of groups as diverse as the W3C Consortium and Wikileaks, the Chaos Computer Congress (and its national sections) and the Wikipedia developer community.

In light of the new conditions of production in network communication, especially in the Linux software community, Yochai Benkler developed the model of "commons-based peer production" (CBPP). As he affirms later, the development of free software was a "quintessential instance" of commons-based peer production (Benkler, 2006: 63). In his early article "Coase's Penguin, Or, Linux and 'the Nature of the Firm'" (2002), Benkler argued that the benefit of peer production could have real economic effects, especially when transaction costs were low and production processes could be broken down into small units. This was especially true for software production, where small parts of code could be written by individuals and could be debugged by a large crowd of users. Benkler wrote:

> I generalize from the phenomenon of free software to suggest characteristics that make large-scale collaborations in many information production fields sustainable and productive in the digitally networked environment without reliance either on markets or managerial hierarchy (Benkler, 2002: 374).

Compared to managerial hierarchies, peer-production was especially suited for professions, which substantially relied on information as a resource for their daily work. With the emergence of the Web transaction costs (i.e. communication costs) have declined and information has became a ubiquitous resource. As Benkler notes, peer-production becomes a possible alternative of organizing common activities when "the cost of organizing an activity on a peered basis is lower than the cost of using the market or hierarchical organization" (403). As a different model of organizing economic activity, peer production relies on declining costs of information retrieval and creation and thus lends itself to those industries, which deal with information as a product and input to their operations.

> Where the physical capital costs of information production are low and where existing information resources are freely or cheaply available, the low cost of communication among very large sets of agents allows agents to collect information through extensive communication and feedback instead of using

information-compression mechanisms like prices or managerial instructions (413).

A further argument for peer instead of hierarchical production was that it could serve "non-monetary motivations and gains" of individuals (ibid., 426f.). Peer production does not replace full-time employment for most contributors but relies on contributions made by individuals to different degrees for non-economic reasons. A condition for such a work process to function is that tasks have a high level of "modularity" and "granularity," Benkler argues. Modularity means that a product development process can be broken down into small and distinct modules or tasks, which can be further split up into individual jobs. For Benkler, this explains why even peer production retains an ingrained hierarchy of contributions: "Heterogeneous granularity will allow people with different levels of motivation to collaborate by making smaller- or larger-grained contributions, consistent with their levels of motivation" (379). A developer writing basic code for the kernel or core of an operating system can make a different contribution to a development of software than someone who points out errors in the user interface, qualifying only through her or his experience as a user for the job. At different phases, users with varying motivations can contribute on many levels, the eventual product being more than any one could have created individually. This concession to social hierarchy is quite different from Axel Bruns' "produsage" theory which postulates "equality" between members of a "neutral network" (2008: 14). Benkler's invocation of "non-monetary motivations and gains" points out that peer-production can accommodate *differing degrees of involvement and investment of time and resources*.

One example of peer-production cited by Benkler, Bruns and many others is the collaborative online encyclopedia *Wikipedia*, which relies on the wiki as form of website, which documents the history of its own making. *Wikipedia*, better: the users that created it, defines a "wiki" as

> a website whose users can add, modify, or delete its content via a web browser using a simplified markup language or a rich-text editor. Wikis are typically powered by wiki software and are often created collaboratively, by multiple users ("Wiki", 2012).

In *Wikipedia*, individual articles are accompanied by a documentation of the discussion

that has created the article as a collaborative online document. References are placed in the article to *Wikipedia*'s own entries and to material found on external websites or even outside the Web. Aaron Barlow draws an analogy of blogs to wikis by pointing out that in both forms "the conceptual barriers between *creator, text,* and *audience* are breaking down." As a new form of collaborative knowledge production, blogs and wikis are similar in that they do not easily fit into the author and work-centric paradigm of print culture or the industrial production paradigm of mass culture (Barlow, 2008: 79, original emphases).

Larry Sanger, co-founder of *Wikipedia*, has argued that the collaborative encyclopedia does not abolish expertise but rather assembles what is already known among its contributors and what can be obtained freely on the Web. Sanger cautions that "the content of Wikipedia rel[ies] crucially on published - and largely expert-vetted - sources." By asking for sources of individual pieces of information and marking articles as "stubs" if they fail to mete this demand, "Wikipedia's own policies actually reinforce the epistemic prerogatives of experts" (Sanger, 2009: 62). However, since contributions can be edited by any registered user, "articles tend to do a random walk around the highest level of quality," as Sanger writes (66). Former *Encyclopedia Britannica* editor-in-chief Robert McHenry has criticized that the collaborative form of writing and editing articles only reflects what the majority of contributors can accept as a true statement. Henry admits that "the [collaborative] process allows Wikipedia to approach the truth asymptotically" but in the end, articles remain infused with ambiguity and doubt, often resolving to ambiguous phrases which cover up definite assertions of facts (McHenry, 2004).

This debate about the truth claims of *Wikipedia* versus encyclopedias resembles the debate about truth claims of collaborative blog news networks and organized journalism. Sanger admits that articles on *Wikipedia* have a "persistent mediocrity" (65). But again, the discussion about quality juxtaposes two very different structures of production - a commercial publishing house and a distributed lose network of

individuals who are involved for "non-monetary motivations" at differing levels.[318] *Wikipedia* allows each user to become a contributor, similar to someone starting a blog. The creation of articles is itself made visible through the history of previous discussions of contributors. On the front page *Wikipedia* is a free, commons-based resource of knowledge, but inside *Wikipedia* is a platform where users can interact on the basis of common interests or knowledge. The encyclopedia makes visible how knowledge is produced in social interaction *around particular objects*. The editing histories of articles serve as documentation of the entire process. In distinction from published articles in encyclopedias, *Wikipedia* offers the making of the product as part of its product, and thus exhibits the dynamic of commons-based peer production, where the object is publicly and transparently created out of a temporal sequence of interactions among a rather small number of people.

One commentator has thus described the success of *Wikipedia* not just as an encyclopedia but as "a forum of interaction" because it allows quick participation and records previous discussions as part of the article wiki. However, the downside of the granularity of Wikipedia's editing process is that

> Wikipedians who persist the longest in retarded edit wars will win, regardless of how well-written or well-cited their opponent's contributions are. Persistence, not quality, earns them community recognition, and eventually a spot among the administrators and the IRC clique (anaesthetica, 2009).

Because *Wikipedia* imposes only limited regulation on the articles themselves, its system of editors serves as a control against destructive or dogmatic behavior. But the struggle over whose views get reflected in articles shows how different motivations and degrees of involvement regulate peer production from within. In his study of the London bombings in 2005 and responses to the event on *Wikinews*, a sister site of Wikipedia, Li found that the majority of sources cited were major commercial or public news outlets like CNN, Reuters or the BBC. The editorial process of *Wikinews* articles was starkly segregated by "expert" editors and a large number of occasional commentators and contributors (Li, 2008). In those cases were information is still scarce, as with developing events or unforeseen catastrophes, the reliance on first-hand

318. Sunstein gives the number that "over half of the edits are done by 0.7 percent of all users" in the English edition of *Wikipedia* (2006: 152).

observers and privileged sources goes against the principle of modularity. When news is still in the making, the potential to contribute is rather limited to those close to an event. During the London bombings in the subway system, amateur video recordings on mobile phones from trapped passengers remained for a long time the only available footage of the event broadcast and narrowcast on prime-time media and many individual websites. Einar Thorsen argues that *Wikinews* challenges not only objectivity but a neutral point of view or perspective due to its collaborative creation (Thorsen, 2008). *Wikinews* and *Wikipedia* are built from granular contributions, which are discussed and altered by users. Both platforms show how peer-production values differing levels of involvement (often as a form of 'persistence') and how discussions are triggered by individual news or encyclopedia articles. By placing interaction and information on an equal footing, *Wikinews* and *Wikipedia* can count as examples of how media representations structure interactions in digital and networked contexts.

With respect to journalism, Benkler has outlined how peer production is applicable as a model for the production of information products like news, commentary and fact checking. Because peer production places a premium on granularity with respect to the gathering and evaluation of information, Benkler sees a potential of peer production in journalism because a "watchdog function can be performed by many more people with more diverse interests and opportunities for observation." This possibility to observe individually and communicate interactively is made possible through a personal media system. Through "their own systems for collecting and disseminating their insights and views" many users can contribute to collective journalism on a peered basis (Benkler, 2011a: 723). This journalistic application of peer production was with the social web from the start since 2002, when "blogging became a mainstream activity" (Lasica, 2009: 16). This period marked a point where blogging moved from an experimental stage to a more civically engaged form of online journalism: "Authenticity and transparency - not imagination and anonymity - became the cardinal rules of the blogosphere," Lasica states (ibid.).

The emergence of news networks like *Slashdot* and *Kuro5hin*, which had started

as individual blogs and rose to prominence in the early 2000s, marked the application of the model of peer-production to the production of news. These networks focused on news about technology, culture and society, and represented an "interest-based news community" (Uricchio, 2006: 79). Similar to knowledge generated in discussions on *Wikipedia*, the online news networks presented news as "fundamentally social in construction" (ibid., 80). By making competing views on a given issue available through links, "collaborative news networks by their very nature treat news as a complex process of competing views, data, and evaluative frameworks" (ibid.). *Slashdot* is a collaborative news site and a news aggregator. It filters news by a system of "karma points" that are assigned to users' posts and comments. By this rating mechanism of users, contributions are categorized and valued in their quality. *Slashdot* thus serves as a filter for news based on what a majority sees as a good article and what comments the majority finds helpful (Rettberg, 2008: 104f.).[319] Exchanges over news, either by blogging or by commenting, center around objects which become relevant in interactions among users either because of common interests or by temporal coincidence. Such objects may become interesting when interactions in different networks overlap at a certain point or are established by individual users. Both the publishing, rating and categorizing of entries, as much as the interactions of users around articles place news in a central position of establishing interactions. Because collaborative news sites arranged news by individuals next to news by mainstream media outlets, blogging on *Slashdot* was at the same time a *'media-oriented practice'* (Couldry, 2004) of audiences and a *journalistic practice.* The media-oriented practice and media practices were taking place within the same network, gradually breaking down the differences between producers and consumers, audiences, texts and interactions.

