

# **Attached or Detached?**

Subjective Methods in War Journalism

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of Study

This thesis examines subjectivity in war journalism. A development within the profession has over the past ten years led to an increasing amount of advocacy in journalists' war reporting. This level of subjectivity in war reporting is a contentious issue that has initiated a debate in the professional and academic communities especially in Great Britain, but also in North America. The debate largely concerns that of professional ideology. Subjectivity in war journalism is therefore met with strong criticism from those who claim objectivity should be the guiding principle of journalism. The practitioners of advocacy journalism answer with calls for a journalism that can incorporate morality and humanitarianism in the reporting of war and conflict.

This ideological struggle clearly demonstrates the many difficulties associated with the objectivity ideal as well as with advocacy. Certain paradoxes of journalism become particularly apparent in this discussion, specifically how subjectivity is at the same time harmful and necessary to the legitimacy of journalism and news production. In this ideological dispute, criticism towards subjective war journalism methods is strong. At the same time, subjectivity in war reporting is a growing tendency, which indicates that this trend cannot necessarily be thwarted by appeals to uphold the professional ideology. It seems the changes in war journalism towards a more subjective and individual practise entails challenges to the profession that may signal an imminent paradigm shift. How professional ideology will attempt to account for war journalism subjectivity in the future however remains to be seen. It is therefore important to

examine this change in war journalism practise, something which I will attempt to address in this thesis.

## **1.2 The Object of Study**

The subjective methods examined here are specifically peace journalism and the journalism of attachment. These methods were developed in Great Britain during the 1990s. Peace journalism is a normative method created by BBC correspondent Jake Lynch. It is largely an academic project that is as of yet not widely practised. Lynch argues that war reporters have a responsibility for the welfare of the world, and as such they have an obligation to contribute to the peaceful resolution of war and conflict. His method is devised for this purpose. The journalism of attachment was developed during the Bosnian War. Its principal representative is Martin Bell, a former BBC journalist who coined the phrase, and who has been the method's principal defender. Bell argues that journalists have a responsibility for the development of the conflicts they are covering. Therefore, he proposes reporters assume an active position in favour of the victims of war, and use their influence as journalists to try to better the situation of those who cannot help themselves. Because the journalism of attachment is a method in practise, it will receive more attention in the analysis than peace journalism. Furthermore, I consider the enduring trend of patriotism to be a subjective war journalism method. Therefore, patriotism is taken into account in the discussion; however it is not a focal point in this thesis. It rather serves to demonstrate some of the reasons for subjectivity, as well as the problems associated with journalism of this kind.

## **1.3 Thesis Outline**

It has been my intent in this thesis to examine what these methods constitute. In attempting to do so, I have found an examination of the development of the war journalism profession to be most helpful. In looking at the history of war journalism, as well as some of the examples of war journalism subjectivity of the past, I have found that although subjectivity has been a prevailing reality in the profession, the methods of peace journalism and the journalism of attachment represent something new in terms of advocacy. Whereas some degree of attachment seems to have always been accepted in strong personalities within the profession, a pronounced method of

subjectivity has not before been suggested for the hard news genre of war reporting. The history of war journalism therefore serves as an explanation as to how we might understand subjective war journalism methods.

In trying to comprehend the phenomenon of war journalism subjectivity, I have closely examined the methods themselves and the discussions surrounding the methods. I have also explored some of the reasons why subjectivity may have occurred, and why it continues to grow in popularity. In discovering that subjectivity can be considered a personal choice, I have found individuality to be a significant element in the rise of war journalism subjectivity. As individuality is an important element also in professional ideology, I have examined some of the paradoxes this entails by taking into account the professional ideology of war journalism. In terms of thesis structure, the issues in the debate concerning professional ideology are presented in chapter five, thus preceding my argumentation concerning individuality, which are presented in chapter six. I have determined that this structure is necessary because the questions revolving the professional ideal to some extent condition the understanding of why subjectivity is a developing trend in war journalism. In organising the topics in this order, I have discovered that there are many similarities between subjective ideology and objective ideology. I have consequently tried to explain how, then, subjectivity continues to be a problem for the legitimacy of the war journalism profession. As the problem of subjectivity seems to be irresolvable – in that demands for a continued adherence to the professional ideology have failed to inspire conformity – I have, as a result, considered the possibility of a forthcoming paradigm shift in war journalism.

#### **1.4 Summary**

The potential benefits of this analysis are numerous. Relatively little academic attention has been committed to the theme of subjectivity in war journalism although the topic has received some attention from professionals, and to a lesser amount academics, over the past few years. The subject has relevance for journalists as well as media researchers. The wars of the new millennium have been studied exhaustively in the traditional canon of war and media research, yet little attention has been devoted to the development of war journalism as profession. This thesis will add to the debate contentious aspects relevant to the journalism profession as a whole.

Therefore, the study of subjectivity in war journalism as a phenomenon, and an investigation into the possibility of a paradigm shift in war journalism, has the potential to illuminate debated aspects also within the general journalistic vocation. In my consideration this study should contribute to the further understanding of how war and conflict is reported. It should also shed some light on the potential harmful effects of subjectivity, as well as on the potential of advocacy journalism to disrupt the professional ideology to the extent that a re-evaluation of the profession is necessary.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1 Definitions**

Journalism can be defined as the acquisition of information based on conventional professional practises in the intent to publish it through an established print, audio, visual or electronic news medium. A journalist is someone who gathers news for a news-producing medium, and who, in doing so, holds his or her professional conduct to a code of ethics and professional standards. War journalism in this regard can be defined as the journalistic coverage of a war, conflict or crisis, while a war journalist, war reporter or foreign correspondent is considered a journalist who is stationed in or dispatched to another country to cover the events there for one or more news media. I use the terms journalist, reporter and correspondent interchangeably. Journalism, reporting and correspondence thereby carries the same meaning and describes the same activity for the purpose of this thesis. Likewise, I here use the terms profession, vocation and trade to denote the same journalistic activity, in spite of the fact that these terms may carry conflicting meanings.

Furthermore, it has not been the intent of this thesis to distinguish between the different journalistic roles in war. I use journalist, reporter and correspondent as collective terms that are meant to generally encompass all forms of journalism – from print and television to web publishing and photography. I therefore assume that journalists are information gatherers whose reaction to war is determined by individuality rather than professional genre. However, one must acknowledge that there can indeed be significant diversity in the manner in which journalists approach war that is linked to working method and publishing medium. Nevertheless, it is not my intent to examine these distinctions in great detail, although I will touch upon this issue in chapter

six. Although the journalists surveyed in this thesis generally work within television, I have also found contributions from print writers, photojournalists, camera-personnel and editors. I do not proclaim to account for any distinction these categories might entail, but rather limit myself to regard war journalism as a general activity that is based on information gathering – which in my opinion corresponds with the needs of the questions raised in this thesis.

For the purpose of this thesis, news is defined as information about *change* – judged by a journalist or news organisation to be urgently relevant to the people (Kieran 1997: 21; Lynch 2002: 18), whereas news media will here represent newspapers, current affairs magazines, radio, television and official versions of these on the Internet. War is defined as the military mobilisation of armies as a result of unresolved conflicts between two or more parties while conflict is regarded as “*a process through which two or more actors (‘parties’) pursue incompatible goals while trying to undermine the goal-seeking potential of the other(s)*” (Lynch 2002: 29). The media will in this situation be regarded as “*willing communicators of information and images from scenes of war and peace to a wider civilian populace which constitutes ‘the audience’ beyond those zones*” (Taylor 1997: 145).

## **2.2 Justification for Field of Research**

The journalistic work discussed here has been produced within Western societies, almost exclusively in Great Britain. This is because most work on war journalism surveyed for this thesis is British in origin. Furthermore, the methods discussed here, especially the journalism of attachment and peace journalism, have been developed in within British news organisations such as the BBC and ITN, and in quality newspapers such as *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. The debate concerning these methods have largely taken place within the British journalism community, however the discussion has also spread to other parts of the world, especially to North America. The execution of subjective war journalism methods is most extensive in the British news media, however equivalents can be found in other parts of the world, especially in the United States, where a parallel to the journalism of attachment has developed – termed advocacy journalism.

The world's most influential and wide-reaching news outlets are stationed in Great Britain and the United States. Therefore, most wars and conflicts have been covered more thoroughly and extensively by journalists from these countries. There are a proportionally higher number of war journalists and foreign correspondents in the UK and US press corps than that of other nations. Furthermore, not only are news stations such as the BBC, CNN, FOX and ITN global in reach, they also deliver much material to news stations that are unable to deploy correspondents of their own for financial reasons. As such, the general state and development of war journalism methodology in the UK and US news media can have an impact on how the rest of the world is perceived by more peoples than merely the British and the Americans.

Because the discussion surrounding the methods in question has taken place largely within British and American professional as well as academic circles, the available material is written in English. The scope of the survey of these methods has therefore been limited rather naturally to expressions in the English language. As a consequence, I have avoided taking into account much of the rest of the world's war journalistic history and methodology.

### **2.3 The Academic Tradition**

This thesis falls under the field of war journalism research. War journalism research has, according to Daniel Hallin, in the past been most preoccupied with the study of war and public opinion, the sociology of war journalism and war as culture (Hallin 1997: 207). Furthermore, the academic interest in war journalism has been focused around the limitations faced by journalists covering war. As such, investigations into the media-military relationship are abundant, as is research on the role of propaganda and censorship in relation to media and war. Furthermore, this thesis can be placed within a tradition of studies of journalism as profession. There is a large field of research into the professional ideology of journalism, as has there been much investigation into the role and function of journalism in society. This thesis draws on material from both these camps.

The study of war journalism's historical development has almost exclusively been conducted by Philip Knightly, who presents his findings in *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to the Kosovo* (2000). My history chapter therefore relies

heavily on this book. Furthermore, the supplied literature used to outline the history of the profession has gathered much of its material from Knightly's research, demonstrating the degree to which *The First Casualty* can perhaps be considered the canon of war journalism history. The singularity with which the history chapter is sourced demonstrates not only that there is limited research within this field, but also the degree to which Knightly's book is considered trustworthy by other academics in the field. As such, I regard the foundation on which I have written my history chapter to be legitimate.

Regarding subjective methods of war journalism there is much research into the form and function of patriotism in war coverage. In fact, Knightly bases much of his book on the war journalist as propagandist. Studies into the coverage of wars since the 1990s have focused largely on the media-military relationship, and therefore also on the abundance of patriotism in war coverage. The media-military dynamic has been the focus of many leading case studies of war coverage, including Daniel Hallin's investigation of the Vietnam War in *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam* (1989); David Morrison and Howard Tumber's research on British newspaper coverage of the Falklands War in *Journalists at War, The Dynamics of New Reporting during the Falklands Conflict* (1988); Philip Taylor's study of the Gulf War coverage in *War and the Media* (1992); Philip Hammond and Edward Herman's study of the Kosovo War coverage in *Degraded Capability: The Media and the Kosovo Crisis* (2000); and Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan's look at the coverage of 11 September in *Journalism after September 11* (2002). These works mainly focus on the working conditions of war reporters in the face of strong propaganda efforts by state institutions.

The study of the journalism profession has focused mainly on the institutional realities of journalistic practises. As such, the technical, institutional, formal and ethical realities of journalism are central to the investigation. Hereunder lays the study of the journalistic ideals. Two important works in this regard are Gaye Tuchman's *Making News. A Study in the Construction of Reality* (1978), and Herbert Gans' *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time* (1980). Much of the research in this discipline falls within the sociological school of media studies (Dahlgren & Sparks 1992: 3).

Research into the subjective war journalism methods considered in this thesis – the journalism of attachment and peace journalism – is scarce. Peace journalism has been discussed inter alia by Majid Tehranian, Wilhelm Kempf and Johan Galtung, who support the method, and by BBC reporter David Lyon, who rejects the method. Much of the debate takes place in discussion forums and various publications on the Internet. The journalism of attachment has received more attention, both from journalists and from media scholars. The journalism of attachment is for instance discussed by Susan Carruthers in *The Media at War* (2000); by Greg McLaughlin in his book *The War Correspondent* (2002); by Howard Tumber and Marina Prentoulis in Thusu and Freedman's *War and the Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7* (2003) and by Philip Hammond in Allan and Zelizer's *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime* (2004). The method has spurred much debate also in journalism periodicals, as well as in Internet publications. The discussion is mainly focused around the pros and cons of the method.

I have also surveyed a few autobiographies. These are mainly works written by journalists who reported the Bosnian War, such as Michael Nicholson (1997), Martin Bell (1996; 2003), Peter Maass (1996), Jon Steele (2002), and Anthony Loyd (2002). The war journalist autobiography is a genre that according to Mark Pedelty must be read with a certain amount of scepticism (Pedelty 1995: 29-30, 39). As such, when used for references they serve mainly to illustrate and supply my argumentation.

The literature used for this thesis indicates its place in the academic tradition. I rely heavily on institutional studies of journalism in general, yet I also survey a large portion of war journalism research conducted in the last 40 years. I have turned to autobiographical texts for evidence to support my hypotheses, as well as to a recent psychological study of the trauma of the war journalism profession. Likewise, I have used the Internet to gain perspective of the opinions of a range of practising professionals on the journalism of attachment and peace journalism, yet I also rely on published works by media scholars. The range of literature suggests the range of the debate that these issues address. The question of what a journalist should be has been discussed for over a hundred years and in many different forums. I therefore attempt to address an ongoing debate through certain controversial developments within the profession, using war journalism research as a tool in my investigation, and the professional ideology as a back-drop for the discussion.