The blogosphere as an organized form of alternative news media emerged from a general disappointment about the "failure" (Bennett et al., 2007) and enduring

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319. A similar mechanism of ranking news articles by user votes is used on reddit.com, which calls itself the "front page of the Internet" (cf. www.reddit.com).

“complacency” of the mainstream media after the attacks of 9/11 (Barlow, 2007: xxi).[320] Although several news media like the *New York Times* served the city community immediately after the attacks as a news medium by presenting private messages, alongside reprinted blog entries, original street reporting and agency news, the debate after the attacks quickly became framed in the “war on terror” rhetoric (Carey, 2002). Instead of following this rhetoric, many alternative news media stressed their liberal point of view and provided a forum for views underrepresented by mainstream media. Clark and van Slyke attribute the rise of “progressive” network media to the resurgence of nationalist rhetoric after 9/11 and its uncritical reflection in national broadcast media. Using networked media from blogs to social networking sites, mainly liberal news outlets began voicing dissident opinions and expressing distrust of the mainstream press to function as a ‘Fourth Estate’.[321] These news outlets succeeded to assemble “networked users” into “self-organized networks” and eventually built “networks of institutions” which could turn individual criticism into a political force (Clark and van Slyke, 2010: 9-33).

What distinguished these media outlets from the mainstream press was that they included contributions from users on a wide scale, marking the success of peer-production in public discourse. They applied peer production to journalism, turning individual practices of news interactions into practices of alternative media production. Among the four kinds that Lasica distinguishes as participatory journalism, collaborative news media like *Slashdot, Kuro5hin* or *Metafilter* gained the most attention around 2001 (Lasica, 2003).[322] Participatory journalism sprang up as a form of peer production where “readers, writers, and editors participate jointly in the ongoing process of news production and circulation via online and social media” (Lievrouw,

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320. James L. Baughman also regards the growing triviality of television impact on more respectable news media, exemplified by the reporting of the Lewinsky scandal in 1998, which marked the “one of the darkest moments in American journalism history” (2006: 229). It was an alternative media outlet, the *Drudge Report*, which was the first to break the Lewinsky story, acting as a new agenda setter apart from the established media houses.

321. On blogging as an explicit reaction against mainstream media failing as critical interlocutors during the Bush administration see (Conroy and Hanson, 2008; Ladd, 2012).

322. Lasica mentions three other forms: (1) reader contributions published in mainstream media like articles, photos or video, (2) independent news outlets like niche and local news media, and (3) participatory news sites like *indymedia* or the South Korean network *Ohmynews* (ibid.).

2011: 127). It is a form of journalism that "should foster interaction and the participation of readers, reporters, editors, and indeed the whole community" (ibid., 128). Instead of packaging news in a new format, participatory journalism opened the possibility to include and reflect many more viewpoints which were brought up in the community. As a journalistic "genre" this mode of production competed with mainstream media's function to provide national news to a national audience. As Lievrouw stresses, "participatory journalism thus adopts the *form* of professional journalistic practices and values, but with the *purpose* of challenging and transforming the press as an institution" (144, original emphasis). Some of the most common activities in participatory journalism include fact checking (and correcting) of mainstream reporting, giving a podium to alternative voices typically excluded from mainstream journalism, organizing rallies for political candidates and issues, or offering an entire alternative media platform for special events like protests against the G8 summits, or around the Occupy Wall Street protests in late 2011. Activities like fact-checking, rallying and linking exhibit the same granular qualities like collaboration on software development or *Wikipedia* articles.

Within the blogosphere, the role of so-called A-list bloggers has been hotly debated. Although many participatory media outlets started as individual blogs, a couple of these platforms gained prominence through their exposure in the mainstream media. In the presidential race of Barack Obama, many liberal blogs also served as platform to mobilize passive voters (Elter, 2010; Einspänner, 2011). Although liberal blogs like *DailyKos* had garnered followers over the years, it was the presidential campaigns of 2004 and 2008 that made bloggers part of the official press (Boehlert, 2009). Their political impact began to become clear when they aligned their public criticism with the Democratic Party in their efforts to win the presidential race for Obama in 2008 (Barlow, 2008: 67). The political A-list blogs created attention for a new publishing form that involved many more contributions by political activists and citizens. These blogs thus competed with journalists in a different medium but on the same turf of influencing public debate, also because "A-list bloggers employ[ed] traditional

impression management strategies providing insight into how the self is presented in blogs" (Trammell and Kashelashvili, 2005: 978). A-List bloggers catered to the mainstream media's demand for personalizing issues, serving as the most visible and nationally most influential representatives of a broad popular practice and political movement. Using the infrastructure of blogs, aggregators and freely available research tools, the political 'blogosphere' made a contribution to public debate by exposing its process of production. Especially the inclusion of links to original source material or the continued criticism of mainstream media propagated a different model of journalism. Barlow argues that in network news media "the *process* of journalism can become much more open to the reader," which "removes the barrier between professional and consumer" (Barlow, 2008: 93).

But there is doubt that blogs as a new cultural practice actually removed such a barrier between professionals and consumers. Recalling Benkler's definition of a user as a both producer *and* consumer, Clay Shirky stresses that amateur production "means that the category of 'consumer" is now a temporary behavior rather than a permanent identity" (Shirky, 2008: 108). This resonates well with Dan Gillmor's concession that "citizen journalism" as a form of peer-production has had its limits. Against the enthusiasm of his classic grassroots journalism study *We, The Media* (2004), Gillmor admits that contributors of articles to collaborative news platforms want to retain a moral right in their creations and want to see this right defended by common standards. Gillmor concedes that "limiting participation is not necessarily a bad idea" (qtd. in Barlow, 2008: 105). Although participatory media like the political blogs changed the public debate, the greatest asset of a collaborative environment was also its greatest foe. Irregular and granular contributions were weak to replace the continuous, daily production of news as a commodity by mainstream media. As Barlow points out, new media outlets and mainstream journalism rather "coexist peacefully" (91), where blogs have become an inexhaustible source of news yet national news media create attention

for particular issues beyond the blogosphere.[323]

Cornfield et al. found that the bloggers' contribution to exposing the "Rathergate" scandal in 2004, an example of investigative and collaborative journalism, was rather "circumstantial" (Cornfield et al., 2005: 2).[324] The story had already a potential to attract the attention of traditional journalists. The bloggers tipped over a lingering suspicion when they started engaging in a form of "distributed detective work" (28), investigating and linking material that was publicly available online. Cornfield et al. stress that the blogosphere can serve as an orientation for what news is becoming important, for audiences and journalists alike. But reach and the ability to "create buzz" (i.e. create attention on a national scale among many news outlets) are crucially determined by other actors in the public arena. The researchers argue that a blogger

> can spark conversation with choice comments on documents drawn from the internet ... but for a conversation to acquire the intense simultaneity of buzz, and for buzz to register with force in public affairs, requires a number of other factors to be present, few of which are likely to be at the disposal of a single blogger, or even a blogging collective, ready to activate at will (30f.).

Because peer-production relies on the sustained support of users making contributions, news outlets founded on such conditions do not compete with mainstream journalism, even more so because they rely on material that is already available online. In *The Myth of Digital Democracy*, Matthew Hindman has furthermore criticized that the often invoked equality of the Internet has its limits in the very network architecture that supports interactions online. Offering a statistical analysis of the influence of political bloggers during the presidential elections of 2004 and 2008, Hindman cautions that there is a "difference between speaking and being heard." In the ubiquity of voices publishing commentary and news online "the bar of exclusivity [has shifted] from the *production* to the *filtering* of political information," which remains a key function of

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323. The Tea Party Movement is a good example of an anti-establishment political movement that emulates the same collaborative practices to become an institutional political actor and use the mainstream media as part of their campaigning. As Harris and VanDeHei argue "the anti-institutional forces that coalesced in recent years now look like an institutional force of their own (Harris and VandeHei, 2010).

324. "Rathergate" counts as one of the principal successes of the blogosphere against mainstream media. In his CBS show *60 Minutes II*, Dan Rather had cited documents which proved the National Guard service of then-President George W. Bush. The documents were later exposed as forgeries, Dan Rather was retired as CBS News Anchor and the broadcaster apologized to the public.

online news channels like the liberal *Daily Kos* or the Republican blog *instapundit* (2009: 13). Hindman follows the argument that search engines are biased toward those sites, which are linked the most. Through Google's Page Rank algorithm very successful sites are attracting incrementally more readers, which in turn makes them more popular. This dynamic of a few hubs being connected by many links was described by Hungarian physics scholar Albert-László Barabási as one ramification of a "power-law" distribution in scale-free networks (Barabási, 2003: 66-72) and has since become a general model to explain hierarchy in the allegedly "flat" Internet. Instead of enhanced equality between sites, "winners-take-all patterns are repeated *on every level* of the Web," as Hindman points out (original emphasis).[325] This applies as well to the political blogs which "almost immediately replicated the winners-take-all distribution of links and traffic that we see on the Web as a whole" (57).