## 2.4 Methodology

I have approached the topic of this thesis through a method of close reading. A close reading is a thorough examination of the terms of certain phenomena. My aim is to uncover arguments and positions in the debate regarding subjectivity in war journalism. My reading is therefore instructed by the problem in question. I have engaged the material qualitatively, with the aim of understanding the encountered texts in the context of contemporary war journalism practise, and with the purpose of efficiently surveying the field in question. The interest of this thesis is to examine subjective methods of war journalism. In order to properly understand these methods, I have found it essential to critically examine what the methods are, why they have transpired, how they are perceived, how they have been practised, and what might be the effects of such methods. In order to reach an understanding concerning these methods I have surveyed a certain number of texts that specifically discuss the methods. Since I am most interested in the phenomenon that these methods constitute, empirical research in the form of actual reports written in the styles here examined has not been a central focus. I have rather examined more closely the arguments presented by the methods' creators, Jake Lynch and Martin Bell, and the arguments presented by their critics. As such, a central focus of this thesis has been the debate surrounding the development and practise of these methods. My main interest lies in the principal questions raised by the development of these subjective methods, and I have therefore considered the debate concerning the principles of journalism more relevant than the results of the practises.

The findings of the thesis are based on my interpretation. A common objection towards such an approach to research is that knowledge acquired through the method of close reading rests on the subjectivity of the researcher and that it as such denies any hope of universality. Moreover, knowledge retained through subjectivity is thought to be untrustworthy. One must certainly take into account the fact that my own subjectivity – my background, education and general beliefs – will have a likely effect on the research process as well as the findings of that process. Nevertheless, in conducting research of this kind it is near impossible for me to escape my own subjectivity. In fact, because we as interpreters of texts are in a world of texts that have been constructed subjectively in the same manner as the interpreters, there is no other method for accessing knowledge about cultural products than through subjectivity. Therefore, one should pay careful attention to my own general assumptions concerning the field in question.

General assumptions for the purpose of this thesis:

- Journalism is a profession that contributes to people's knowledge of the world and its affairs.
- In a democratic society with a well-functioning public sphere, the media acts as a mediator of public discourse.
- The journalism profession is defined by a professional ideology that is created and maintained by individuals.

According to Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, the acquisition of truth can be reached either through intuition, common sense, authority, reason or empiricism (Fernandez-Armesto 1997). Truth will in this thesis therefore be accessed through authority and reason. The veracity of the chosen methodology relies on my abilities as a researcher. As such, the validity of the analysis rests solely on my authority and on the soundness of my argumentation. Furthermore, my abilities as a researcher are accepted in the method of close reading, and can be tested through the logical argumentation and evidence I present. A close reading is non-disruptive in nature and serves well in its capacity to compare, analyse and evaluate the topic of subjectivity in war journalism. The method explores the meaning of texts, and therefore, my examination of this material can only be refuted through a contradictory reading of the texts in question.

## **2.5 Summary**

This thesis examines the phenomena of subjective war journalism methods. One way to gain knowledge about why this has transpired and how it has been received in the journalism community is through a close reading. Furthermore, I consider it vital to the further research of these subjective war journalism methods that an enquiry into what these methods constitute be examined through this method. Research into the working methods and field-engagements of war journalists has been thoroughly conducted in the past. At this point I therefore consider the principle debate about war journalism subjectivity to be more interesting than mere criticism of the results of subjectivity. I therefore believe that I might, through this thesis, contribute to the understanding of the war journalism profession.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **A HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF WAR JOURNALISM**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The advent of subjective methods of war journalism must be seen in its historical context. This historical summary will focus on the main aspects of the coverage of some major wars during the last 150 years to demonstrate how the profession has developed in conjunction with these, and identify factors that have inspired subjective approaches to war reporting. Some wars and conflicts (such as World War II, the Korean War, and the Iraq War) have been omitted because the characteristics of their coverage are to a large extent covered by other wars addressed in this chapter. The wars chosen here are interesting because they demonstrate war reporters' challenges. Therefore, in addition to objectivity, issues like propaganda, pool systems and embedding are discussed. This summary of the history of war journalism is however brief, and should be regarded as basis for a debate on subjectivity in war journalism rather than as an investigation into how wars have been reported throughout the ages.

#### **3.2 The Beginning of a Profession: The Crimean War (1854-1856)**

According to Philip Knightly, the institutionalised journalistic coverage of wars emerged in England in the mid-eighteen hundreds as literacy spread and the demand for news of war grew (Knightly 2000: 2; McLaughlin 2002: 50; Taylor 1997: 133). The profession was born as journalists William Howard Russell and Edwin Lawrence Godkin followed the British army into Crimea in 1854 and sent back reports of wide-reaching political impact (McLaughlin 2002: 49; Williams 1992: 155). The coverage of the Crimean War marked the beginning of a profession that Russell referred

to as a 'luckless tribe', of which he proclaimed he was its 'miserable parent' (McLaughlin 2002: 49). Here journalists encountered many of the problems war journalists still struggle with today – an uncooperative military force, a dangerous working environment, self censorship, and the question of whether patriotism and sympathy for the cause should guide correspondents in their work rather than the ideal of objectivity. As such, the different reporting styles of Russell (from *The Times*) and Godkin (of *London Daily News*) can be said to have had a great deal of influence on war journalism. As Knightly points out, “*even in these early days of war correspondents, two distinct techniques were emerging*” (Knightly 2000: 8). Russell and Godkin's different approaches are still visible in the profession. While Russell was a battlefield correspondent whose goal was to give the reader an idea of how a battle was conducted, Godkin instead focused on the condition of soldiers in the field and the individual's experience of war, including his own (Knightly 2000: 8; McLaughlin 2002: 49-50). Godkin was also critical of the British military leadership and even urged them to send more surgeons to tend to the wounded soldiers (Knightly 2000: 12). Russell and Godkin's methods reflect the situation within the profession also today. Many war correspondents are concerned with reporting military action, strategic manoeuvres and arms deploy from a technological standpoint. Others object to what they see as a mechanical view of warfare and instead choose to focus on the impact of war on the individual.

### **3.3 The American Civil War (1861-1865)**

The American Civil War established war journalism as a separate branch of journalistic practise (Hallin 1997: 208; Knightly 2000: 41). Knightly points out that during the first developmental stages of war coverage, objectivity as a journalistic principle had not yet been fully developed. Several factors contributed to the deterioration of objectivity in war reporting, among them being a consistent lack of accuracy, a failure to report significant events and a general undermining of negative results (Knightly 2000: 25-26; McLaughlin 2002: 51-53). Journalists from both sides were patriotic towards the army they were following, especially in the South where loyalty “*came before any professional requirements of truth and objectivity*” (Knightly 2000: 25). Newspapers supporting either side were claiming the moral high ground, a factor that led to one of the most inaccurately reported wars in the history of war journalism (Knightly 2000: 20; McLaughlin 2002: 51-52). Even European newspapers openly supported one side or the other, as did Russell's paper

*The Times*, highly supportive of the South (Knightly 2000: 22-25, 36-37). Knightly claims that the public was ill served by the press during this conflict because they were not provided with vital information about the development of the war. One such effect was that, because no other newspaper in the UK could surpass the size and reputation of *The Times*, the public's impression of the American Civil War was so inaccurate and biased that it created mistrust between the two nations for years to come (ibid: 29-31, 41). The reporting from the American Civil War therefore demonstrates how patriotic advocacy became a major force in war journalism, and also exemplifies some of the negative effects of exaggerated partisanship.

### **3.4 The First World War (1914-1918)**

War journalists reporting World War I were considered by the military to be part of the national war effort (ibid: 84). For instance, the British government imposed severe censorship and reporters quickly became a willing part of the propaganda machine whose main task was to distribute atrocity stories to keep up the public war morale (Badsey 2002: 2-3; Carruthers 2000: 5, 57; Knightly 2000: 13, 86-88; McLaughlin 2002: 60-61, 63; Taylor 1997: 104). Knightly emphasises that,

*“[the journalists] identified themselves absolutely with the armies in the field; they protected the high command from criticism, wrote jauntily about life in the trenches, kept an inspired silence about the slaughter, and allowed themselves to be absorbed by the propaganda machine”* (Knightly 2000: 84-85).

Many writers on war journalism have emphasised the substantial differences between limited war (limited military operations) and total war (full-scale national mobilisation), both regarding the situation for journalists and the lives of the civilian population (Carruthers 2000: 5, 54-55; Hallin 1989: 8; Hallin 1997: 208; Keeble 2000: 62; Taylor 1997: 130; Williams 1992: 156). The central conflict between the media and the military during the two world wars was rooted in the fact that total war demanded a national effort that required sacrifices from all parts of the population. During the First World War, McLaughlin maintains, journalists exaggerated military successes, underestimated casualty figures, invented German atrocity stories and failed to report many significant events (Knightly 2000: 114-116; McLaughlin 2002: 62). The result of the failure of the press to supply the public with accurate information was a growing mistrust of the media in the general

population. This mistrust occurred because of the nature of total war – people had the opportunity to check the information they read in the newspaper with the reality of the war through correspondence with friends and relatives in the armed forces (Knightly 2000: 105, 111).

McLaughlin emphasises that because neutral correspondents were regarded as spies by both parties in the war, “*most neutral journalists decided to stick with one side or the other for the duration and became fully immersed in the propaganda war*” (McLaughlin 2002: 57). When the war began to involve America, objectivity and neutrality in US war reporting, as well as the First Amendment, was set aside in favour of patriotism and marshalling public support for the war effort. This involved government censorship imposed to secure morale as well as military and national security (Knightly 2000: 333-334). The result of such compliance from war journalists was that the public had little or no understanding of the real casualty figures until after the war (ibid: 116). When the war was over the press intended to improve the standards of their reporting, which in retrospect they themselves condemned as inexcusably poor. Especially US correspondents became increasingly aware of the need to report wars through its effect on individuals rather than in technical terms, the aim being to report wars “*with truth and objectivity*” (ibid: 184). The First World War thus contributed to an increased attention to professional ideology, a growing awareness of the potential influence of the media upon the public, and the establishment of objectivity as a distinct ideal within war journalism.

### **3.5 The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)**

Knightly states:

*”No other war in recent times, with the possible exception of Vietnam, aroused such intense emotion, such deep commitment, such violent partisanship as the Civil War in Spain”* (ibid: 207).

It was during this conflict that Knightly contends one of the strongest conflicts in war journalism emerged – the question of whether a war correspondent’s duty is to report the facts neutrally without allowing personal feelings to influence a story, or to report with ‘heart as well as mind’, openly admitting to believe not in objectivity but in acknowledging an open bias (ibid: 208). The

Spanish Civil War signalled for many correspondents the world war to come and was as such seen as an important crossroad in the fight against fascism (Knightly 2000: 108; Matthews 1946: 68). Several war journalists covering the Spanish Civil War felt strongly about the Republican cause, and they often sympathised with and even joined their fight against the Nationalists (Williams 1992: 163). Knightly points out that many correspondents who supported the Republicans felt they were doing the right thing in taking an active stand against Franco. They felt they were fighting for freedom and justice at a crucial juncture in history (Knightly 2000: 208). “*We knew, we just knew (...) that Spain was the place to stop Fascism*” said Martha Gellhorn, who reported the conflict for *Collier’s* (Knightly 2000: 208; Matthews 1946: 95).

Knightly claims pro-Republican sentiment was so strong among Western war correspondents that it influenced the veracity of their work to the point where self-censorship became a standard practise. He maintains reporters who wished to champion the Republican effort often excluded the facts they did not regard as applicable to the cause (Knightly 2000: 233-234). This perception is however somewhat disputed. Most war journalists covering the conflict felt themselves competent due to the fact that they openly admitted their support for one side or the other. Knightly however shows that the conflict did inspire war journalists to write false accounts in support of either party (Evans 2003: 52; Knightly 2000: 211; Williams 1992: 163). Knightly’s criticism is directed towards the fact that journalists covering the war from the Republican side often failed to show the imperfections of the Republican Army. He claims this is due to the impact the war had on many of the correspondents personally (Knightly 2000: 233). Knightly thus asserts that an open and honest bias affected the reporters’ professional judgement. He makes this point because he wishes to demonstrate the fallibility of such a practise. He says:

*“The drawback of reporting with heart as well as mind is that if the cause is basically just, as the Republican one undoubtedly was, the correspondent tends to write in terms of heroic endeavour, rather than face unpalatable facts, and to mislead his readers with unjustified optimism”* (ibid: 234).

Whether or not the reporters in Spain were right in reporting ‘with heart as well as mind’, the Spanish Civil War inspired a professional debate that resurfaced in similar form during the Bosnian War. The conflict in Spain inspired many to question the established and strong

professional ideal of objectivity in American journalism. Also, the coverage of the Spanish Civil War encouraged reporters and academics to address the issue of what a journalist should be – someone who watches objectively and dispassionately or someone who tries to help good fight evil in this world.

### 3.6 The Vietnam War (1961-1970)

Knightly observes that the military found war journalists to be less patriotic in their reporting of Vietnam than they had been in World War II and in Korea<sup>1</sup>. He points out that although the US military imposed no formal censorship during the Vietnam War they expected editors and reporters to “*get on the team*” (Hallin 1989: 8; Knightly 2000: 415; Taylor 1997: 131; Williams 1992: 161). When war journalists failed to comply the Pentagon launched an extensive and professional public relations campaign to influence journalists in the field and public opinion back home (Hallin 1989: 9; Knightly 2000: 418). Despite the generally high level of criticism towards US military operations among war correspondents, Knightly maintains that journalists in Vietnam were “*just as interested in seeing the United States win the war as was the Pentagon*” (Knightly 2000: 417). Knightly writes of the Vietnam coverage:

“[Most of the American correspondents] *did not consider it their job to speculate on the morality of the war. It was in direct contrast to the attitude of the American correspondents in the Spanish Civil War, who had considered it their job to do exactly that*” (ibid: 435).