Looking at the biographies of the eighty-seven most successful political bloggers, Hindman finds that compared to the general population, the so-called A-list bloggers had more advanced university degrees and had either worked in journalism before or had entertained close connections to journalism through their jobs at corporate enterprises and law firms. Judged from their educational and professional backgrounds "almost all the bloggers in the sample are elites of one sort or another." The bloggers in the sample debunked the myth of the "ordinary citizen" making it on prime time television as a political commentator because their success relied on resources they had acquired outside of the blogosphere.[326]

> Running a successful political blog requires strong analytic training, an encyclopedic knowledge of politics, the technical skill necessary to set up and maintain a blog, and writing ability *equal to that of a journalist* (Hindman: 123, emphasis added).

As Hindman concludes, "the very success of the most popular bloggers undercuts

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325. Halavais also cautions that "search inequality" is a serious counterargument against the non-hierarchical Web: "While the internet provides a platform for self-expression, that expression is constrained by the values of the network" (Halavais, 2009: 87). See also Baker's evaluation that networked communication "tends to concentrate audiences" (Baker, 2007: 109).

326. Luke Tredinnick has warned that the "ability to participate in digital culture on something like an equal footing is dependent on not only access to digital technologies but also on an understanding of the rules and conventions of participation" which are equally applicable in offline contexts or in the production and valuation of content in other media (2008: 129).

blogging's central mythology" (128) of a collaborative form of peer production.[327] While the best-exposed liberal blogs created wider attention for the format as an alternative form of journalism, they equally focussed attention on a few commentators. The blogging phenomenon became equated with Markos Moulitsas of *DailyKos*, Arianna Huffington of *Huffington Pos*t and few others. These blogs underline Lievrouw's central claim that participatory journalism seeks to 'challenge and transform the press as an institution' by emulating practices of mainstream journalism. In 2013, such alternative news sites like *The Drudge Report, Daily Kos* or *instapundit* are no longer considered alternative but have become part of an enlarged national media sphere directing public debate. Especially the blog aggregator *Huffington Post* is becoming a transnational media outlet that is co-operating with local partners to introduce its model of free user content and paid advertising in journalism.[328]

But does this mean that blogging "is dying as a practice" as Jodi Dean argued (2010: 33)? If the crisis of journalism, which introduced this chapter, was only about a few alternative news media striving for national influence, commercial mainstream journalism would have certainly accommodated additional competitors.[329] Because the blogosphere became identified with a particular political climate in the early 2000s, the term should be limited to describe this historical phenomenon, when a few liberal media outlets created a new form of public that wanted to be represented in national debates. The historical circumstances of the "rise of the blogosphere," indicate why the practice of blogging was primarily associated with a new kind of journalism. However, as a social practice blogging is not limited to journalism proper.

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327. Another study of political bloggers similarly concludes, "the average blogger is not an average citizen" but mostly "white, well-educated. and male" (McKenna and Pole, 2007: 101) although other studies have found that blogging as a general practice is taken up by both genders to the same degree (Lenhart and Fox, 2006).

328. The *Huffington Post* as a blog aggregator and news enterprise has started joint news web sites with French *Le Monde* newspaper in January 2012 (Huffington, 2012), a Japanese site together with *Asahi Shinbun,* and several outlets in Canada, Spain and the UK.

329. New journalistic ventures like Politico are already attempting to offer journalism for the network age where communication processes rather than stories stand in the focus of reporting (www.politico.com).

Blogging as a Practice of Self-Communication

The discussions about the blogosphere have contributed to seeing blogs only in political terms as an alternative journalistic outlet. A lot of the 'buzz' created around blogs seems also to go back to the mainstream media's own attention to the phenomenon. But despite a few well connected blogs and media outlets who actually competed with journalists for the same national audiences, the majority of blogs does not serve a general public in the way a newspaper, a television channel or the *Huffington Post* does. Most amateur or hobbyist blogs draw only a few page views per month and their circulation is rather limited.[330] Blogs address readers individually and do not generally seek forms of collective address to attract and sustain readership: "blogs don't unite bloggers and readers. They remain specific in their multiplicity" (Dean, 2010: 73). If collectives emerge from blogs, these collectives are rather communities of temporary attachment to specific interest, interests which are represented by individuals on their personal blogs. In such a context, the blogging as a practice transposes an entire structure of public communication to the domain of private or professional interaction. The blog is valued as a technology because it brings together a medium of publication, a public website and connects to a network of distribution and interaction.

A study on bloggers by the Pew Internet & American Life Project in 2006 found that only a third of bloggers interviewed in the survey would describe their publishing as a "form of journalism," which included checking facts or linking to original source material. More than half of them saw blogging as a way to find a creative way of expression and of sharing "personal experiences" with others (Lenhart and Fox, 2006: 10f., 8). This importance of the blog as a platform for sharing experiences is sustained by findings that blog authors are increasingly using other social networks like Facebook.com, Twitter.com, or Google+ to create attention for new blog entries in their private networks and embed their postings in a constant interaction with others ("State

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330. The *State of the Blogosphere Report 2010*, compiled by the blog aggregator Technorati.com, finds that almost 70 per cent of all English-language blogs are run by "Hobbyists" and have less than 5,000 page views per month ("State of the Blogosphere" 2010). The disparity to corporate media outlets becomes apparent when compared to, e.g. CNN.com with 32 *million* page views per month in 2012 ("CNN" 2013) or the video portal Youtube with 100 *billion* page views per month in 2011 ("Most-Visited Sites" 2011).

of the Blogosphere" 2011). Although the blog is thus public, its link circulates only within fairly limited personal networks, which are all sustained by the same Internet and Web protocols and infrastructure.

In *Cognitive Surplus*, Clay Shirky explains his unease with regarding the value of creative production only through the lens of its wider public impact. The dominance of the power-law as a measure of attention, traffic and in some cases revenue, obscures the fact that many networks exist on a much smaller scale and are deliberately kept from public view. In these networks of blogs "readers and writers can all pay similar amounts of attention to one another, forming relatively tight conversational clusters." This does not mean that such tight clusters are not open to contributions from outsiders but rather that the focus of a conversation is set by a common theme (subject) or by the personal relations of an individual. Shirky argues that "once writers start getting more attention than they can return, they are forced into a width-versus-depth tradeoff" (2010: 129). The less the routines and relations in such a 'tight cluster' are immediately understandable to outsiders, the better the cluster preserves its exclusiveness. Moreover, closing networks against the onslaught of information and using them as a filter, partially ensures the rarity of information exchanged and discussed. The network maintains its exclusivity by *not* catering to audiences but by valuing its audience as a potential contributor.

In his study of blogging practices Jan Schmidt argues that in each use of a blog the three structural dimensions of rules, relations, and code are constantly (re)produced as part of social action (Schmidt, 2007). The blog involves assumptions about what counts as appropriate content, its potential relevance to others and the technical conditions that enable users to publish. In the practice of blogging, these assumptions are given social significance, are re-evaluated and eventually come to structure interaction through further blog entries. A textual focus can only analyze what content is presented on blogs, but a practice approach can foreground how a blogger is always also a reader (of other blogs or news media), an author and a networker (ibid., 1412f.). Blog entries then become meaningful at the intersection of *all of these* roles and identities.

Just as the uses of social media differ, so do the forms and content of blogs. J.D. Lasica states that "some people want productivity; others want fun. Some want recognition; others want privacy" (2009: 28). As a public medium, the blog can be a billboard of the self, as much as it is a diary, a notepad or a news channel. This multiplicity allows even for niche blogs to play vital roles in their respective communities. Hindman had argued that networks replicate power-law distributions "on every level". In a more positive reading of this diagnosis, this means that even niche media or individual blogs can become leaders in very special interests of their communities. Self-communication entails that a niche may be as small as one single individual embedded in a network of like-minded others.

dana boyd and Nicole Ellison have stressed that online social networks serve as an interactive tool to keep contacts active when opportunities for face-to-face interactions are rare: "What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks" (2007: 211). It is crucial to underline the difference between a *social networking site*, like LinkedIn or Facebook, and social *networks* in general. Social networking sites offer pre-programmed routines for interaction among its members, but social networks in general go far beyond such routines. A medium like a blog or a Facebook account becomes embedded in wider social practices, as one of many ways of interaction. Barlow admits that "most Web communities do not spring from the Web, but from affinities existing in individuals beyond the Web" (Barlow, 2008: 9). The irregular publishing of a blog entry instantiates and activates the community and offers chances to expand its scope.

This perpetual activation of contact is at the same time interactive and detached because postings may not be read instantly or comments might come much later. In his book *The Second Media Age*, Mark Poster has posited that "subject constitution in the second media age occurs through the mechanism of interactivity" (Poster, 1995: 33) which was absent from the first, mass media age. Through blogs, chat and online social networks, interactivity has now become embedded in real-life practices and thus places

greater emphasis on reflexivity in mediated communications. The practice of blogging as one form of interaction is embedded in other communication practices. Electronic media in everyday usage create what Manuel Castells called "real virtuality" - a new cultural condition which no longer distinguishes between digital/online and analog/offline modes of communication. The "culture of real virtuality," for Castells, marks the point when "digitized networks of multimodal communication have become so inclusive of all cultural expressions and personal experiences that they have made virtuality a fundamental dimension of our reality" (2010: xxxi). When the borders between virtual media and actual presence have been blurred, real virtuality simply assumes that interaction through digital media is no longer *qualitatively* different from other forms of interaction. Embedding digital media in communicative practices places interactivity at the center of the constitution of subjects through communication.

In her book *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, Nancy Baym argues that the "myth of cyberspace" was its detachment from normal life, whereas recent developments show how online media are gradually becoming embedded in other practices of interaction.