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<sup>1</sup> The Vietnam Syndrome – the belief that the media contributed to the loss of the Vietnam War – is not an issue to be considered in this thesis. Suffice it to say that the press during the development of the war, and most notably after the Tet Offensive in 1968, became somewhat more adversarial towards the military commitment in Vietnam than it had been previously (Carruthers 2000: 119; Hallin 1989: 10; Taylor 1997: 110). According to Daniel Hallin the belief that the media lost the war for America is an unfounded one (Hallin 1997; see also Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 6; Williams 1992: 160). He claims, as do many others, that the media was mostly supportive of the military efforts during the entire war; however that press and broadcasting increasingly reflected a growing dissent in the political environment as well as in the general public as the war progressed (Hallin 1989: 3-10). The military and the administration came to regard the media’s negative attention as damaging to the war effort and therefore have to some extent blamed the media for the loss of public support for the war (Carruthers 2000: 108-109; Hallin 1989: 3-4; Knightly 2000: 470). The belief in the Vietnam Syndrome has therefore contributed to a somewhat antagonistic relationship between the war journalist corps and the military, a factor that has played a large part in government control of information and military access and censorship in subsequent years (McLaughlin 2002: 73).

Vietnam reporter David Halberstam points out that the overall young age of the reporters stationed in Saigon had great impact on the reporting of the War (Carruthers 2000: 112-113; Hallin 1989: 6; Taylor 1997: 110). “[T]hey came to the story remarkably clean, carrying no excess psychological or political baggage. What obsessed them was the story” (Hallin 1989: 6). More and more correspondents in Vietnam saw it as their role to observe the war dispassionately, “to record it all for history” (Knightly 2000: 446). Hallin thus observes that journalists covering the Vietnam War began to use methods of standard political reporting rather than seeing themselves as a part of a national war effort (Hallin 1989: 6-7; Hallin 1997: 209). Journalism in general was becoming an increasingly powerful institution in Cold War America (Wyatt 1993: 49). Furthermore, the introduction of television in the 1950s challenged traditional news values as TV journalism became more adversarial during the 1960s in its approach to government institutions (Hallin 1989: 5-6, 9; Petersen 1998: 2, 4, 9).

Reporters treated the Vietnam War in the same manner as they would a political story, which meant the subject matter was under the scrutiny of objectivity more so than during previous wars (Carruthers 2000: 112-113; Evans 2003: 50; Hallin 1989: 7; Taylor 1997: 111). The growing professional ethic of political independence therefore meant that journalism had become somewhat hostile to political power (Carruthers 2000: 113; Hallin 1987: 12, 30; Hallin 1989: 7). According to Hallin this professionalisation removed partisan journalism from the profession and opened for a more responsible press with increasingly privileged access to the political elites. Hallin claims that, “this ethic of ‘responsibility’ became particularly powerful in foreign affairs reporting” (Hallin 1989: 8). However the Vietnam War was also covered by another type of reporters who, “began to question whether it was possible to cover the war with an untroubled conscience” (Knightly 2000: 447; Petersen 1998: 6-8). According to Tom Wicker, the US press was also moving somewhat away from objective reporting and into a realm of interpretive reporting, where questions such as ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘what if’ became additional and even substitute to the standard questions of ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’ and ‘when’ (Wyatt 1993: 48; see also Linsky 1986: 139).

Knightly suggests that it was during the Vietnam War that journalists began to seriously question the ethics of their profession. This ethical ambivalence became possible because journalists who looked for a justification of the war found none, at least not to the degree there existed a justification for entering the Second World War. Also, Knightly points out, correspondents were

often torn between the patriotic feelings of newspapers and audiences back home, and soldiers accusing them of not ‘telling it like it really is’ (Knightly 2000: 445, 448). There was an increasing gap between the objective and dispassionate reporting styles of journalists such as Peter Arnett, and the more humanised approach to war, represented some would say by the growing number of female war correspondents in Vietnam, such as Martha Gellhorn and Gloria Emerson. The Vietnam War therefore demonstrates a growing divergence between reporting through the objectivity method, and doing journalism based on a concept of individual and moral responsibility. The dilemmas associated with the coverage of the Spanish Civil War can thus be seen to have been aggravated in the coverage of the Vietnam War.

### **3.7 The Falklands War (1982)**

The effect of the journalistic coverage of the Vietnam War was, as McLaughlin notes, that the military perceived the media to have lost the war for them (Belknap 2002: 103-104; Carruthers 2000: 4, 108-109; McLaughlin 2002: 73). This led to an increase in military control over the media’s involvement in military operations (Carruthers 2000: 109; Hallin 1997: 210; Knightly 2000: 470; McLaughlin 2002: 73; Morrison & Tumber 1988: 348-349; Taylor 1997: 117).

The British invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982 initiated a pool-system where only a limited number of journalists were allowed to accompany the armed forces on its mission (Allan 1999: 174-175; Knightly 2000: 478-479; McLaughlin 2002: 78). 29 reporters and crew, all British, were accredited. The rest of the international media were represented by one Reuters reporter (Carruthers 2000: 121; Taylor 1997: 116). The army imposed censorship and conducted strict control over transport and communications systems (Hallin 1997: 211-212; Taylor 1997: 117), the effect being that “*in some instances, unfavourable reports or pictures took days to find their way to the newsroom, by which time they were stale and useless as news*” (McLaughlin 2002: 79). McLaughlin asserts that the key outcome of the Falklands War was control – the introduction of a system that would allow the military to control correspondents in such a way as to prevent the media’s coverage of a war from undermining the policy of the government (McLaughlin 2002: 82; Taylor 1997: 117). Knightly summarises:

*“... the Falklands provided a model of how to make certain that government policy is not undermined by the way a war is reported. The rules turned out to be fairly simple: control access to the fighting; exclude neutral correspondents; censor your own; and muster support, both on the field and at home, in the name of patriotism, labelling any dissidents as traitors. After all (...) objectivity could come back into fashion when the shooting was over”* (Knightly 2000: 482).

Although critics have described the media-military relationship during this conflict as adversarial (Carruthers 2000: 120-121; McLaughlin 2000: 78-79), Knightly also observes that several media outlets were highly patriotic in their support for the British war effort (Knightly 2000: 481; see also Keeble 2000: 63; McLaughlin 2002: 80; Williams 1992: 161). What he finds most disturbing is not the high level of censorship that was involved, but rather the fact that,

*”what no-one had expected was that seasoned correspondents who had reported other people’s wars with commendable objectivity found, when reporting their own country’s war, that patriotism was a stronger driving force than professionalism”* (Knightly 2000: 481).

This is a central aspect of war reporting in general – the fact that during ‘our’ wars, soldiers frequently become ‘our’ boys, and missiles and objectives become ‘our’ missiles and objectives (Taylor 1997: 105). According to Susan Carruthers, ‘our’ wars are often accompanied by a readiness by journalists to abandon certain professional standards such as detachment and neutrality, a readiness that does not generally apply, she argues, to the coverage of ‘other people’s’ wars (Carruthers 2000: 197; Taylor 1997: 221). ‘Our’ wars can be considered wars or conflicts in which we as a country or civil society are involved either politically, militarily or humanitarily. Arguably then, ‘other people’s’ wars describe those wars where neither the allies of the West nor we are directly involved. Coverage of ‘our’ wars, Carruthers asserts, more easily permits open partisanship. “[M]edia organisations – as we have seen – often adopt supportive or more outspokenly patriotic roles in reporting ‘their’ wars” (Carruthers 2000: 197), most notably because media audiences are perceived to identify “*closely with the interests at stake in the conflict*” (ibid). This is an issue that Harold Evans claims has been a journalistic dilemma since the Crimean War (Evans 2003: 45). Certain elements of total war, such as national survival, demand patriotism from

journalists (Carruthers 2000: 55-56; Williams 1992: 156). Limited wars, however, allow reporters to cover conflicts from within rivaling factions, from 'the other side' – situations that demand other guidelines than patriotism (Evans 2003: 45-46). However during the Falklands War, which must be characterised as limited war, British journalists had no option of reporting the conflict from Argentina. Without access to more than one side of the story, history suggests the military will be successful in their propaganda efforts.

The coverage of the Falklands War demonstrates how war reporters can become influenced in attitude towards the cause for which the armed forces are fighting. Journalists were stationed on board the Royal Navy Ships (Carruthers 2000: 122; McLaughlin 2002: 78), and therefore spent much time with the troops and the officers of the navy. Because of this situation, journalists formed ties to military personnel, even friendships (Carruthers 2000: 158-160; Tumber 2002: 253; Williams 1992: 164). The danger of the mission and the admiration some correspondents felt for the soldiers and their officers proved beneficial for the military propaganda effort. The closeness between the reporters and the boys and girls going into battle thus increased the level of patriotism within the corps (Williams 1992: 164). The reporting of the Falklands War therefore demonstrates how closeness to those in danger of being killed in a war can influence the willingness of reporters to abandon objectivity and detachment as journalistic ideals.

### **3.8 The Persian Gulf War (1991)**

Limited military operations during the 1980s such as the American invasions in Grenada and Panama to a large extent followed the British model for press control established in conjuncture with the Falklands War (Knightly 2000: 483; McLaughlin 2002: 83-88). This system continued to guide the military in its management of war journalists during the Gulf War in 1991, only this time, Knightly observes, the media seemed eager for war. In fact the media advocated action against Saddam Hussein, a US adversary which they meticulously painted as a lunatic rivalled in history only by Adolf Hitler (Keeble 2000: 65; Knightly 2000: 486). Thus the build up to the war saw the press exposing Iraqi atrocity stories manufactured by military propaganda units and PR companies engaged by the Kuwaiti government in exile (Knightly 2000: 487). Also, the military coached the media to help mislead Saddam Hussein as to where the allied invasion would commence. The

media complied with the military's request, thus actively becoming a willing and knowing part of the propaganda system (Carruthers 2000: 6; Taylor 1997: xii, 127).

During the Gulf War the media began to take advantage of technology that allowed reporters to send transmissions live from Baghdad and from the battlefield. But as Philip Taylor has pointed out, "*just because journalists have the equipment to transmit live reports from the front, it does not automatically follow that they are able to do so*" (Taylor 1997: 129). Reporters at the front were prohibited from using their satellite equipment because the military claimed this would constitute a risk to operations, resulting in reports being severely delayed en route to their respective broadcasters (ibid: 125-126). This breakthrough in technology nevertheless allowed CNN to become the dominant 24-hour news broadcaster in the world. Not only was their reporter Peter Arnett one of the few journalists remaining in Baghdad when the allied bombing began – CNN was also the only news organisation with a telephone line out of the city (Carruthers 2000: 133). Thus the Gulf War initiated the era of war being transmitted live on television to viewers the world over, while giving CNN a leading position in the development of the 24-hour news cycle<sup>2</sup>.

The pool system that allowed an ensemble of about 300 of the most prominent reporters to see the war up close with the protection of US and UK military units has received much attention from media scholars. Journalists belonging to the pool would gain access to the theatre of war, albeit long after the action was over and under militarily controlled conditions, and then share their copy with the rest of the 1500 or so reporters stationed in Saudi Arabia (Carruthers 2000: 134-135; Taylor 1997: 116, 124-125). The issue has been raised that the pool reporters were in a situation of compromise: in exchange for access they also submitted their work to the manipulation and censorship of the military (Bell 2003: 49; Evans 2003: 61; Taylor 1997: 121, 125; Williams 1992: 164). There were however some reporters who objected to this system and ventured into the field on their own searching for stories (Carruthers 2000: 137; Taylor 1997: 125-126; Williams 1992: 165). These so-called unilaterals were somewhat unpopular with the members of the pool (Knightly 2000: 492;

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<sup>2</sup> The 24-hour news cycle is a reality that leaves reporters constantly pressed for time. Many reporters complain about this technological development because it means they are increasingly limited in their movements. Journalists need to stay close to their communication equipment in order to be able to dispatch their copy in time. With the demand of the 24-hour news cycle, journalists are often required to transmit live reports several times a day. This situation restricts reporters' ability to move around in the area of combat, reduces their access to the battleground and limits their choices in sources, making reporters more reliant on official spokespersons. The 24-hour news cycle is a factor in the development of the profession of war journalism however it is not considered a vital component in the effort made by some journalists to approach war and conflict with subjectivity.

Williams 1992: 165). The unfavourable compromise suffered by the pool reporters nevertheless gave them an advantage over the reporters stationed in hotels in Riyadh and Dharhan. The unilaterals, however, should they survive the dangers of travelling without guidance and protection, were exempt from the same degree of military control and censure (Carruthers 2000: 137; Taylor 1997: 125-126).

It seems increasingly difficult to report wars from a neutral or independent perspective. Not only have wars become more dangerous for journalists travelling without the protection of a military unit, the military have also tightened control over accredited reporters in the coverage of 'our' wars. Under such restrictions it may be difficult not only to convey truthfully the events of the war, but also to remain objective. Audiences are increasingly experiencing that the information they receive from field correspondents is accompanied by cautions as to the reliability of this information. The level of control exercised by the military during The Gulf War demonstrates the degree to which the media are losing tenure in the struggle for wartime information.

### **3.9 The Bosnian War (1992-1995)**

The Bosnian War had such a strong effect on many of the war correspondents covering the conflict that a new method later named the journalism of attachment emerged from the coverage. Reporters were stationed in Sarajevo, where many of them witnessed the suffering of the civilian population. Journalists have often claimed this conflict made a large impression on them (Bell 1996: 28, 135; Blair 2003; Lane 1994: 43), and many admit they were affected by what they perceived as the unwillingness of the international community to become involved in the conflict (Lyon 2003: 3). Therefore, many journalists covering the conflict disregarded the professional standard of objectivity and called for intervention from the UN and NATO (Brock 1993: 153-154; Seib 2002: 52; Carruthers 2000: 218).

This journalism that 'sides with good against evil' can be seen as an echo from the coverage of the Spanish Civil War. Critics claimed the Sarajevo correspondents who embraced the new journalism cast all the blame for the war on the Bosnian Serbs (Gowing 1997: 12; Hume 2000: 76). Furthermore journalists were accused of disregarding evidence that did not fit this framework of good versus evil (Foerstel 1999: 6; Hume 2000: 76-78; McLaughlin 2002: 166-167). The recurring

demonisation of Milosevic and the Serbs throughout the Yugoslavian wars has in large part been blamed on the journalism of attachment (Hammond 2000: 377). A simplistic portrayal of the conflict as one between the ruthless perpetrators of evil on one side and the innocent victims of systematic violence on the other has supposedly created an environment in which the Serbs are seen as deserving punishment. It has been pointed out that factions participating in the Yugoslavian wars of the 1990s were “*acutely aware of the importance of capturing the moral high ground in the battle for global public sympathy*” (Taylor 2000: 294). This allegedly led to unsatisfactory coverage. As the theatre of war was considered too dangerous to be entered, this created, in Taylor’s words, an “*information vacuum*” in which many journalists fell prey to propaganda efforts from the participants in the conflict (ibid: 294-295).

The coverage of the Yugoslavian Wars, especially the Bosnian War, was accompanied by high levels of emotion. The conflict took place in Europe, and it was low-tech in nature (see Loyd 2002: 222). Thousands of civilians were killed during the wars, many of them in what has been considered war crimes. These conflicts were different from the operations of allied Western states in the Gulf or the US invasions in Grenada and Panama in the 1980s. The Yugoslavian Wars were long-lasting whereas previous operations covered by the media had been short. Also, reporters in Sarajevo witnessed the war personally – not as video game images from a briefing room or as an aftermath of missile explosions. Many reporters were killed during this war, and because they were personally in danger, many felt strongly about what they were witnessing. Therefore, a conflict emerged within the journalistic community that has developed into a debate over some of the fundamental principles of Western journalism – the question of what a journalists should be, and the ideal of objectivity.

### **3.10 Post 11 September Coverage (2001)**

The so-called war on terrorism that followed the attack on The World Trade Center and The Pentagon in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 is a foreign policy initiated by the American government that has also had impact on the policy of many other nations. The effect of this on journalism is still uncertain however efforts have been made to understand the challenges this event may have on the profession. Howard Tumber and Marina Prentoulis claim the boundaries between war journalists and other kinds of reporters have become increasingly

unclear after the attacks on New York and Washington. They point out that war journalism may no longer be reserved for those assigned to war zones and foreign offices (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 226). Events such as the Madrid train bombing and the attacks on the World Trade Center, as well as car bombs and suicide bombings in major cities around the world demand domestic journalists to become war reporters for the duration of the crisis. This may have an effect on war journalism because this particular journalistic genre is now confronted by the challenges of factors such as feelings of patriotism, lack of war zone experience and government propaganda. Scenes of New York reporters crying on camera while reporting from Ground Zero (Tumber 2002: 257) are at odds with the expectations of war correspondents to be objective and balanced. Tumber and Prentoulis thus suggest that the new terrorist threat in the Western world has created a new group of journalists – the urban war correspondent (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 226; see also Tumber 2002: 247).

According to Tumber and Prentoulis, the amount of mourning executed through ritualised journalism in the American press post-September 11 may have contributed to a change in the profession. They claim this situation opened for a more emotional journalism, and they recognise a general call for “*a more ‘human face’ in war reporting*” that disclaims the “*old culture of newsgathering and war reporting founded on a ‘macho’ attitude that prohibited any display of emotion or psychological anguish*” (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 227). Today some see such display of emotion as a positive development within journalism, while others, perhaps more seasoned veterans of the trade, describe this trend as exaggerated and inappropriate. Nevertheless, the 11 September coverage raised an interest in the possible trauma of war journalism. The fact that the emotional life of reporters may be affected by war has therefore been used as an explanation for the increasing disregard of the objectivity ideal within war reporting (Tumber 2002: 252-260; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 226-228).

### **3.11 Summary**

The war coverage considered in this chapter has been chosen with regard to the impact of these events on the development of war journalism as a profession. The Crimean War initiated a professional practise that in its methodology still is recognisable today. The American Civil War, despite the allegedly poor quality of coverage, firmly established the vocation as a separate branch of journalism, and the coverage of the First World War contained such unsatisfactory

journalism that it helped usher in the ideal of objectivity to American journalism. A reaction to this ideology developed during the Spanish Civil War when journalists from many parts the Western world chose to abandon impartiality and objectivity in favour of active partisanship. At the time of the Vietnam War, objectivity as journalistic principle had been firmly established and many war reporters treated the conflict as they would a political story, initiating a change in war journalism standards that led to more critical coverage of government and military actions. The Vietnam War was however also covered by journalists who began to question the ethics of objective reporting – a situation suggesting that alternative approaches to war reporting existed parallel to the mainstream methods of objective and dispassionate journalism. The British invasion of the Falkland Islands introduced a pool system that later dominated the reporting of the Gulf War. This was a conflict which in part demonstrated the power of new technology and the effectiveness of the sophisticated propaganda efforts of coalition forces. The Bosnian War in turn had such impact on the reporters stationed in Sarajevo that it instituted a new and controversial method of active partisanship termed the journalism of attachment. This method can be seen to have initiated a debate within the journalistic community over the ideal of objectivity. This discussion continues to be influenced by the changes within war journalism, among them challenges to the professional norms and ideals as a result of the events and the aftermath of 11 September 2001.

## CHAPTER 4

### NEW METHODS OF WAR JOURNALISM

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will take a closer look at two of the more recent subjective methods in war reporting – the journalism of attachment and peace journalism. I will furthermore attempt to illustrate how subjective war journalism practises have existed throughout the history of the profession. This includes the endurance of patriotism as a subjective approach to war reporting. In many of these instances war correspondents take an active part in the execution of war, assume positions of support for one of the parties in a conflict or make an effort to help the victims of war.

To a certain extent there have always existed alternative war journalism methods. There is however evidence that distinctly new methods of war journalism are emerging. The new methods I wish to investigate here are subjective in nature. A common denominator is that the practitioners of these methods often have an agenda which is based on some degree of altruism – they wish to serve a greater purpose of humanitarianism by contributing to end wars or help someone prevail in war. Journalists often express this altruism though proclaiming their subjectivity in method.

The patriotic method is not a new method in subjective war journalism. It has in fact been a rather dominant method prior to the emergence of the objectivity ideal. It has continuously had an influential status within war journalism. Patriotism is examined here as a subjective method because it continues to be a prevailing alternative approach to war reporting that shares common

characteristics with the other methods examined here. Also, I will attempt to establish that the basic ideals of the journalism of attachment and peace journalism are rooted in the alternative approaches of past generations of war journalists.

A common feature among the journalists utilising subjective methods is their open support for something or someone. As such, the journalism of attachment can be said to be on the side of the victims. Reporters in Bosnia witnessed the destruction of the Bosnian civilian population and urged the international community to intervene on their behalf. Likewise correspondents in Rwanda, during the genocide of the Tutsis, encouraged Western governments to help them survive the Hutu militias (see Hammond 2002: 2, 5; Seib 2002: 72; Steele 2002: 380). Peace journalism can however be seen as siding with ‘peace’, as peace journalism methodology encourages conflicting parties to strive for the peaceful resolution of war. Furthermore, patriots can be characterised as being supportive of an armed force or a government representing their homeland at war. An example of patriotic journalism is therefore the reporting the Falklands War, where many of the British correspondents openly supported their soldiers and government in their endeavour against the Argentines.

#### **4.2 Subjective Approaches in History**

There are examples of subjective reporters all throughout the history of war journalism (McLaughlin 2002: 155). One has to keep in mind however that many of these subjective positions to a large extent were considered unproblematic when assumed – such as the carrying of arms by reporters and patriotic reporting. Indeed the most common instance of subjective war journalism is the patriotism that has characterised most war journalism during the reporting of conflict up to and including the First World War. During the 1920s, however, objectivity became an accepted professional ideology that encouraged reporters to disregard feelings of patriotism. Nevertheless, subjectivity has been a prevailing aspect of war coverage for nearly 120 years. The fact that objectivity nonetheless has survived as the primary professional ideal, suggests that the subjective acts exemplified in the following have not represented a major threat to the objectivity ideal. Aside from the somewhat institutionalised subjectivity inherent in patriotism, I suggest that it is the individual nature of advocacy that has deterred this approach from harming the professional ideal.

### 4.3 Common Acts of Subjectivity

One of the most common acts of subjectivity by a war correspondent is, as mentioned, patriotism. Another widespread subjective operation involves the carrying of arms and the active participation in battle by a reporter – an endeavour that immediately suggests that the reporter is taking sides in a conflict. Such instances occur throughout the history of the profession, from the colonial wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the latest Iraq War. The carrying of a weapon by a war correspondent is a contentious issue, and has become even more so in later years. On the one hand the danger to correspondents is growing, as witnessed by the increasing number of war journalist fatalities over the last 10 years<sup>3</sup>. As such, an increasingly perilous environment might encourage some reporters to carry their own weapons in addition to wearing a helmet and flak jacket. On the other hand, many correspondents claim reporters carrying guns contribute to intensify the risks of the profession. Journalists carrying arms might encourage warring factions to think war correspondents are far from neutral, which in turn might make it easy for them to perceive correspondents as potential enemies to their cause. It can therefore be argued that one journalist's weapon jeopardises the non-combatant status of all practitioners equally. The Geneva Convention protects war reporters as neutral parties and therefore considers the killing of a war journalist a war crime. However the protection of the Geneva Convention requires journalists to enter the field unarmed, and in fact deems it illegal “*for a reporter to participate directly in military actions*” (Evans 2003: 52).

The participation in battle is another subjective position sometimes assumed by war correspondents. There are some examples of reporters engaging in action against an enemy, and of reporters accepting surrenders and taking enemy positions. Aiding civilians and wounded personnel is moreover occasionally considered a subjective act, but this is a controversial issue, as many would not perceive this as an act of subjectivity but merely as human decency. Furthermore there are instances of journalists operating as intelligence agents – clearly a subjective position. Partisanship is another subjective approach to war. It can be roughly

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Committee to Protect Journalists 346 journalists have been killed from 1994 to 2003. The most deadly years were 1994 and 1995, when 66 and 51 journalists were killed respectively. The most deadly countries have been Algeria (51), Colombia (31) and Russia (30). 55 reporters were killed in crossfire; 264 were murdered; 51 were cameramen and photographers; 51 were radio journalists, and 17 were women (cpj 2004b). Furthermore, 36 journalists have died while covering the US invasion and occupation of Iraq since March 2003 (cpj 2005).

explained as similar to patriotism – you want one of the parties to win. Perhaps in opposition to this attitude stands the anti-war journalist – the reporter who detests war and is committed to the abolishment of armed conflict. In short there have been many alternative manners of war reporting that remain in stark opposition to the objectivity norm. The following will attempt to illustrate the extent of these subjective stances in the history of war journalism.

#### 4.3.1 *Carrying Firearms*

A number of correspondents who have carried arms during the coverage of war have used their weapon for protection or active participation in battle. In fact, according to Knightly, prior to World War I this was not an unusual practise among correspondents (Knightly 2000: 70). For instance, journalist and newspaper owner George Wilkins Kendall operated both as soldier and reporter when he rode with the Texas Rangers during the Mexican War of 1846-1848 (McLaughlin 2002: 155). Furthermore, *Nebraska State Journal* reporter William Kelley killed two Sioux during an uprising in 1890, a feat for which his newspaper praised him (ibid: 156). Winston Churchill, who covered the Boer War in South Africa, carried a Mauser pistol and “*didn’t hesitate to fire it when the Boers derailed an armoured train he was on*” (Evans 2003: 49, Knightly 2000: 69). Likewise, James Creelman of the *New York Journal* participated in the Spanish-American War (1898). He joined a bayonet charge at the battle of El Caney (Evans 2003: 52; Knightly 2000: 45, 61). Others were ready to defend themselves when following troops into battle, such as Herbert Matthews of the *New York Times* and Luigi Barzini Jr of *Corriere della Sera*. They were dodging machinegun fire on the Italian side during the war in Abyssinia (1935-1936) with a grenade in each hand, ready to aid the Italians should their forces be overrun (Knightly 2000: 198). Others were more proactive. In 1944 Ernest Hemingway carried a tommy gun into battle against German troops. In fact he had made himself de facto leader of a group of French resistance fighters at the end of the Second World War (Evans 2003: 52). During the Spanish Civil War, while reporting for the North American Newspaper Alliance, Knightly asserts Hemingway “*took it upon himself to instruct recruits in the International Brigades in weapon drill and made frequent visits to the line*” (Knightly 2000: 209). The Spanish Civil War invoked the fighting spirit in many a correspondent partial to the Republican cause, a number of whom in fact joined the Republican Army. Among them were Claude Cockburn, editor of *The Week*; George Orwell, who wrote for the *New*

*Statesman*; Belgian correspondent Mathieu Corman; the *New York Herald Tribune*'s Jim Lardner; and reporter for *The Nation*, Louis Fischer, who became a weapons purchaser for the Republic (ibid: 209-210).