> Taken as a whole, mediated communication is not a space, it is an additional tool people use to connect, one which can only be understood as deeply embedded in and influenced by the daily realities of embodied life (Baym, 2010: 152).

This contemporary development stands in contrast to earlier reflections on the presentation of the self in online contexts, which stressed the potentials of creating alternative or 'multiple selves'. In her study of identity formation and multi-user domains from the early days of the Internet, Sherry Turkle argued that the multiplicity of communications in the online environment provided a way for individuals to "express multiple and often unexplored aspects of the self." Turkle likened her notion of a "decentered self" to several active windows on a computer screen, running different programs simultaneously (i.e. multitasking). In the continuous communication with others, members of multi-user domains were "becom[ing] authors not only of text but of themselves, constructing new selves through social interaction" (Turkle, 1997: 11-16). But, as Turkle notes later, this new hybrid form of disembodied interaction through

computers and a network "offers the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship" (30); the responsiveness of the computer itself becomes an analogy of responsiveness of other users in mediated communications.[331]

In her study on practices of self-communication on personal websites from 2004, Sabina Misoch tries to overcome Turkle's utopianism by drawing a quite different picture.[332] Misoch argues that the successful presentation of the self on websites relies on the correlation of constancy and change, the necessity to be identical (with oneself), i.e.. to be recognizable as one and the same person, yet to renew this claim to identity and individuality through the repeated change of oneself into someone else. While identity is the basis of reliable and stable social ties, the presentation of personal development (change) is necessary for claims to individuality (2004: 19). Against such popular, postmodern notions of "multiple selves" created in online game environments or virtual reality platforms like *Second Life*, Misoch finds that private home pages were primarily used to find a way of "authentic presentation" of *one* self in all its multiplicity.[333] A website served the purpose to unite in a common format reactions to "postmodern processes of transformation" which include social and local disembedding, conflicting truth claims of different authorities, and the multiplicity of social relations experienced by mobile and precarious subjects. For Misoch, the central function of a website was to "relocate" identity within a virtual "frame" which allowed for a higher degree of "constancy, controllability and stability" (Misoch, 2004: 205f.).

Misoch's findings are particularly interesting for an evaluation of the blog as a publishing frame that can unite different forms of news - from novelties to commentary, from a record of media experiences to community-oriented discussion. This multiplicity of the form lends itself to an effort at controlling interactions through the functions of

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331. "Virtual Reality" is envisioned by Turkle and Howard Rheingold (1991) as an optically malleable and unrestrained space of self-creation - detached from real life. Castell's notion 'real virtuality', by contrast, states that this 'space' is part of real life. Not as an optical simulation but as an information-enriched setting, used by networked individuals for interaction.

332. See also (Döring, 2002) for an extensive overview of research on personal websites from the early days of the Internet.

333. For a discussion of the idea of multiple selves in cultural studies (and its implicit focus on a center of identity), see also (Fluck, 2011).

publication. In *Identity and Control*, Harrison White argued that stories can be thought of as ties within and between networks (1992: 66). Stories as social ties represent efforts to control contingency in social behavior by attaching actors selectively to different networks: “Stories are generated by control efforts which act as constraints upon identities,” White argued (ibid., 13). Through its publication a blog entry limits the endless possibilities of choice that characterize the Web and preferentially attaches itself to particular networks. The story itself then serves as a selective tie to a network of individuals by evoking a particular set of ‘rules and expectations’ (Schmidt) as to how its content serves a community of individuals to actualize their ties.

This multiplicity of the blog is captured in a chart which presents different types of blogs according to their orientation towards topicality and community.

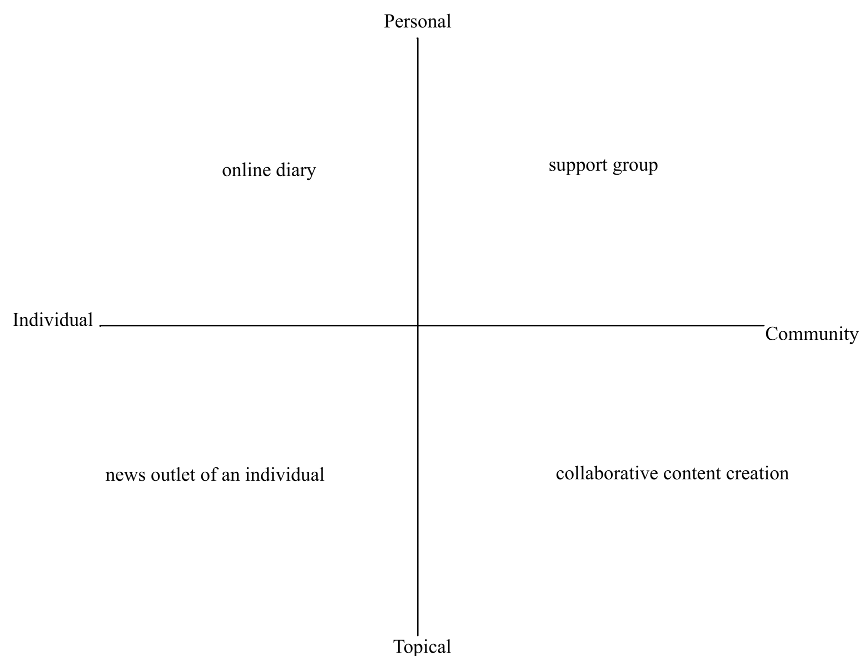

Figure 13. Types of blogs and their orientation toward content and audience. Adapted from (Herring et al., 2005: 146).

In their study of blogs, Susan Herring et al. found that blogs are a “hybrid genre that draws from multiple sources, including other Internet genres” (Herring et al., 2005:

144). As a successor to rather static personal home pages of the early Web, blogs center around the interests and views expressed by individuals; 70% of the blogs in their study where online diaries. Building on a typology by Sandeep Krishnamurthy, Herring et al. suggest that blogs are open to serve many different functions - from private keeping of diaries to filtering online content for others. They thus serve similar functions for individuals on the level of their private networks, to what national media outlets offer for larger audiences. Herring et al. divide their overview by types of content from topical to personal, and by the contents' relation to an audience or a collective of producers. Whether a blog is centered around topical interests but remains largely isolated or whether such a blog is centered around private interests and connects widely to other bloggers is not determined by the blog itself but remains within the control of an author and his or her intentions.

The researchers found that in their sample, linking to other blogs occurred less frequently, "fewer than one-third of blog entries (31.8 percent) contain[ed] any links at all and that the central tendency [was] for an entry to have none" (156). This disparity between highly networked and less-connected blogs points toward the different cultural valuations of the technology. As a filter blog for news, links are essential to its function.[334] As a diary, by contrast, links are not necessary to attract readers. The link to a blog will only circulate within a very limited circle of acquaintances. Between a highly networked form of collaborative content creation, e.g. *Wikipedia*, and an online diary, interactivity plays a role in different degrees. Herring et al. conclude that blogs are a "bridging genre" between rarely updated personal websites and very interactive, frequently updated Computer-Mediated Communications (CMC) like live chats or newsgroups. The authors conclude that the attractiveness of blogs is that they "allow authors to experience social interaction in ways that are otherwise difficult to achieve through web pages, while giving them ownership of, *and control over,* the

334. According to Mark Tremayne, the function of filter blogs "is to direct readers to other websites or at least to bring information from those sites to readers' attention" (2007: x). This function is comparable to an agenda-setting function that is customarily ascribed to the press.

communication space that is difficult to achieve in CMC" (162, emphasis added).[335] The asynchronicity between a published blog entry and its comments can count as an instance of low interactivity. Although a blog can mirror very interactive discussions between readers and authors, the entire design put control over what is communicated in the hands of an author - both in postings and its comments.

The blog form allows for the *selective* self-communication in particular networks. Because users can manipulate most of the graphic and communicative functions in weblog templates, determine the frequency of their postings, and can moderate comments made to postings, the format remains attractive as an outlet of restricted but public self-communication. The blog is thus different from social networking sites like Facebook, which repeatedly causes outrage among its users when the site is "redefining privacy" in different terms than its users (Fletcher, 2010).

That network media like blogs are used as personalized filters for information is also sustained by studies which find that blog authors and readers tend to follow a rather small segment of publications. Eric Gilbert et al. characterize blogs as "echo chambers". Blog commentators are more likely to write comments on posts when they agree with a particular position.[336] This behavior underlines a monadic tendency in online communication which is associated with specialization and the fragmentation of interests that these media allow (Gilbert et al., 2009). In this increasingly specialized and fragmented form of communication, output of mainstream media continues to play an important role. In a study of German-language messages on twitter.com, Axel Maireder found that more than 70 percent of all tweets linked back to content from classic mass media outlets (newsrooms, editorial content) or to web sites of organizations. Tweets furthermore showed a great level of self-referentiality by equating the content of a tweet with its author (about 30 percent), using twitter.com as a platform for self-promotion and self-communication (Maireder, 2011: 16).

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335. See also Susan C. Herring's article "Computer-Mediated Conversation: Introduction and Overview" (2010).

336. Aaron Barlow sees a similar tendency of preferential attachment as a filtering mechanism:"[I]n a nearly infinite universe, it is easy for one to turn away without regret from any one thing; in an 'on demand' universe, there is little incentive to turn to something one does not already know one will like" (Barlow, 2008: 63).

Blogging in such a context can be seen as a “media-oriented practice” (Couldry, 2004) which uses the same medium like mainstream media outlets but that remains tied to practices of self-communication. As Couldry argues, following the news on many levels and communicating this experience to others “contributes to even more complex practices of narrating one’s life through news or orienting oneself to a public world through news consumption” (Couldry, 2012: 53). In this practice, links to news from elsewhere on the Web serve not only as reference but also as a form of interaction which activates common reference points among small networks. Through links, social tags (metadata) and overlapping search terms, connections can be established to other networks on the basis of publishing. Blogs thus offer a platform for individuals to integrate individual experiences within a network of personal relations and within a network of ongoing discussions in other networks.

John Kelly has pointed out that “online clusters form around issues of shared concern” through practices equally employed among journalists and bloggers like collecting information and discussing its relevance (Kelly, 2008: 37). Kelly succinctly points out that “as blogging and online media genres evolve, blog vs. MSM [mainstream media] becomes purely a cultural, or perhaps commercial, distinction and not one of format” (39). Circulating news in a limited network is not *structurally* different from the same practice employed in mainstream media. Beyond scales of distribution, the difference between both practices is that information is differently activated in interaction. ‘Media-oriented practices’ have become *structurally* equal to referencing content in mainstream media and beyond. They are part of the same ecosystem that is based on the Web as a resource of communication. Although such practices existed before the beginning of the Web they are now represented in similar ways like the representations they reference. Martin Kipp has poignantly summarized this effect of convergence:

> The difference is that now we are all connected – so the amount of crazy stuff that’s going on in the world hasn’t increased; what's increased is *our awareness* of what has been happening the whole time (Kipp, 2012; emphasis added).

The transposition of an entire structure of public communication to private interaction

creates an increased awareness of the multitude of media representations and social contexts that exist simultaneously in a society. Including such references to mediated representations in private interactions serves as a "communicative resource" similar to the references to news or television content used in structuring 'table talk' (Keppler, 1994: 211). Reflecting "mediated knowledge" about films or television stories exemplifies learning processes of publicly displayed modes of behavior (ibid., 212). In such a setting, references to common experiences are used to strengthen ties within a small network.

In their discussion of communities and digital media, Wellman and Haythornthwaite emphasize that online communities are not qualitatively different, closer or more appealing than other communities. The authors point out that individuals are always forced to "maneuver through multiple, specialized partial communities, giving limited commitment to each." What changes with digital network media is that individuals can be members of contradictory or conflicting networks. "Networked individualism as the basis of community" also concedes multiplicity to individuals, the possibility to take up different social roles (Wellman and Haythornthwaite, 2002: 32, 34). Sharing references through blogs as a media-oriented practice expands the possibilities of individuals to form and maintain ties to different communities. Through a publishing medium like blogs, topical representations of personal experiences mark an effort at controlling multiplicity as much as they can be geared to expanding the network.[337] Sharing as a social practice involves the gratuitous and reciprocal exchange (of music, images, information) on an individual level. As a property of network environments sharing instates what Richard Barbrook has called a "high-tech gift economy" (Barbrook, 2005). William Uricchio underlines the importance of exchange for establishing ties, "not because one expects that person [with whom one is exchanging] to reciprocate, but in hopes of reciprocation from some member of the community" (Uricchio, 2006: 83, footnote 10). Information selected and presented

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337. As Sonia Livingstone argues: "It seems that for many, creating and networking online content is becoming an integral means of managing one's identity, lifestyle and social relations" (Livingstone, 2008: 394).

individually in blogs thus allows to activate existing networks while enriching the network as a whole as a place of possible interactions. The blog capitalizes on 'strong ties' for stability and control while opening to 'weak ties' with other networks.

In the network environment, managing temporality becomes crucial to differentiate use patterns of blogs. Because publication and response may not occur in short sequence, the synchronicity of news consumption, which characterized the broadcast model of mass communication, is broken. As interests diversify and fragment, attention to a particular news item can be deferred to the future, since it is retrievable from databases through search. The Pew Internet & American Life Project study on participatory news consumption in 2010 found that news is more and more becoming a "social experience". The increased availability of private and public news channels puts both of these categories of news on one gadget, connected to one network. Since networks and especially mobile technology "ha[ve] turned news gathering and news awareness into an anytime, anywhere affair for a segment of avid news watchers," the diversity of news can only be reflected in different use patterns (Purcell et al., 2010: 2f.).

Manuel Castells has argued that the sequential concept of time that characterized life and work in the industrial age is gradually being replaced by a form of "timeless time" which he defines as "a systemic perturbation in the sequential order of the social practices" in network society. The effect of 'timeless time' can be seen, for example, in the social practice of "multitasking" which is itself a metaphor derived from a computer's ability to execute different routines simultaneously. Castells argues that reaching *timeless time* is becoming a "social practice that aims at negating sequence to install ourselves in perennial simultaneity and simultaneous ubiquity"(Castells, 2010: xli). In a similar way, Mark Poster has argued that "electronic communications systematically remove the fixed points, the grounds, the foundations that were essential to modern theory" (Poster, 1995: 60), including theories of subject constitution. Instead of tying temporality to a daily production cycle, blogs and other social media manage temporality through the structured interaction among individuals. This emphasis on

interaction can explain, why open networks can retain hierarchies among individual members. Tyrone Adams and Stephen Smith point out that "e-tribes" or online communities allow for different levels of involvement by differentiating contributions of individual members through their "frequency of interaction" with other members of the group (Adams and Smith, 2008: viii). Olaniran further elaborates that such groups are formed around "goal accomplishment" (e.g. developing a software, collaborating to attain a task in gaming environments) or a common specialized object of interests, e.g. fan and game cultures like the Japanese otaku culture.[338] The frequency of interactions creates group positions based on knowledgeable contributions to specific subjects. Members of special interest groups are sought "as valuable sources of information and social exchange" (Olaniran, 2008: 45). Olaniran distinguishes the "tourist, mingler, devotee, and insider" (47), which reflects a hierarchy of the group's members. Personalizing information and hence privileging attention to direct communications with other group members is not only a way to build community but also works as a filter against the incessant onslaught of new information.

In conclusion, what makes the blog valuable as a tool of self-communication is a schema that balances networked individualism with asynchronous communication. Its function as a publishing platform also serves as a filter for information for those interacting with blog authors in their wider social network. By its sense of topicality, the blog emulates a journalistic structure of communication, yet ties topicality to interactions among members of the network or an individual's own experiences. It allows different levels of involvement, from serving a passing 'tourist' as a quick reference guide to contributing to an insider discussion. In opposition to the collaborative schema of participatory journalism, blogs emphasize individuals as embedded in social networks, not networks composed of individuals, which replicate power-law distributions of attention. As part of a "gift economy" of attention, the

338. Otaku culture gained some attention in the wake of early online communities in the late 1990s. Based on Japanese fan cultures, which are rigorous in their adoration for and attention to particular pop-idols, manga characters or popular fads, the otaku was heralded somewhat ambivalently as a new monadic social agent, who had achieved near complete knowledge in a specialized field of interest, yet exhibited only very rudimentary social skills beyond his immediate fan culture (Grassmuck, 1999). See Geert Lovink's interview with Toshiya Ueno, who describes otakus as examples of a "digital diaspora" culture (Lovink and Ueno, 2004: 269).

frequency of interactions around particular blogs also allows for different intensities in network relations and different levels of involvement. The blog remains a 'bridging genre' between highly interactive forms of communication and more reflexive forms of publication. As a hybrid news form, blogs mark the convergence of news topicality with networked individualism, which questions the differences between genre categories of professionally and privately circulated news.

Journalistic Practices after Journalism and the Privacy of Publicness

Among the many new types of social media that emerged since the late 1990s, the blog is only one particular form. But due to its topical presentation of a broad category of news, the blog has been identified as a new journalistic medium. Because blogs stress the interconnectedness and interactivity of producing and consuming information they have been regarded as a new medium of public discourse, a medium that is networked and reflexive of social interactions in many more forms than mainstream journalism. Although subjective in their approach to news, blogs were regarded as a new form of journalism, because they invite the collaborative contributions of users. But the blog in most of its uses remains tied to serving individual aims of self communication, as a form of diary or as a publishing medium. Although both schemas of blogging are often juxtaposed as opposed functions - the diary points inwards, journalism points outwards - this chapter has argued that both schemas can serve to value the blog as a medium of interaction.

In the schema of collaborative production (peer-production), blogs and their authors work together to form an alternative journalistic outlet, that competes with mainstream media in the same network. In the schema of blogs as media of self-communication the form lends itself to structure and sustain social networks by tying the topicality of a blog entry to an author's interactions. Both forms continue an emphasis on topicality, but involve audiences to different degrees as co-producers. Blogging may be regarded as a "media-oriented practice" which gets reflected either in the mainstream media themselves or which structures interactions among members of a social network around common published articles and interests. Benkler has argued for a "new networked fourth estate," in which network media outlets and mainstream media cooperate while keeping their institutional structures intact and independent from each other (Benkler, 2011b: 393f.). That such structures are in fact highly compatible is exemplified by the publication of secret documents on tax havens (Offshore Leaks) in 2013 as a coproduction of several national mainstream media and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). A similar cooperation has been

established between *Wikileaks* as a freedom of speech activist group and other international news media. The inclusion of blogs as a more personal form of publication is now a standard on most U.S. American and international news websites. But the proliferation of the form should not be interpreted as a new institution of public communication. In fact, the very readiness to adopt the form in mainstream media signals only its general compatibility with other expert-based forms of publication. Comparing the multitude of blogs only in terms of their reach measures an emerging communicative practice in the same categories that have been established by the very structure of public communication that is now in crisis.

The second schema of blogging as a practice of self presentation points to the cultural dimension of the crisis, where the cultural valuation a new medium has abandoned to value journalism as a structure of public communication. With audiences emulating the same journalistic practices as mainstream media in their limited social networks, the homology between two different structures of public communication no longer distinguishes publication from privacy. The proliferation of journalistic practices in private communication mark the transposition of an entire structure of public communication to the private domain, not just a modification of a professional practice. Journalistic practices after journalism survive on many platforms, thrive in many networks as a practice of self communication. The practice of publishing topical information is no longer tied to an organizational structure; practices of news production and consumption become quotidian activities performed on every single personal media system.