Several reporters have also played an active part in conquering enemy forces. During the Falklands War, Max Hastings of the *London Evening Standard* crossed the front line and took the capital single-handed, as did John Simpson of the BBC 20 years later when he walked into Kabul, Afghanistan, ahead of the troops (ibid: 1). This was also the ambition of *New York World*'s Stephen Crane. He seized a town during the American invasion in Puerto Rico (1898) and held it for a day until the troops arrived (ibid: 60). Likewise Evelyn Irons of the *Evening Standard*, one of the few female correspondents during World War II, helped capture a town in Bavaria. She was accredited to the Free French Army and carried a weapon of her own (Knightly 2000: 346; McLaughlin 2002: 156).

During World War II many journalists saw themselves as a part of the war effort. According to Knightly, several reporters had difficulties deciding whether to go to war as a journalist or as a soldier. This resulted in the active participation by many correspondents in battle. For example, Alexander Clifford of the *Daily Mail* took a wounded air-gunner's place during a flight over Sicily with the RAF and shot down an enemy plane, and Cyril Ray of the BBC took up arms to lead a platoon of Canadians to safety in Italy (Knightly 2000: 333, 345).

Most of the correspondents covering the front line in Korea were armed, many of them with a wish to kill a Korean (ibid: 368-369). However, Alan Dower, reporter for the *Melbourne Herald*, can be said to have made a positive contribution to the Korean War because of the rifle he was carrying. When he came across a prison where the UN was in the process of executing women and children, he broke in and threatened to shoot the Governor unless they abolished such a policy (Evans 2003: 56; Knightly 2000: 375). Several reporters during the Vietnam War also carried a weapon. For instance, the *Associated Press*' Peter Arnett carried a Mauser machine pistol (Knightly 2000: 1, 445), however he claims he never used it (McLaughlin 2002: 156). Furthermore, Charlie Black of the *Colombus Enquirer* is said to have murdered three members of the Vietcong, and *United Press* photographer Charlie Eggleston was murdered trying to avenge colleagues killed by the Vietcong. According to Knightly however, most correspondents in Vietnam never

fired their weapons. One exception was Charles Mohr, reporter for the *New York Times*, who contributed to the retaking of Hué Citadel after the Tet offensive, armed with an M-16 (Knightly 2000: 1, 417, 445). One of the latest incidents of a reporter carrying arms occurred during the 2003 Iraq War where *FOX News*' correspondent Geraldo Riviera became quite unpopular with some of his fellow correspondents for carrying a gun. Riviera professed in one of his live reports that he was anxious to take a shot at Osama Bin Laden himself, imparting his message while flashing his weapon to the television viewers at home (Blair 2003). During the same war, CNN's Brent Sadler had been assigned a personal security guard after receiving death threats. During a live transmission where Sadler and his team were driving into Tikrit ahead of the troops, armed Iraqi soldiers opened fire on their vehicle. Sadler's bodyguard returned the fire, something which created uproar in the journalistic community (Blair 2003; Blitzer 2004: 6).

The participation of a war correspondent in battle is not a normal occurrence. There are in fact very few indications of instances of this during the last 10-20 years in the literature here surveyed. However, as Jules Crittenden of the *Boston Herald* experienced while riding on a tank during the US attack on Baghdad in March 2003, it is not easy being objective when someone is firing in your direction. Crittenden, there as a reporter, engaged in aiding the troops in defending their position by indicating where the shots were coming from. He admitted he was quite probably the cause of three Iraqi deaths. Crittenden says:

*"I'm sure there are some people who will question my ethics, my objectivity, etc. I'll keep the argument short. Screw them, they weren't there. But they are welcome to join me next time if they care to test their professionalism"* (Crittenden 2003: 2).

In spite of these instances it can be safe to assume that most reporters do not carry weapons when entering a war zone, and if they do, few ever use them. It is a valid point that although some war correspondents might feel safer knowing they have a gun to protect themselves should they encounter a hostile environment, this policy in fact does more to endanger war journalists than to secure their safety. Should this policy become more persistent in the future, it can only be assumed that the number of journalist casualties will continue to rise. If it is the case that warring factions can no longer feel secure in the fact that war reporters can be considered neutral and

unarmed, there is a possibility that journalists may easily be characterised as antagonists by parties in future wars and conflicts.

#### 4.3.2 *Aiding Wounded and Helping Civilians*

Considered another act of disregard for professional detachment by some is the aiding of wounded in battle. The ideal of journalistic detachment demands that journalists be observers and not participate actively in war. However this is a disputed ideal when it comes to the value of human life. Some correspondents, such as Peter Arnett and photographer Kevin Carter, insist that it is more important to write stories and take photographs to engage public debate and outrage that may ultimately save a larger amount of people than try to save those in the reporter's immediate surroundings (Evans 2003: 55; Knightly 2000: 446). However, as Harold Evans emphasises, “*One's first duty is to humanity, and there are exceptional occasions when that duty overrides the canons of any profession*” (Evans 2003: 54).

Many reporters find it difficult to remain observers when faced with cries for help from the victims of war. It seems children have a certain effect on reporters<sup>4</sup>, causing some to abandon their current journalistic mission to help save lives. For instance, ITV journalist Michael Nicholson became involved with a humanitarian mission while reporting the war in Bosnia. He helped evacuate 200 children from an orphanage outside Sarajevo and even adopted an orphan girl himself (McLaughlin 2002: 155). Richard Hughes went as far as abandoning journalism during his stay in Vietnam to manage four orphanages (Knightly 2000: 459). Others have helped wounded civilians when they should be covering the aftermath of battle. According to biographer Nicolas Rankin, George Steer of *The Times* and his photographer participated in helping families recover their loved ones in the aftermath of the bombing of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War rather than taking pictures and conducting interviews (Rankin 2003: 123). Harri Peccinotti, a photographer for *Nova* magazine during the Vietnam War, had a similar experience. He found the perfect photo opportunity – a mother loading her dead husband's body onto a truck – when he was asked to help with the wounded, a choice he made in favour of the wounded (Knightly 2000: 14). Likewise,

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<sup>4</sup> See for instance Michael Nicholson's autobiography from the Bosnian war *Natasha's Story: Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997), Jon Steele's autobiography *War Junky* (2002), Anthony Feinstein's book *Dangerous Lives: War and the Men and Women who Report it* (2003), and Jon Blair's documentary series *War Reporter* (2003).

Martin Bell of the BBC has confessed he became a part-time ambulance driver during the Bosnian War because he had an armoured Land Rover at his disposal. Bell comments that, “*There’s nothing actually against it in the Geneva Conventions, but it is amazing how many young reporters believe it is somehow unprofessional to get off the sidelines for once and try to help people*” (Bell 1996: 127).

Some correspondents have also helped soldiers wounded in battle. Robert St. John of *Associated Press* was reporting the battles in Greece during World War II when he came across a soldier whose hands had been blown off. He stopped to inject him with morphine. Another reporter for the *Associated Press*, Harry Correll Jr., gave first aid to a wounded air-gunner while in Greece – an act for which he received an Air Medal from the US government. During the same war, and during an Iraqi revolt, the *Daily Telegraph’s* correspondent Ronal Monson jumped into the Euphrates to save the life of a wounded British soldier (Knightly 2000: 335, 345). In a similar incident, photographer Don McCullin of the *Sunday Times*, “*carried a wounded marine to a first aid station*” at the battle of Hue in the Vietnam War (Evans 2003: 52). He also gave chocolate and water to two Khmer prisoners when in Cambodia, an act for which he received much criticism (ibid). McCullin in fact experienced that his trade began to suffer when he became more preoccupied with helping wounded after receiving injuries himself during the Vietnam War (Knightly 2000: 450).

Evans demonstrates how photographers sometimes feel responsible for inducing the violence they are sent to cover. Television cameraman Sorius Samura laments the presence of his camera during a riot in Sierra Leone in 1999. He fears his filming “*may have provoked the soldier to kill*”, something for which he cannot forgive himself (Evans 2003: 54). A similar incident occurred during the India-Pakistan War of 1971. Photographer Marc Riboud left the scene in disgust when Bengali soldiers started bayoneting Bihari prisoners before an angry mob. He felt the presence of his camera provoked the soldiers into murdering the prisoners. Other photographers however stayed until the prisoners were dead and received a Pulitzer for their work. *Magnum* photographer James Nachtwey, whom Evans claims has “*saved victims from mobs in Haiti and South Africa*”, says he will always help wounded if he is the only one available, otherwise he will prioritise taking pictures (ibid: 54-55). According to him, photographing violence is important because

journalists have a duty to collect evidence of the ills committed by others. He furthermore claims it is not his job to censor himself. He points out that,

*“There’s an oft-told tale of World War II where some of the photographers who entered the concentration camps were so horrified that they walked away without taking pictures. What would we do today [if no one had taken] those pictures? ... Our own emotional well-being is one of the things that sometimes has to get sacrificed in order to fulfil our duties as journalists”* (ibid: 85).

The point may be that although it is important to prioritise saving lives where possible, journalism must endure a greater purpose of bearing witness and exposing war crimes<sup>5</sup>. Journalists committed to aiding the civilian population through the utilisation of subjective methods might therefore feel torn between dropping their notepads and helping where possible, and recording death and destruction that might ultimately facilitate their cause. There are many reasons why a journalist may feel compelled to help those wounded in, or fleeing from, a theatre of war. Subjective war reporters will certainly be predisposed to take such action, as they are often partisan to one of the parties at war, and thus feel sympathetic towards the combatants. Others feel for the victims of war.

#### 4.3.3 *Partisanship and Espionage*

The most severe form of subjectivity is however partisanship. During World War I, Philip Gibbs of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Chronicle*, along with the other correspondents, found himself in officer’s uniform (Knightly 2000: 101). He wrote in 1923:

*“We identified ourselves absolutely with the Armies in the field...We wiped out of our minds all thought of personal scoops and all temptation to write one word which*

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<sup>5</sup> There have also been cases where war journalists have testified in war crimes tribunals. For instance, Martin Bell and Ed Vulliamy (see Seib 2002: 85-86) gave evidence in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and Lindsey Hilsum testified at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. This is a contentious issue for many journalists on the grounds of source protection. According to McLaughlin many feel that testimony by a journalist in war crimes tribunals violates fundamental principles of journalism and may “*destroy the credibility and effectiveness of the journalist*” (McLaughlin 2002: 176). Hilsum however asserts that she testified because of the responsibility she felt as a citizen and human being “*in the face of mass crimes*” (ibid: 177).

*would make the task of the officers and men more difficult or dangerous. There was no need of censorship of our dispatches. We were our own censors”* (ibid: 103).

Also during World War II many British correspondents felt they were part of the national war effort. This feeling coincided well with the Army’s understanding of their role. Similarly, many British war reporters felt part of the war effort during the Falklands War. Max Hastings of the *Daily Express* claims many correspondents were clear about their sympathies for the British cause. ITV journalist Michael Nicholson agrees with Hastings’ assumption. He admits that in fact he felt that, “*This was Britain’s war. It was my war*” (ibid: 482).

Partisanship was not only evident during the two World Wars. In the reporting of ‘other’ people’s wars, there have been instances where reporters who are initially ‘neutral’ assume a position favourable to either side. For instance, *United Press* correspondent Webb Miller and Herbert Matthews of the *New York Times* reported the war in Abyssinia from the Italian side. According to Knightly the two became partisan to the Italian cause and “*came to understand and even sympathise with the Italian attitude to the war*” (ibid: 192). Matthews explained that,

*“If you start from the premise that a lot of rascals are having a fight, it is not unnatural to want to see the victory of the rascal you like, and I liked the Italians during that scrimmage more than I did the British or the Abyssinians”* (ibid: 199).

Matthews also became partisan to the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil war, as did many other Western correspondents, the most famous perhaps being Martha Gellhorn, George Orwell and Ernest Hemingway (Knightly 2000: 208; McLaughlin 2002: 157). And as previously pointed out, many war journalists covering the war in Bosnia felt equally strong about the plight of the Bosnian civilian population (Bell 1996: 39; Knightly 2000: 502, 519).

There have also been instances of communist sympathies among Western war correspondents. In 1943, the *New York Times* dismissed their correspondent in Russia, Ralph Parker for ‘pro-Soviet bias’. Despite his work as a British spy, Parker felt strongly for the Soviet cause, as did certain other correspondents stationed in Russia (Knightly 2000: 291). Similarly, during the Vietnam War

Australian journalists Wilfred Burchett and Madeleine Riffaud both sympathised with the Vietcong and reported the war from the North for communist publications (ibid: 458-459).

Spying is another activity practised by correspondents for decades. For example, Knightly claims that during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 many of *The Times*' correspondents were spies – working for government departments in addition to reporting the war (ibid: 64). The same was true regarding many US reporters during the Spanish-American War (McLaughlin 2002: 156). A similar characterisation can be made regarding the coverage of Russia. During the Russian revolution Harold Williams of *The Times of London* and the *New York Times* was so involved in the anti-Bolshevik campaign that Knightly asserts he should never have been accredited as correspondent (Knightly 2000: 148). As a result he misinterpreted the situation in Russia to the extent that he continued to predict the imminent downfall of Bolshevism until his death in 1928 (ibid: 170-171, 183). Furthermore, at the onset of the World War II, British intelligence agencies once again made an effort to recruit correspondents from *The Times* to act as spies inside Russia. Both Ewan Butler and Ralph Parker were successfully employed (ibid: 274). And during the Spanish Civil War correspondent for the *London News Chronicle* Arthur Koestler actually used his credentials as a cover for his commitment as a Comintern spy. In the same conflict, H. A. R. (“Kim”) Philby of *The Times* used his reporting of the war from the Nationalist side as a cover for his activities as a Soviet intelligence agent (ibid: 210).

Spying and partisanship are obvious cases of subjectivity because in some sense these positions are almost preconceived. Certainly espionage under the cloak of journalism is a calculated and indeed secretive degree of partisanship. The act of spying somehow demands a certain amount of idealism on the part of the reporter, at least to the degree that this ideology may override the canons of professionalism. Partisanship is, on the other hand, perhaps not as premeditated as espionage. Reporters may become convinced of the nobility of a cause once in the actual war zone. However, they may also be predisposed to partisanship because of their homeland's role in a conflict, or their reports may seem partisan because of censorship. Nevertheless, partisanship is one of the oldest and most predominant subjective modes of war journalism.

#### *4.3.4 100 Years of Subjectivity*

Whereas it took some time before objectivity established itself as the dominant war journalism ideology, it is clear that this ideal existed in the early beginnings of the profession. Nevertheless, subjective approaches can be said to have dominated the coverage of certain wars, and whether or not the journalistic community has condemned such methods during and after such coverage, subjectivity in war reporting has in many instances initially been considered unproblematic. In this regard, the patriotic coverage of the two World Wars can be seen as a mainstream rather than alternative. Despite this, the coverage of the First and Second World Wars has been strongly criticised, and one can therefore recognise that an objectivity ideal has been present in journalism in general and in war journalism specifically also at the time this subjective reporting occurred.

As demonstrated, subjective methods are not new but can rather be seen as a constant aspect of war journalism. It is only in later years however that subjective methods have been named as such explicitly. Nevertheless, the idealistic and philosophical condition of, and motivation for, the assumption of subjective methods to war and conflict, can be characterised as rather constant. The reasons for assuming a subjective position in war coverage seem to have been the same before as they are now – the wish stop war (peace journalism), to aid the victims of war (the journalism of attachment) or to help someone win a war (patriotism). Subjectivity has therefore always been a somewhat contentious issue within war journalism. Today the discussion surrounding subjective methods has become even more significant because of the supposedly growing popularity of the journalism of attachment among young professionals, and due to the introduction of peace journalism into the academic training of journalists.

#### **4.4 The Controversy of Subjective Methods of War Journalism**

Over the past 10-15 years, war journalism has been faced with certain attempts at changes within its methodology. The two most visible attempts at using an alternative approach to the reporting of war and conflict are the journalism of attachment and peace journalism. The journalism of attachment is linked to the coverage of the Bosnian War and peace journalism is a normative method developed in roundtable discussions among war journalists, foreign affairs editors and academics. Both methods have been developed within the British journalistic community, most

notably by reporters working for the broadsheet press, and for ITV and the BBC. These approaches have received much criticism from professionals, and have been discussed to some extent among media scholars. Several journalists see these methods as a threat to some of the basic principles of journalism such as objectivity and impartiality while others consider these attempts an improvement within the profession.

The journalism of attachment and the peace journalism option share a number of characteristics that first and foremost encompass the idea that journalists have an obligation to try to make the world a better and safer place. Further fundamental principles common to these methods are:

1. that print and broadcast media have a certain measure of power in setting the public and political agendas (Bell 1998: 102-103; Lynch 2002a: 9-11),
2. a view of a journalist as someone who by mere presence has an effect on a situation being reported and that as such has a responsibility for the development of that situation (Bell 1998: 103; Lynch 2002a: 11, 27), and
3. a denial of the epistemological and methodological possibility of objectivity (Bell 1998: 102-103; Lynch 2002a: 12).

The clearest distinction between the two is that the journalism of attachment was developed in the direct interaction between reporters and a war situation whereas peace journalism is a normative and academic project. Furthermore, the journalism of attachment merely encourages journalists to report with 'heart as well as mind'. The peace journalism option is accompanied by two publications outlining how to practise the method, as well as a 17-point checklist for peace journalists covering war and conflict. One similarity between the two methods is that they encourage journalists to side with the victims and the oppressed (Galtung 1998b: 3). Whereas this for the journalism of attachment often entails supporting the underdog faction in a war, peace journalism rigorously rejects assuming a position of support for either of the parties in a conflict. With this in mind, this chapter will now take a closer look at these two methods.

## 4.5 The Journalism of Attachment

The media normally evaluates its own performance after a war that has received major coverage. This customary enterprise that has been practised since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century may or may not lead to changes within the profession. The media tends to be self-critical when assessing its own performance in wartime. This self-criticism serves to remind the news media of its responsibilities in times of war. Such an evaluation also highlights the difficulties of covering violent conflicts and as such provides a basis for the further development of the profession.

After the Bosnian War (1992-1995) the news media's self-analysis produced not only substantial criticism of the Western media-coverage of the conflict, but also led to a debate surrounding some of the fundamental principles of journalism (Carruthers 2000: 240; Hammond 2002: 1; Horrocks 2000: 2; Howard 2002: 2; McLaughlin 2002: 155; Minear et al 1996: 92; Seib 2002: 40; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 228). Several professionals were highly critical of the way in which many of the correspondents stationed in Sarajevo had covered the war (Carruthers 2000: 241; Hammond 2002: 1; Hammond 2004: 187; Lloyd 2004: 4; Sambrook 2004: 11; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 222). Critics claimed to recognize a trend in war reporting particular to the Sarajevo press corps. Many high profile correspondents such as Martin Bell of the BBC, Christiane Amanpour from CNN and Maggie O'Kane of *The Guardian* were accused of practising a specific type of new journalism – a method in which objectivity was cast away in favour of advocacy. Martin Bell was the journalist who most strongly defended the professional choices he and many of his colleagues had made in Sarajevo. Later he gave the new method a name: the journalism of attachment.

### 4.5.1 Significant Adversaries

The reporting of the Bosnian War is considered the basis for the establishment of the journalism of attachment as a distinct method of war reporting. The debate over the journalism of attachment is played out most notably between former BBC journalist Martin Bell and former editor of the magazine *Living Marxism*, Mick Hume<sup>6</sup>. Several other professionals and scholars have voiced

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6 Bell's writings on the subject is concentrated in his two books, *In Harm's Way, Reflections of a War Zone Thug* (1997); *Through Gates of Fire, A Journey Into World Disorder* (2003); and in the two articles *TV News: How far Should We Go?* (*British Journalism Review* 1997); and *The Truth Is Our Currency* (*Press/ Politics* 1998). Hume in turn published a pamphlet against Bell in 1997, entitled *Whose War is it Anyway? The Dangers of the Journalism of*

their opinion on the matter, however Bell and Hume can be said to have been the principal catalysts for the debate.

#### 4.5.2 *Debating Ideology*

The controversy surrounding the journalism of attachment appears to have become more significant lately as, according to many commentators, this particular approach to reporting is growing in popularity among those practising the profession, especially among the younger generation (Bell 2003: 165; Dunkley 1997; Gowing 1997: 5; Gowing 1999; Hume 1998: 2-3, 8; McLaughlin 2002: 170). The dispute is largely over professional ideology. The practitioners of the journalism of attachment say they no longer believe in the ideal of objectivity in journalism (Bell 1998: 102; McLaughlin 2002: 154; Seib 2000: xiii; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 225). In renouncing objectivity as a viable and indeed attainable goal these professionals challenge the foundation on which much of journalism is built. The question of what a journalist should essentially be – someone who observes dispassionately or someone who participates with emotional involvement – is a central part of this debate. The journalism of attachment claims journalists cannot pretend to observe dispassionately because the journalist is already involved in the issues and ethics of war simply by being present. Hume and his supporters however claim that while this acknowledgement may have some truth to it, objectivity must remain an ideal of journalism to prevent the profession from becoming a journalism of advocacy. Hume claims there is nothing wrong with journalistic commitment – it is when journalists begin to proclaim good and evil the method becomes a dangerous approach to conflict, he says (Hume 1997: 5; McLaughlin 2002: 167). Herbert Foerstel in fact calls the method “*a new journalistic virus*” (Foerstel 1999: 1). He is supported by BBC journalist Nic Gowing. Gowing characterises of the journalism of attachment as, “*a secret shame for the journalists community, (...) a cancer (...) which is infecting journalism*” (cited in Foerstel 1999: 6; see also Hammond 2004: 183; Sambrook 2004: 11 ).

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*Attachment.* Martin Bell retired from journalism in 1997. He ran for Parliament that year as an independent, and won the seat of Tatton. After 4 years in public office he now works as a goodwill ambassador to UNICEF (Bell 2003). Mick Hume’s magazine *LM* is no longer in circulation.

### 4.5.3 *Journalism According to Bell*

Bell has often tried to explain that he did not establish a doctrine when he named his working method the journalism of attachment – he merely put into words a trend that had already been established (Bell 1997: 10; Bell 2003: 163). Nevertheless he claims this method encourages “*a journalism that cares as well as knows; that is aware of its responsibilities; and will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor*” (Bell 1997: 8). The method therefore takes journalism beyond the balanced presentation of all sides of the conflict and instead makes clear “*who are the victims and who are the aggressors*” (Seib 2000: xiii). According to Bell, the method is both balanced and principled – it is more than anything about telling the truth, and doing so with an awareness “*of the moral ground on which it operates*” (Bell 1998: 103; McLaughlin 2002: 156). Bell encourages a journalism that is careful with the facts as well as “*committed and (...) impassioned*” (Bell 2003: 56). The reason is that Bell sees journalism as a moral enterprise that frequently enters morally ambiguous grounds. Therefore, he claims, journalism must be based on some idea of what can be considered right and wrong. Journalism according to Bell can and does make a difference in the world, and for that reason reporters should try to make a difference where they can (Bell 1997: 11).

According to media scholar Wilhelm Kempf subjective methods of war journalism have surfaced in later years as a result of an increasing awareness among professionals that their practises may have an impact on national as well as international politics. In his opinion, it is the willingness of certain journalists to consciously attempt such an effect that has led to the development of the journalism of attachment (Kempf 2003: 2). Canadian journalist Ross Howard claims that Bell, who in the initial stages of the conflict reported large-scale killings with objective distance, increasingly turned his attention to the victims of the war, as well as the reasons for the war. As Howard notes, “*his intention was to make somebody do something, to end it*” (Howard 2002: 2). Looking back on the Bosnian War, Bell laments the unwillingness of the UN to intervene on behalf of the victims of war. He claims a larger international commitment could have saved thousands of lives (Bell 2003: 21).

It seems one of the premises of Bell’s journalism of attachment is that television is a powerful medium whose images have the capacity to influence the public opinion (Bell 1997: 8; Bell 1998: 102,

103; Bell 2003: 32-33, 158). Bell in fact claims the presence of television in Bosnia "*made things marginally less worse than they would have been without it*" (Bell 1998: 104). Bell maintains journalists' actions may have consequences upon situations on which they report (cited in McLaughlin 2002: 178). He therefore asks journalists to try and make a difference where they see evil (Bell 1998: 103; Hume 1998: 3). Bell states that,

*"It is no use pretending that the victims of a massacre and its perpetrators have an equal right to be heard. It is morally wrong to argue that the oppressor and the oppressed, the powerful and the powerless, the rich and the poor, are equal and equally deserving of attention. (...) it is up to us to decide who gets heard"* (cited in Kingsnorth 2004: 3-4).

Christiane Amanpour of the CNN supports Bell. She feels one should not insist "*on drawing a balance when no balance exists*" (McLaughlin 2002: 169). By this she means that while reporters should be fair, "*it does not mean treating the perpetrators on an equal basis with their victims*" (ibid). Amanpour is quite clear about her impression of the conflict in Bosnia. She claims the parties in the conflict were not equally guilty and that blame rested with one party more so than the other<sup>7</sup>. Instead she accuses what she calls a culture of moral equivalence of causing an unnecessary loss of lives during the Bosnian War (Hammond 2004: 182-183; McLaughlin 2002: 169). Philip Hammond therefore asserts that being neutral to the journalism of attachment means being an accessory to all manners of evil. In rejecting neutrality, these reporters rather construct a moral imperative for the profession – one that is based on human rights (Hammond 2002: 1). Tumber & Prentoulis hence comment that sometimes, neutrality and objectivity are regarded as a contributing factor in the execution of war crimes (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 221).

It seems many of the critics of the journalism of attachment find it important to stress the fact that they are not against responsible journalism. Instead they emphasise that moral involvement threatens a slippery slope from which journalism should steer clear at all costs (Lyon 2003: 1, 5;

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<sup>7</sup> This argument has been made also by Washington Post reporter Peter Maass (Maass 1996: 257) and Pulitzer Price winner Samantha Power. Power says: "*...as we learned in Bosnia, there is a difference between neutrality and objectivity. Initially, when people who had been working beats elsewhere went into Bosnia, there was a tendency to try and maintain the appearance of evenhandedness, despite the fact that one side was committing the bulk of the atrocities (...) [ - ] the reporters job is to convey the truth of the proportions*" (Power 2004: 8).

Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 222). Critics claim that this particular journalistic approach during the Bosnia War contributed to the public impression that the Serbs were wholly responsible for this conflict and all other parties were blameless (Brock 1993: 153, 160-172; Dunkley 1997; Foerstel 1999: 6-7; Gowing 1997: 12; Hammond 2002: 2; Hammond 2004: 183; Kempf 2003: 2; Lloyd 2004: 1; McLaughlin 2002: 167; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 222). In the “*possible attempt to attract worldwide sympathy and provoke a tough military response against the Serbs*”, says McLaughlin, this framework led to faulty reporting by the journalism of attachment (McLaughlin 2002: 167-168).

#### 4.5.4 *Hume Versus Bell*

The exchange of viewpoints between Hume, Bell and other participants in the debate can be characterized as somewhat expressive. Bell, although he displays his opinions passionately, to a general extent presents his arguments in a balanced and calm fashion. Hume’s contribution however seems full of outrage and anger. It furthermore appears from Hume’s response that he to some extent misunderstands Bell and his argumentation. Bell’s writings on the journalism of attachment are on the other hand full of contradictions that in turn can be easily misinterpreted.

Hume maintains that the journalism of attachment is demeaning to journalism. It is a method that in his opinion leads to more sensitised and simplistic reporting that indulges in feeling, not fact (Hume 1997: 26). He asserts that the reporting of the Bosnian War was one-sided. According to him, the Serbs were continuously characterised as evil and journalists often disregarded evidence of atrocities committed against the Serbs (ibid: 10-11). Nic Gowing supports this claim. He asserts that the coverage of the Bosnian War was skewed and that many reporters took sides in the conflict – a trend that resulted in unbalanced coverage (Gowing 1997: 12). Hume gives specific examples in this regard to demonstrate that Serb victims of war were ignored by American and British media. He claims to recognise the method of attachment also in the Anglo-American reporting of the Rwandan Civil War. Journalists here placed all blame on the Hutus while ignoring stories about atrocious Tutsi behaviour in the aftermath of the genocide. Hume therefore condemns the one-sided portrayal of war that he claims is the result of a journalism of attachment (Hume 1997: 11; see also Hammond 2002: 5).

Should Hume be correct in his assessment of the journalism of attachment and the effects of this method on war reporting and indeed on civil society, then the compassionate reporting encouraged by Martin Bell certainly appears as a menace to the profession. In this regard one may recognise that despite the pure intentions of the journalism of attachment, this method to some extent produces unfavourable journalistic results. On the other hand, the unsatisfactory reporting of Bosnia and Rwanda may have several causes besides a new and adversarial journalistic method. The reporting of a conflict where one side emerges as the aggressor and one as the victim is after all not a new phenomenon in war journalism.

Hume maintains that the journalism of attachment is part of an increasingly more ‘feminised’ type of war reporting – one that focuses on the humanitarian aspects of war. The result of this trend, he claims, is that reporters have become more preoccupied with human-interest stories than the military and strategic aspects of war (Hume 1997: 18). He is supported in this claim by McLaughlin (McLaughlin 2002: 170). The result, Hume claims, is the impression of a more ‘sentimentalised reality’ that reinforces stereotypes and overlooks the real issues of war (Hume 1997: 27). Hume furthermore accuses these reporters of using the method to enlarge their own self-importance in compensation for the moral ambiguity felt in Western societies. He claims these reporters use battle zones to “*work out their own existential angst [and] fight for their own souls by playing the role of the crusader*” (Hume 1997: 4). Journalists are thus compensating for the moral vacuum present in the West by establishing firm aspects of good and evil in other parts of the world (Hume 1997: 18; see also Hammond 2004: 186). Hume maintains that the reason why the journalism of attachment has been relatively well received in Western society is because audiences themselves welcome this rare moral certainty as a remedy for their own moral ambiguities (Hume 1997: 18). Therefore, in portraying a conflict in terms of good versus evil, Bell and others exult themselves to judge and jury of moral absolutes, he claims. One fear that has been expressed by critics is that crusading journalism of this kind may lead reporters to ignore facts that do not fit their constructed moral framework (Dunkley 1997; Foerstel 1999: 6; Hume 1997: 4; Hume 1998: 5; McLaughlin 2002: 166-167, 170). Therefore, some argue that the journalism of attachment removes the focus away from the conflict and onto the journalists themselves, an environment where “*viewers and readers need to be led by the reporter through a minefield of moral distinctions*” – a situation not to be desired by conventional journalistic standards (McLaughlin 2002: 166, 173, 175).

Mark Urban, Diplomatic Editor of BBC's *Newsnight*, recognises the journalism of attachment as an element in the cultural *zeitgeist*, where he claims victimhood is so fashionable that it is impossible "*for someone with a gun in their hand to be a hero*" (ibid: 173). In his opinion, the journalism of attachment is more about emotional reporting than actual journalism (ibid). Hammond argues that the journalism of attachment in fact is the opposite of everything it claims to be. The journalism of attachment does not produce truthful reporting, he claims, but rather ignores facts that do not favour its course. Furthermore, the journalism of attachment is more frequently in line with official policies than adversaries of it, he says (Hammond 2002: 2-4). Hammond goes so far as to claim the humanitarian agenda of the method in fact rather "*led to the celebration of violence against those perceived as undeserving victims*" (ibid: 2). Therefore, he says, advocacy journalism merely accomplishes that which it criticises in objective journalism – namely to follow the official agenda rather than gaining independence from it. Hammond says of the journalism of attachment that,

*"The actual irresponsibility of the journalism of attachment derives from its being a part of the broader 'new humanitarian' discourse. The logic of the moralised approach to conflicts is to seek to escalate violence in order to deal with 'evil' human rights abuses. (...) In today's circumstances, advocacy journalism and the broader human rights discourse of which it is part do indeed legitimise barbarism"* (ibid: 8).

Hume professes that he is against all forms of advocacy journalism. He recognises specifically as the journalism of attachment a journalism that attempts the encouragement of the international community to intervene on behalf of victims of war and disaster (Hume 1997: 15). Hume furthermore recognises that the media can be a powerful influence on politics. He therefore urges journalists not to take advantage of their power and encourage intervention, because he claims such a commitment from the journalistic community may make matters worse. Among other things he blames the deterioration of the situation in Somalia in 1993 on media involvement rather than on the mismanagement of the situation by the US military and the UN peace keeping forces. Hume's argument seems to be that had the media not urged intervention in Somalia, the US and the UN would have kept out of the area. Hume seems to claim that the situation became

worse as a result of media involvement – worse than what it was when journalists first discovered the conflict. Hume therefore suggests that advocacy journalism does more harm than good (Hume 1997: 17; see also Hammond 2002: 4).

On the other hand, Hume honours campaigning journalists who opposed the Vietnam War and who sympathised with the disgruntled miners in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s. The difference between this type of journalistic commitment and the journalism of attachment he asserts is that the campaigning journalism of the 1960s and 1970s was anti-interventionist. These reporters were telling their governments to get out of Vietnam and Northern Ireland, whereas the journalism of attachment is urging government to intervene in Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Somalia and Chechnya. Hume's point is that the journalism of attachment is beneficial in most part for the governments and established elites, whereas campaigning journalism in his opinion should be strongly discouraging government intervention (Hume 1997: 22-23; see also Hammond 2002: 7-8). His interpretation of the journalism of attachment is that this method is ethnocentric and imperialistic (Hume 1997: 25). The journalism of attachment, when finding evil in other countries and encouraging intervention, suggests that 'we' are the only solution to the problems of others; he claims (Hume 1997: 25; see also McLaughlin 2002: 197-198). Bell and his supporters would however most likely argue that the West, comprising the richest and most powerful nations on earth, has an obligation towards those in need. Hume however maintains that this kind of journalism will backfire because, as the old advocacy journalists of the 1960s and 1970s knew well, the intervention of Western countries into matters outside their borders has a tendency to go wrong (Hume 1997: 23). In fact, Hume seems to blame the new imperialism and the interventionist regime of the US government on the media when he claims that,

*“The effect of the crusading journalists' demands for intervention on moralistic grounds was to help overcome the incoherence of Western foreign policy and give the elites a new rationale for running the world”* (ibid: 25).

Hume's argumentation partly appears simplistic, exaggerated, and coloured by anger. The tone of his pamphlet is perhaps intended to be slightly sarcastic, but rather it comes across as stingy and contemptuous. He accuses journalism of attachment reporters of being prejudice, anti-establishment, and feminised. Hume claims that the attention directed towards the suffering of

civilians will not help audiences make sense of what is happening in a war zone, or indeed why war is taking place (ibid: 7, 11-13). This view is at odds with much of the criticism made by predominantly, but not exclusively, female war journalists since the reporting of the Vietnam War. It has been argued that the excessively male journalistic attention to military equipment, weaponry, war technology and the life of soldiers in the field has diverted much needed attention away from the effects of war – making war, in the words of Martin Bell, seem like a cost-free enterprise (Bell 1998: 105; Blair 2003). One should think this alteration in focus would be welcomed, however Hume chooses to view it as “*emotional reaction*” obstructing “*a clear view of the bigger political forces shaping events*” (Hume 1997: 13). Furthermore, Hume perhaps places too much power in the hands of the media – in effect making the journalism of attachment responsible for many of the decisions made by the parties at war to prolong the conflict in Bosnia. Hume in fact claims that, “*all of the peoples of Bosnia have paid a high price for the press corps’ intervention in their affairs*” (ibid: 17).

However, it is not problematic to see how Hume could find Martin Bell’s new method difficult to accept. Bell’s articles contain inconsistencies that may lead to misunderstandings and make him an easy target for critics. Bell says he believes in “*fairness and impartiality and a scrupulous attention to the facts*” (Bell 1998: 102). However in the same sentence he claims he is also determined to “*pay heed to the unpopular spokespeople of unfavored [sic] causes*” (ibid). These statements seem inherently contradictory when considering how fairness and impartiality are perceived as journalistic concepts. It can be argued that it is impossible to prioritise one side of the story and call it impartial journalism. On the other hand, it has been considered a journalistic task to take into account exactly those underdogs who rarely reach a level of power from where they may seize the attention themselves. Likewise, it is considered the role of the journalist to expose atrocities and criminal behaviour (Seib 2002: 10). Both Stephen J. Ward and Susan Carruthers react to Bell’s proposition that journalism should not ‘stand neutrally between good and evil’ – at the same time professing that the journalism of attachment ‘doesn’t take sides’ (Carruthers 2000: 240; Ward 1998: 123). “*Isn’t this neutrality?*” asks Ward (Ward 1998: 123). It seems Bell is urging journalists to be neutral and not neutral at the same time. Bell furthermore says the journalism of attachment, “*doesn’t back one people or army or faction against another*” (Bell 1998: 103). It might be difficult to see how this correlates with paying heed to unpopular spokespeople of unfavored causes. What Bell fails to clarify is that when he says journalism

should refrain from supporting one faction against another, he is really talking about devoting time and space to those who stand in the way of the unpopular spokespeople and their unfavored causes. What he seems to mean is that journalists should not back armed factions – that these should in fact be reported with balance and impartiality – and that the attention given to these factions should not get in the way of the attention devoted to the victims of war. Bell presupposes that in war there are many conflicting goals promoted by different armed parties. He also assumes that in war there are innocent civilians caught in the middle. These are the ones deserving of the media’s attention. In fact, it seems Bell is against those who fight wars, and in favour of saving lives.

As demonstrated it is sometimes necessary to apply a little generosity when trying to ascertain the meaning and intent of Bell’s writing. According to McLaughlin, Bell in hindsight feels his journalism of attachment has been misunderstood. To clarify he asserts his method is “*not a licence for campaigning journalism*”, and that facts are sacred in his form of war journalism. But he maintains that because journalists have the power to affect the situations upon which they report, they also have a moral responsibility for the development of that situation (McLaughlin 2002: 178). McLaughlin says of Bell and his methods:

*“Martin Bell does not deserve the opprobrium that was heaped upon his head in the wake of his ‘heresy’. He was after all the BBC journalist exemplar, public service to the bone. But it is clear that he touched a nerve. Intentionally or not, he stirred up a debate about the proper role of the journalist in the war zone”* (ibid).

Martin Bell quite likely has good intentions in calling for a journalism that cares as well as knows, as is it likely that he had the skill and experience to thread the fine line of morality in the Bosnian War. It is equally clear that he means well, and that he is right in his assertion that war journalists bear a certain responsibility upon the events they are reporting. However one may assume that the criticism towards the journalism of attachment is a result of the fact that many of the reporters who adopted Bell’s methods in the Bosnian war and in subsequent wars did not have the level of skill and experience required by this method. Consequently, because of the way that the journalism of attachment has been practised, wars and conflicts have clearly been reported unsatisfactory.

#### 4.5.5 Summary

The journalism of attachment as method has very few set rules or guidelines. Perhaps therefore it should not be described as a method but rather as a general tendency in recent war reporting. There is evidence that an increasing number of war correspondents indeed display a greater degree of emotional commitment in the conflicts they report. Whether or not the effects of this tendency are negative or positive is difficult to ascertain, and is nevertheless not an object of this thesis. The interesting aspects of the journalism of attachment rather concern the controversy and the debate surrounding the practise (as addressed here), the reason why this tendency is so recognisable, and how this method corresponds with professional ideology.