According to Mark Deuze, the ubiquity of communications media creates a situation where media are "everywhere, and therefore nowhere." The ability to participate in various interactions through different channels creates a "personal information space," which admittedly loses the comprehensiveness of a glance through a newspaper, yet offers a chance to engage more actively in ongoing discussions and follow specialized interests on a regular basis. Deuze argues that media and everyday life have become so deeply entangled today that a "life lived *in,* rather than *with,* media"

represents the “ontological benchmark for a 21st-century media studies” (Deuze, 2011: 139, 137).[339] The implication of such a perspective is that the constant involvement in various forms of private, semi-private and public communication demands a more accrued awareness of the what meanings information creates in different social contexts. If information is homologous within the digital code structuring a web page or in a transmission protocol, if it can be accessed by the mere coincidence of a search term, this homology of information is again reconstituted as meaningful in social interaction. The availability of public information, often touted as a value in itself, has little implications for how such information becomes socially relevant and culturally meaningful.

The heterogeneity of blogging as a practice raises the question what it means to publish and in what way it reconfigures notions of privacy, individual and audience. In one perspective, the formerly moot audience is enabled by new technologies to contribute in a much more influential sense to public discourse than the concept of an ‘active audience’ in reader-response theory envisioned. Such an expansion of the potential to contribute on many levels is often portrayed as a form of either emancipation (from elite discourse, hegemonic power, or hierarchical inequality) or as a form of deliberation (designing the *terms* of discourse in distinction from dominant discourses). In another perspective, these new networked media exhibit not a structurally new form of discourse but merely expose a discourse publicly, which hitherto remained confined to private exchanges, letters and conversations. Both of these perspectives have been reflected here as peer production and self-communication, which is an attempt to keep these two perspectives analytically distinct while acknowledging their similarities. Although the distinctions between privacy and publicness are beginning to blur, the different uses of the blog actually affirm the continued significance of both categories in social interaction.

In other words, the first perspective stresses that network media have introduced a genuinely new possibility to become a producer of representations whereas the second

339. See also (Deuze, 2012) for an elaboration of his thesis on *media life*.

perspective accentuates that such active reflection of media content has always been part of audiences' interaction with media. Only now such reflections and interpretations are likewise public *within the same medium*. They are stored in archives and databases, can be retrieved through search engines, links and aggregation services. They offer an incredible and unprecedented resource for researchers in communication, media practices and journalism. Comparable to the social authors of the 19th century that Zboray and Zboray described as publicists for very limited audiences, where the "stigma of print" marked the transition from a private to a public communication, network media like blogs can be read in the same way. The difference, however, is that the form of the medium no longer distinguishes its forms of usage. The technology sustaining an individual blog and a newspaper's website are similar and rely on the same protocols. They both appear on the same screen, within the same browser window, at more or less the same time. Although the application of technology and its level of specialization differs in scale, its social uses are no longer marked by media junctures. The fine line between publishing and being public is redrawn in social networks woven by individuals through mediated interactions. A blog comment or article, a video blog or podcast may be as published as a TV news show or a Hollywood movie, its address structure as URL or link does not differentiate one producer from another. But in this convergent environment, public communication can address very private networks of individuals without exposing them to a wider public.

In light of the described transposition of journalistic practices, Jeff Jarvis' propagation of the "benefit of publicness" is little more than the short-sighted, utopian manifesto of a public intellectual, who reaps the benefits of his own publicness. Jarvis argues for the "the value you get from being public" because publicness allows for more connectivity and more interactions with other individuals. Privacy is antidotal to publicness and remains a vestige of a bourgeois public. Criticizing Habermas' normative concept of a public as a group of equal discussants, Jarvis argues that "the real corruption of the ideal of the public was to throw us all into a single public sphere, a mass - the lumpenpublic." This homogenizing trend of the mass media age ends with

network media, according to Jarvis, where now “the critical public is no longer a one-way entity” but reassembled from the atomized bits of its individual members. Along individualized channels of communication and on the basis of more specialized interests, individual publics “reform into new molecules” (Jarvis, 2010).[340] If blogs as media of self-communication can be regarded as examples of such ‘molecules’, their use in private interactions shows that publicness is not necessarily *opposed to* privacy but that privacy can be upheld by *not making it* to the front page of a search engine.

The power-laws of traffic distribution serve as indicators that attention from wider publics follows “winner-take all” patterns (Hindman). By increasing the reliance on only a few search engines, users of the Internet will find only the most average, the most common topical results through general purpose searches. Ito warns that networked publics are prone to follow only the leads of such search aggregators: “The presence of Google as a new information industry behemoth with unprecedented power is testament to the power of aggregation services at this current moment in network society” (Ito, 2008: 12). Search engines initially served to structure the Web for users, pointing outwards to interesting content. The ability of Google’s algorithm to learn from user behavior and amend search results by majority preferences over the last years has effectively turned a technology of exploration into a technology of confirmation, or a “Googlearchy” (Hindman 57).

It is thus understandable that commentators on the present transformation of the media system write that “new technologies were creating a new informational and culture class system” at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Baughman, 2006: 256). Within that class system, blogs and similar network media contribute to patterns of preferential attachment by joining individuals through already established cultural, political or ideological preferences. On the other hand, blogging as a social practice becomes embedded into an array of communicative relations, in which the exclusivity of exchanges between individuals is preserved despite their public nature. Because blogs tie topicality of entries to a person’s activities and network, they present news

340. Published in book-length as *Private Parts: Public Parts: How Sharing in the Digital Age Improves the Way We Work and Live* (Simon & Schuster, 2011).

filtered through that individual's perspective, which places blogs closer to letters and telephones rather than journalistic products like newspapers. A commentator in the *Economist* wrote that “the value of things is largely determined by their rarity.” When social network sites begin to connect everyone with everyone else, their value to the individual was actually declining.

> The more people tweet, the less attention people will pay to any individual tweet. The more people “friend” even passing acquaintances, the less meaning such connections have. As communication grows ever easier, the important thing is detecting whispers of useful information in a howling hurricane of noise. (...) Everyone will need better filters ... to help them extract meaning from the blizzard of buzz (“Too much Buzz”, 2011).

Blogs differ from online social networks in that they present a personalized publishing platform that focuses on postings, rather than the documentation of each and every interaction with other users. In their similarity to other journalistic forms of communication blogs, emulate news functions of journalism but connect these to the activities of individuals - in offline and online contexts. The form lends itself for communicating publicly while maintaining privacy through the marginal exposure in search engines or dedicated privacy modes. Yet, social hierarchy in network communication remains intact; some blogs and their authors can claim wider audiences than others. Power-laws get reproduced *on every level*, as Hindman stated, which includes attention to highly specialized forms of publication with very limited networks. This dynamic limits the potential of networks per se to have deliberative effects on social hierarchies.

Robert McChesney and John Foster state that a second wave of monopolization begins to exert tighter control over access to online content and the Internet itself. New global players emerge in the realm of search and content distribution (Google), hardware (Apple), long-tail marketing (Amazon, Ebay), and social networking sites (Facebook) which all compete for becoming the exclusive access point to the Web for users. The increasingly important mobile market further locks hardware into rigid proprietary agreements with certain network operators, content providers and software

companies which effectively limits the range of content available on mobile gadgets.[341] McChesney and Foster state that a consolidation has taken place in the realm of network communication:

> Although the right to launch a Web site and speak to the world persists, its real-world significance is diminishing, as the proprietary realms of the wireless Internet render the open Web less relevant. (McChesney and Foster, 2011).

This chapter has tried to analyze the significance of an emerging cultural practice like blogging based on the premise of an accessible and open network like the Internet. But this brief period in the development of Web services may well be coming to a close as transnational media corporations are trying to "remake the Internet before it remakes them" (Lessig, 2004: 9). The power of only a few corporations controlling the availability and access to online content attests to the growing monopolization in that specific industry. As access to information becomes controlled through software designed specifically for certain hardware devices like mobile phones, general purpose computing devices becomes more and more an exception rather than a rule. In this changing environment, net activists reaffirm their demand to keep general purpose computers open to intervention from users, based on transparent rules of code, in which hardware setup and software routines can be manipulated by users. Cory Doctorow summed up this demand for transparency in his 2011 address of the Chaos Computer Congress in Berlin: "Freedom in the future will require us to have the capacity to monitor our devices and set meaningful policy on them, to examine and terminate the processes that run on them."[342]

In a similar vein, Jaron Lanier has warned that social networking sites and similar online environments were pushing in the direction of fostering a form of "digital

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341. The proprietary browser Chrome, developed by Google, overtook first Firefox in 2011 and then the Internet Explorer in 2012 as the most popular browser on desktop computers (See http://gs.statcounter.com/#browser-ww-monthly-200807-201305). Chrome integrates most of Google's network services and thus structures network experience in terms of these services. Building on the original Netscape web browser, Firefox had been developed by a community of users and the Mozilla Foundation into a viable and safer alternative to Microsoft's Internet Explorer, which was a standard browser on every PC running on Windows. For an overview of browsers and their usage shares see the compilation of various data sources on Wikipedia, which all confirm this trend ("Usage Share", 2013).

342. Doctorow, Cory. "The Coming War on General Purpose Computation". Speech delivered at 28C3 Chaos Computer Congress. 28 Dec. 2011. Transcribed by Joshua Wise. https://github.com/jwise/28c3-doctorow/blob/master/transcript.md [Accessed 3 Jan 2012].

maoism"(Lanier, 2006). By promoting the "hive mind" as a form of collective intelligence, social media like *Wikipedia* were ostracizing individual ambition and expertise. As Lanier further argues in *You Are Not A Gadget* (2010), social networks and online communities are also increasingly limiting the ways in which users can relate to each other, by introducing social classification systems which rely on predefined patterns of how identity can be represented. Profiles on social networks like facebook are "organizing people into multiple-choice identities" (Lanier, 2010: 48).

Social networks mark a turn away from search driven navigation, by making the preferences of 'friends' into the dominant method of finding content. Despite the power-laws in network traffic and attention, search nonetheless pointed outward to the web; access-controlled social networks point first inwards to other members who can provide links to outside pages. In this restriction of interactive possibilities, social networks are a new form of "walled gardens" similar to online portal sites of the early Web (Dekker and Wolfersberger, 2009). Users are free to roam predefined patterns of possible interactions. The new "social media" are largely venture capital-driven enterprises, that produce audiences for advertising by analyzing patterns of communication and frequencies of interaction, network dynamics and demographics, consumer preferences and locative data. In this function of producing audiences for advertising, "social media" do not differ from mass media of the industrial age, although their methods of targeting are more advanced.[343] As the web is woven tighter with more and more data, its apparent usefulness contributes to institutionalizing new practices of public communication.

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343. It was probably due to his overtly Marxist framework that the work of the Canadian media scholar Dallas Smythe has not received its due critical attention. See his classic analysis of media providing audiences for advertisers in *Dependency Road* (1982). I thank Dmytri Kleiner for pointing out Smythe and sharing his insightful memories on the transition from the early Internet's communications space to its proprietary new forms in "social network media." See further my article "The Fallacy of Social Media" (Raetzsch, 2011a).

Conclusion

This study was written in a moment of transition, in which the potentials of network communication were still under debate, its social uses still tentative and experimental, and in which the meanings of a new media form were still fluctuating and ambiguous. But this period is coming to an end, as new practices institutionalize new structures of public communication. The cultural crisis of journalism and its most traditional medium, the newspaper, is an exemplary case of a new medium challenging established ways of communication. In the context of this study, the crisis of journalistic practice was regarded as an opportunity to revise the terminology used to describe the institutionalization of journalism. This revision included conceptions of audience and news, production and consumption, of media and media technologies as they have been historically defined in journalism. On the level of practice, cultural innovation appears as an inherent property of social structures adapting to changing environments. The turn to journalistic practices instead of journalism was motivated by the oft-quoted opposition of private blogs as news media of a convergent media environment, and journalistic news media failing in a network environment.

These two media forms were compared to show how both practices sustained structures of public communication. The crisis of journalism thus appeared as a crisis of cultural valuation, in which journalistic practices of professional journalists were no longer sufficiently different enough from general practices now shared among members of ‘former audiences’. While journalism as a structure of public communication was still being enacted by companies, through products and journalists, audiences as a constitutive part of journalism’s social significance were gradually failing to enact the structure in the same way. Cultural valuation emphasized that the meanings of new media were negotiated in social practice, and that neither a text-focussed nor a technology-focused nor an actor-focused approach to media change alone could explain this practice.

On the level of practices, the current crisis also offered a chance to question some

of the established narratives on the institutionalization of modern journalism. Two important periods were presented as transformations of journalistic practice in the past, in which new media were endowed with social meaning in relation to topical daily journalism. The emergence of the penny press in the 1830s represents the beginning of modern American journalism, because it instated the commercial model which is now in crisis. The penny press transposed material practices of printing, cognitive conventions of printed information, and social practices of relating to printed ephemera into a new form of journalism. This journalism was geared toward audiences not previously accustomed to owning a private paper. Newspapers were distributed in ways that disrupted the cultural hierarchies of newsprint, making a newspaper a consumer item rather than an object of prestige. Through the transposition of material, cognitive and social practices, the penny press instated the 'schema of topicality,' in which the newspaper became a time-structuring, daily resource for information that renewed contact to audiences on a daily basis and that created temporary communities from otherwise unrelated individuals. The result of the schema of topicality was that it required an organization for the production of news which in turn could only be sustained through the expansion of circulation. Both in its appeal to an audience and to advertisers, the commercial principle needed to value the newspaper as a privileged medium of public communication.

The second case study on the 'schema of objectivity' further analyzed how the distinction of journalistic practice from other practices of publishing and communication was based on a media change that had occurred around the turn of the century. While photography had existed since the mid-nineteenth century as a practice loosely associated with art and science, the inclusion of photographs in popular print media remained largely dependent on manual or photomechanical practices of reproduction. This chasm, between the objectivity and immediacy of the photographic image and its 'authored artistry' in reproductions required to differentiate illustrative designs from photographs by discursive and narrative framing. With the implementation of the halftone printing method, photographs could be reprinted by the same

photographic process which had created them in the first place. The halftone thus allowed to claim for reproduced photographs the same objectivity like for photographs themselves. It was at that moment that photography became valued as a new medium in journalistic practice, long before the advent of genuine photojournalism. The case study on the photographic legacy of journalistic objectivity explored in depth how the schemas that endowed photographs with 'epistemic virtues' of scientific objectivity, became transposed to legitimize journalistic practice in a time of crisis. The study on illustrated news media, photography and objectivity integrated three different research traditions to offer an interpretation of the currency of the ideal of objectivity around the turn of the century. This perspective highlighted how a media innovation consisted in material, cognitive and social dimensions which together created a schema of objectivity in close analogy to photographic media. The schema then was transposed to legitimize journalistic practice and made the journalist into a 'mere machine to repeat', an unseen automatism that neutrally revealed the world to news readers.

The historical studies of the emergence of the schemas of topicality and objectivity highlighted how new media became valued by journalistic practices, which helped to institutionalize these practices as parts of a structure of public communication. The historical circumstances of the valuation of new media in the past and the cultural schemas they instated help to explain the cultural crisis of journalistic practice in the present. As the schema of topicality is transposed to online communication and the schema of objectivity is exposed as a narrative convention, journalism looses its exclusive and privileged position as a form of public communication. As a serial narration of a person's life text, the blog features topicality in terms of an ongoing interaction with audiences and other producers. Although blogs are identified with a primarily subjective approach to news, the practice nonetheless emulates journalistic practices and transposes a structure of communication to the private domain of interactions. The blog is thus valued as a resource of structuring interactions, and of communicating the self through topical news. A blog entry is likewise public, in that it can be retrieved through the same digital and networked media that allow access to

mainstream journalistic media. But blogging as a practice exemplifies that categories of producer, audience and text have become fluctuating attributions in a network environment. The dedifferentiation of information in digital communication reconstitutes the meaning of media and texts in social interaction. The cultural valuation of a new medium thus underlines how public communication is internally always a process of simultaneous activation of meaning on both sides - audiences and producers of public communication. This early insight by Raymond Williams affirms the historical and contemporary contingency of media practices, with the important difference that such mutual activation is now transparently taking place within the same medium.

In summary, Nick Couldry's argument on "media as practice" (Couldry, 2004) leads to the acknowledgement that the separation of media technologies, the cognitive schemas they provoke and the social structures they enable is no longer tenable. More recently, Couldry has asked: "What if the very idea of 'the media' is imploding, as the interfaces we call 'media' are transformed?" (Couldry, 2012: 22). Media that used to be defined by material boundaries and staked out their exclusivity by technological incompatibilities are now created on a uniform digital standard and delivered through the same networks. This transformation of public communication also foregrounds the role of audiences in constituting the meaning(s) of a medium through its social uses. The emphasis on media as social practice also overturns the centrality of certain media institutions in shaping public discourse, communication and culture. With the dissociation of media technologies from certain social practices, as they are dominantly established in relation to material and local media artifacts, the role of media in relation to other social practices changes as well. As Couldry argues, "media ... anchor other practices through the 'authoritative' representations and enactments of key terms and categories they provide." Media as social practice operate on the "fundamental categorical distinction between what is 'in' the media and what is not 'in' the media" (2004: 122, 128). Instead of regarding the internal structure of media texts as indication of their cultural and social function, the text itself functions as an object of permanent interpretation, transmutation and interaction. Today, what is in the media, i.e.

what is available through digital media in networked environments, structures interaction just like blogging sustains a structure of interaction on the basis of published content. In Bourdieu's conception of the journalistic field, the authorizing function of journalism on other fields was achieved through publication to a general audience. This authorizing function has been transposed to the medium of publication itself. The universal addressability of information in digital networks exemplifies how media representations can "be seen as standing in for, or speaking authoritatively about, the non-media practices they represent" (128).[344] In the end, this affirms the centrality of cultural studies to present the meaningful dimension of social practices as they intersect with media and vice versa, how media are embedded in social practices. The concept of practice as an analytic category of cultural innovation then should be understood as a re-affirmation of the idea of cultural studies - that the elusive dimension of meaning is the result of a permanent negotiation of the value of media, texts and their social relevance.

> [T]he idea of culture ... never represents on any scale (...) a unified and stable set of values, belief systems, practices, material products and whatever else, but always represents a disparate and mutable set of such things that together have no essential or common characteristics until we define them as such, and which are therefore always under constant construction, always lacking complete and final definition and always subject to reinterpretation (Tredinnick, 2008: 18).

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344. This argument on the "meta-capital" of media is developed out of Bourdieu's writings on the legitimizing effect of the journalistic field on other fields. Couldry proposes to regard "media power also as a form of 'meta-capital' through which media exercise power over other forms of power" that exist in the economy or the state (Couldry, 2003b: 667). See also Bruhn Jensen's assessment that "an important center of future research lies outside communication - at the end of communication and in its intersections with other political, economic, and cultural practices" (Bruhn Jensen, 2010: 165).

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Summary in English

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, American journalism is undergoing an existential crisis provoked by the emergence of digital and networked communication. As the economic model of producing journalism is undergoing significant changes, this study argues that the crisis of journalism is primarily a cultural crisis of valuation. Because the practices that traditionally defined the exclusivity of journalism as a form of public communication have been transposed to the online and digital environment through social media and blogs, such practices no longer value journalism in the same terms like in the age of mass media. The key to understanding the cultural crisis of journalism in the present, this study argues, is to revise the traditional narrative and its associated terminologies of the institutionalization of journalism. Journalism is thus defined as a structure of public communication, which needs to be enacted by producers and audiences alike to become socially meaningful.

The consequence of seeing journalism as a structure sustained through social practices is that it allows to see the relation between audiences and their journalistic media as constitutive for the social function of new media in journalism. Through the analytically central dimension of practice, the study presents key moments in the history of modern journalism, where the meaning of new media was negotiated. These moments include the emergence of topical news media oriented toward a mass market (the penny press in the 1830s) and the definition of a schema of objectivity which valued journalistic practice in professional and scientific terms around the turn of the twentieth century in analogy to photographic media. In each phase, material, cognitive and social practices helped to define the value of a given new medium for journalism. Through the schemas of topicality and objectivity, journalistic practice institutionalized a privileged structure of public communication. The legacy of defining these schemas is then regarded as the central reason for the cultural crisis of journalistic practice in the present, as practices have been transposed and re-valued to sustain either forms of alternative journalism (as peer-production) or forms of self-communication in network

media like blogs. Neither the form nor the technology of the blog alone can explain this differential social relevance but only the different ways in which social practices integrated and value new media.

The study synthesizes an interdisciplinary array of concepts from cultural studies, sociology and journalism studies on subjects such as public communication, interaction, news production and cultural innovation. The theoretical framework of practice theories is then applied to an extensive body of primary and secondary source material, in order to retrace the cultural valuation of new media in a historically-comparative perspective. The study offers a theoretical and empirical contribution to the analysis of cultural innovation, which can be adopted to other cultural forms and media.

Zusammenfassung

Zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts erlebt der amerikanische Journalismus eine existenzielle Krise, die vor allem durch das Aufkommen digitaler und vernetzter Kommunikation im Internet begründet ist. Während die ökonomischen Grundlagen zur Herstellung journalistischer Produkte sich rasant wandeln, argumentiert diese Studie, dass die Krise des Journalismus vor allem eine Krise seine kulturellen Bewertung ist. Journalistische Praktiken sind durch Individuen in den Bereich der Onlinekommunikation in sozialen Medien und Blogs übertragen worden und markieren so nicht länger eine exklusive Form öffentlicher Kommunikation wie sie für das Zeitalter der Massenmedien typisch war. Diese Studie argumentiert, dass die kulturelle Krise des Journalismus in der Gegenwart eine Revision der etablierten Narrative und zentralen Begriffe zur Geschichte der Institutionalisierung des Journalismus erfordert. Journalismus wird daher als Struktur öffentlicher Kommunikation definiert, die von Produzenten und Publika gleichermaßen aufrecht erhalten werden muss, um sozial relevant zu sein und zu bleiben.

Als Konsequenz aus dieser Neudefinition ergibt sich, dass soziale Praktiken auf Seiten von Produzenten und Publika konstitutiv für die Bewertung neuer Medien im Journalismus sind. Durch die analytisch zentrale Kategorie der Praxis entwirft die Studie eine Methode zur Untersuchung von Medienwandel und Journalismus in der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Dazu werden zentrale Medieninnovationen in Fallstudien untersucht, die als wichtige Schritte zur Institutionalisierung des Journalismus angesehen werden. Dazu zählen die Penny Papers der 1830'er Jahre, die aus der Zeitung ein tagesaktuelles, kommerzielles Medium öffentlicher Kommunikation machten. Ferner wird anhand des Erscheinens photographischer Dokumente zwischen 1890 und 1920 die Formulierung eines Schemas der Objektivität nachgezeichnet, dass es dem Journalismus erlaubte seine eigenen Praktiken der Nachrichtenproduktion in scheinbar neutraler und professioneller Form neu zu bewerten. In jeder Phase von Medienwandel, prägten materielle, kognitive und soziale Praktiken die Relevanz neuer

Medien für den Journalismus. Tagesaktualität und Objektivität werden als zentrale Schemata des modernen Journalismus betrachtet, die wesentlich zu seiner jetzigen kulturellen Krise beitragen. Indem vormals journalistische Praktiken in den Bereich der Onlinekommunikation- und interaktion übertragen wurden, bewerten sie die Funktion journalistischer Medien neu, wie am Beispiel des Blogs gezeigt wird. Hier bringt die Interaktivität des Mediums einerseits neue Form von alternativem Journalismus hervor, während das selbe Medium durch das Nutzungschema der 'self-communication' Nachrichten privater Art als Moment der Strukturierung von Interaktionen betont. Weder aus der Form noch der Technologie des Mediums Blog alleine lässt sich diese unterschiedliche soziale Relevanz ablesen, sondern nur aus der sozialen Praktik in der das Medium Kommunikation ermöglicht und strukturiert.

Die Studie ist interdisziplinär angelegt und beruht auf einer Synthese von kulturwissenschaftlichen, soziologischen und journalistischen Konzepten zur öffentlichen Kommunikation, Interaktion, Nachrichtenproduktion und kultureller Innovation. Die Studie wendet dabei theoretische Praxiskonzepte auf einen umfangreichen Korpus von Originalquellen an, um die kulturelle Bewertung neuer Medien historisch-vergleichend nachzuvollziehen. Damit wird sowohl ein empirischer wie theoretischer Beitrag zur Untersuchung kultureller Innovation geliefert, der sich auf andere Formen und Medien übertragen lässt.

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Scholarship of the *ERASMUS* Program at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Work Experience

Sep. 2008 - Sep. 2009
Project Management Assistant at *Wegweiser GmbH*, Berlin

Apr. 2006 - Sep. 2008
Journalist Assistant at *The Sankei Shimbun* [産経新聞社], Office Berlin

Mar. - July 2005
Workshop Designer and Editor for *Mediamatic Foundation*, Amsterdam

Mar. - July 2004
Research Assistant at Department of Literature (PD Dr. Susanne Rohr, *John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies Berlin*)

Feb. 2002 - May 2004
Head of Sponsoring Department for *britspotting British Independent Film Festival*, Berlin

Selected Publications and Conference Presentations

Publications

"'All the News that's Fit to Circulate' – Reframing Journalistic Practices after Journalism." *States of Emergency - States of Crisis. REAL - Research in English and American Literature.* Vol. 27. Winfried Fluck, Katharina Motyl, Donald Pease, Christoph Raetzsch (eds.). Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2011. 143-164.

Review: Hayles, N. Katherine "How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis" *InVisible Culture* 17 (Feb. 2013)

Regular reviewer for *r:k:m-journal* (www.rkm-journal.de).

Wider die Simulation – Medien und symbolischer Tausch. Revisionen zum Frühwerk Jean Baudrillards. Berlin: Universitätsverlag der Technischen Universität Berlin, 2008.

Conference Presentations

“Innovation through Practice: Understanding the Cultural Valuation of Technology.” *Future of Journalism* (Cardiff University, September 2013).

“The Photographic Legacy of Journalistic Objectivity.” *Redefining Journalism* (University of Sheffield, July 2013).

“Approaching Journalism History through Practice Theory.” *Fourth European Communication Conference. European Communications Research and Education Association (ECREA)*. Istanbul, October 2012.

“Journalistic Practices and Audience Participation: Perspectives from the 1830’s.” *European Communications Research and Education Association (ECREA), Division of Digital Culture and Communication Biannual Workshop*. (Centre d’Estudis i Recursos Culturals), Barcelona, November 2011.

“Images of the Cybernetic Body, or the Banality of the Future.” *Fourth International Graduate Student Conference: American Bodies: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modes of Power* (John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, Berlin, May 2011).

“Inventing the News: Journalistic Practices in Early American Penny Papers 1833-1846.” *9th Annual Graduate Students and Graduate Conference: Approaching Literary and Cultural Theory* (Humboldt University Berlin, November 2010).

“Journalistic Practices after Journalism - On the function of news in network media.” *Annual Conference of the Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association* (Alexandria, VA, October 2010).

“Disassembling the Audience: Journalistic Practices in Networked Communication.” 13th Fulbright Summer School in the Humanities. *The History of Reading and the Future of Readers* (Lomonosow University, Moscow, June 2010).

“All the News That's Fit to Circulate” - Reframing Journalistic Practices after Journalism.” *Third Graduate Student Conference: States of Emergency - Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Dynamics of Crisis* (John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, Berlin, June 2010).

“Symbolic Exchange Revisited.” *The Succession of Simulacra. Jean Baudrillard: A Symposium*. (University of California, Santa Barbara, April 19, 2008).

“The Challenge of Networks to Newspapers.” *Closing Symposium of the JSPS Summer Program* (Tokyo, August 21, 2009).

Erklärung

Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Dissertation auf Grundlage der vollständig angegebenen Hilfsmittel selbstständig verfasst habe. Alle wörtlich oder inhaltlich aus anderen Texten übernommenen Stellen wurden als solche ausgewiesen. Die Dissertation ist in keinem früheren Promotionsverfahren angenommen oder abgelehnt worden.

Berlin, 04. Dezember 2013 ______________________________

(Christoph Raetzsch)