### 4.6 Peace Journalism

The creator of peace journalism is Jake Lynch, a journalist working mainly for the BBC and *The Independent*. He is the author of *Reporting the World – A Practical Checklist for the Ethical Reporting of Conflicts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2002) and co-author with Annabel McGoldrick of *What are Journalists for?* (1998), and *Peace Journalism – How to Do It* (2000). Peace journalism is a method for covering war and conflict that has a normative approach to journalism practise (Kempf 2003: 2). It draws heavily on insights from conflict analysis (Lynch 2002a: 4, 28-29; Schechter 2001: 1). Lynch says of the peace journalism method that it is “*a service for journalists striving to uphold values of balance, fairness and responsibilities in their coverage of international affairs*” (Lynch 2002a: 3). He argues that the obligation of journalism is towards conflict resolution and a greater understanding of the complex issues of war. Peace journalism therefore forwards the idea that journalists have a duty to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in this world (ibid: 30-33), because, “*...there is a larger ethical dimension to the way a conflict is reported, some sense of responsibility for its possible influence over the course of events*” (ibid: 9).

The peace journalism method has been developed since 1997 through seminars and roundtable discussions between journalists and academics arranged by *MediaChannel*, the *Freedom Forum* and *Conflict and Peace Forums* at Taplow Court outside London (Lynch 2002a: 10; Schechter 2001: 1). These organisations arrange seminars for students, professionals and media scholars on how to practise the method (Kempf 2003: 2). Further efforts at training journalists in the peace journalism

method have been made by Johan Galtung's conflict resolution group the *Transcend Peace and Development Network*, the *Conflict Resolution Network Canada* and the *Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution* (Adnan 1998: 1; Kempf 2003: 2). The method is also taught at certain universities<sup>8</sup>.

#### 4.6.1 Journalism According to Lynch

According to Danny Schechter, peace journalism is “*challenging the one-dimensional war and conflict reporting, offering concrete alternatives rather than mere (if solid) criticism*” (Schechter 2001: 1). Lynch suggests a checklist<sup>9</sup> based on the conflict analysis of Johan Galtung for reporters in warring areas that focuses on highlighting the complexities of war and possible solutions to violent conflicts (Lynch 2002a: 4- 5). Lynch maintains that it is important not to portray war as a zero-sum conflict between only two opposing parties. Rather, he suggests that journalists focus on the many conflicting goals of the diverse parties in a conflict, thereby “*opening up more creative potential for a range of outcomes*” (Lynch & McGoldrick 2000: 1). He also proposes that journalists not categorise the parties as good or evil, self or other, victim or villain, and emphasises that it is important to explain the reasons for and consequences of war and conflict. He asserts that trying to find common ground between the warring factions may create an environment better suited for peaceful negotiations than should reporters only focus on the aggression of stalemate. Lynch proposes that reporters be careful of using language that may stigmatise either of the parties. He also encourages journalists to report wrongdoing by all parties in the conflict while treating victims with respect. Furthermore, Lynch suggests reporters try and seek out peace initiatives on a regular basis, rather than focusing merely on the efforts of official statespersons and peace negotiators. He suggests this might be more easily accomplished if journalists do more to seek out sources of information alternative to official government and military spokespersons (Galtung 1998a: 2-4; Lynch & McGoldrick 2000: 1-3; see also Kempf 2003: 6-9).

Lynch wants reporters to be proactive and ethical in their approach to war reporting. He urges war journalism to go deeper into the structure and causes of conflicts so that the audience might

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<sup>8</sup> Among those educational institutions offering training in peace journalism are the online university The Transcend Peace University, The University of Oslo, The University of Sydney and The Amsterdam-Maastricht Summer University.

<sup>9</sup> The checklist (Lynch & McGoldrick 2000) is presented in full in the Appendix.

better understand the complexities of war (Lynch 2002a: 13-14). Incidentally, Galtung, who is a professor of Peace Studies and a supporter of the peace journalism option, claims Lynch's method gives a more accurate picture of the events of the world than traditional war journalism methods (Galtung 1998a: 6). Lynch claims that today's war journalism is a method of reporting that only serves to encourage further aggression between parties in a conflict. He proposes that his method better preserves the chances for peace – in part by incorporating all aspects of the conflict into news analysis (Lynch 2002a: 33). Lynch explains that,

*“If people think of a conflict as having only two parties, they can feel they are faced with only two alternatives – victory or defeat. Defeat being unthinkable, each party steps up its efforts for victory. Relations between them deteriorate, and there is an escalation of violence. This may further entrench the ‘us and them’ mentality, causing gradually growing numbers of people to ‘take sides’” (ibid: 30).*

Therefore,

*“Recognising an expanded number of stakeholders and their goals expands the possible number of creative combinations of interests, which can lead towards solutions and transformed relations. This is a key to a co-operative or collaborative approach. A conflict presented as two parties contesting the same goal (like territory, control, victory) is so naked there is very little to play on. When the conflict is more complex, constructive deals can be made” (ibid: 32).*

#### 4.6.2 Practising the Method

Lynch has in his writings provided examples of how war and conflict can be covered more satisfactorily by the peace journalism method. One such approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict focuses on the many parties involved, the history of the conflict and the dispute over the scarce water resources in the region. Lynch likewise attempts a broader view on the conflicts in Indonesia and Ireland (ibid: 43-57), thereby demonstrating how the method may contribute to a greater understanding of war and conflict. However the examples in *Reporting the World* are

taken from areas of low-intensity internal conflicts where full-scale war is absent. In spite of the armed conflicts existing in these regions, the inhabitants of Israel, Indonesia and Ireland are nonetheless able to lead more or less normal lives. The level of hostilities is not the same as say in Bosnia, in Rwanda or in Afghanistan. Additionally, these conflicts have been fought for several years, meaning that information is relatively available in the form of established non-government sources. Also, journalists are free to travel these areas without the need for military protection. In other areas where war journalism is practised this level of information access and freedom to move might be restricted by the military. Besides, war may be over in a few weeks, as has been the case in the Falklands and in the Gulf War, possibly leaving it more difficult to acquire alternative sources of information as well as an in-depth understanding of war than in the conflicts to which Lynch refers.

In 1997 and 1998 two Northern Ireland newspapers, the nationalist *Irish News* and the unionist *News Letter*, combined their efforts at peace journalism in conjuncture with a the controversial annual Orange Order parade which came to be known as the “Siege of Dumcree” (Fawcett 2002: 215-217). The newspapers issued joint editorials where they encouraged the parties to reach a compromise concerning the march but were unsuccessful in conveying their message. The newspapers instead reverted to producing news within the usual framework of conflict. Liz Fawcett claims this happened because while the editorials contained a clear message of reconciliation, the remainder of the newspapers’ content continued to convey a frame of incompatible interests (ibid: 213, 218-219, 221). Fawcett asserts that this gave the newspapers “*a decidedly schizophrenic tone*” that failed to encourage appeasement (ibid: 218). Fawcett maintains that the reporters, in spite of their editors’ attempts at peace journalism, could not escape the discursive frameworks and institutional constraints under which they worked (ibid: 214, 221-222). Fawcett claims it was the identification felt by reporters to the cause of their readers that prevented them from becoming peacemakers. She says this “*can be traced, in large part, to the constraining nature of the news text*” (ibid: 222). As such, the criticism towards peace journalism often focuses on the technological, social, economical and institutional restrictions inherent in the media structures from within which journalists report wars (Fawcett 2002: 222; Kempf 2003: 2-3).

On the other hand, there are suggestions that peace journalism has been practised with some success in other areas of conflict. For instance, Lynch and McGoldrick profess that small,

conflict-ridden communities in predominantly third world countries should and indeed have benefited from peace journalism (Lynch & McGoldrick 2001: 1-3; Lynch 2002b). Furthermore, Angela Castellanos claims that Lynch's method is being practised in rural Colombia, albeit with little effect on the level of violence dominating some of the communities there (Castellanos 2001: 1-3). A web search<sup>10</sup> reveals that it also seems media workers in under-developed countries especially in the Asian region find peace journalism an attractive option to examine for the benefit of their communities.

In Wilhelm Kempf's view, peace journalism demands much from journalists. The method insists that reporters break free of the institutional, economical and sociological constraints of news production in order to successfully become peace correspondents. Kempf emphasises that peace reporters will need to have great knowledge and understanding of conflict theory, while at the same time possessing the professional and technical skills rendering them capable of communicating wars in an exciting and engaging way (Kempf 2003: 10-11). Kempf's objections towards the method can be supplemented by Majid Tehranian, who says that, "*at the individual level, peace journalism appears the simplest to define but the most difficult to enact*" (Tehranian 2002: 74). Tehranian's view of peace journalism is however positive. He proposes that in order for peace journalism to succeed, reporters must choose to undergo an ethical transformation. He furthermore claims that the whole system of news production must undertake major structural changes in its institutional framework to provide the individual freedom necessary for this alteration. Tehranian therefore calls for pluralism in news institutions on local, national and global levels – a media system that is based on the assumption that communication is a human right (Tehranian 2002: 58, 74-76, 79; see also Kempf 2003: 10-11). According to him, a more diverse media system should facilitate the promotion of peace journalism in a more feasible way (Tehranian 2002: 58). Tehranian says that, "*professional media ethics would thrive best in a mixed media system in which pluralism of structure gravitates toward pluralism of content and checks and balances in news coverage*" (ibid: 59).

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<sup>10</sup> I am here referring to a Google search conducted on 27th July 2004, in which the search word used was "*peace Journalism*". In the first 50 hits the search produced 15 articles on training opportunities and university courses in the peace journalism method and 5 articles on the practise of peace journalism.

### 4.6.3 *Criticising Peace Journalism*

Such a transformation of media systems might be considered wishful thinking on the part of Tehranian. The critics of peace journalism often emphasise the impossibility of carrying out such a methodological alternation. Not only are protests towards Lynch and his supporters idealistic in nature – they often argue that peace journalism is simply not viable. Many media scholars have devoted much attention to the structural constraints inherent in the news media system. This includes consideration for the difficulties of executing satisfactory war journalism. It has been pointed out that economic, technological and cultural structures may restrict the extent to which war reporting can be performed according to the desired standards of the profession<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore peace journalism demands much in terms of resources. The developments within foreign news coverage suggest that fewer resources are being devoted to the international sections of news outlets than ever before. Likewise, the number of specialist correspondents is constantly decreasing and the trend of parachute journalism is becoming more and more prevalent (Hamilton & Jenner 2004: 306, 313; Moeller 1999: 26-27; Schechter 2001: 2). Furthermore, satellite and Internet technology – the reality of real-time reporting and a 24-hour news cycle - can be said to have introduced increasing pressures on correspondents to perform within a shorter time span and geographical region than before (Carruthers 2000: 203-205; Hawkins 2002: 226-227; Herbert 2001: 8-10, 17-18, 57-65; Moeller 1999: 29-32; Tumber 1999: 347). Whereas peace journalism may seem the perfect methodological approach to war and conflict reporting, the realities of the media system suggests that such a method could not be practised under the current realities facing the profession. The suggestion promoted by Tehranian to tear down the inherent limitations on peace journalism may seem difficult to accomplish, if not completely unrealistic in nature (Herbert 2001: 20; McQuail 1994: 156-159, 162; Moeller 1999: 25-28). The difficulties of working in a war zone where restrictions are already abundant (language barriers, military censorship, geographical restrictions and a generally dangerous environment) are therefore further complicated by the structures of multinational media conglomerates.

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<sup>11</sup> The restraints on the journalistic profession can further more be said to be enhanced by a market liberalist media environment. News broadcasts and segments become shorter and increasingly entertaining in format; news staffs are reduced; less funding is directed towards coverage of international affairs; and the political ideologies and economic philosophies of owners and shareholders may be seen to affect news media output (Hamilton & Jenner 2004: 304-305; Hawkins 2002: 226-227; Herbert 2001: 2; Kempf 2003: 2, McQuail 1994: 156-159, 169; Minear et al 1996: 36; Reese 2001: 179-182; Starck 2001: 145; Tumber 1999: 235-236).

A common objection towards peace journalism concerns the demand that journalists become actively involved in a conflict. BBC reporter David Lyon claims that journalists cannot meet this demand because this is not the function of their profession (Lyon 2002b: 1). Lyon maintains that even though journalists may influence events by their presence this should not encourage them to become involved in conflicts. Journalists are witnesses, he claims, not participants. Lyon expresses the view held by many that whereas war journalism certainly could improve; a critique of the profession should abstain from attacking the fundamental principles of journalism (Lyon 2003: 1-4). Lyon claims that, “*we need sharp forensic weapons to cope with this world, not an ethical checklist from peace journalism academics*” (ibid: 2). He rather sees peace journalism as a ‘theoretical construct’ – a method that *prescribes* a cure for journalism. He contrasts this with the standard method of today, which he claims sufficiently upholds journalism by *proscribing* what reporters cannot do (ibid: 1-2). He claims this distinction within journalism ethics is very important because a change within this ideology will have a “*potentially distorting effect on the news agenda*” (ibid: 2). According to Lyon, anyone who wishes to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts should join the UN, not the correspondent corps (Lyon 2002b: 4). Lyon in fact claims that the peace journalism option is “*the most pernicious of the [new subjective methods], especially since it is so well funded, academically backed and superficially attractive*” (Lyon 2003: 1).

Lyon defends the objectivity method within war journalism not by claiming that objectivity is indeed possible, but through emphasising that even though there may not be an attainable objective truth, the audience need to feel that what they “*see on the screen or hear on the radio is an honest attempt at objectivity*” (ibid: 5). This, according to Lyon, is the heart of the relationship between the reporter and the audience – that there is no agenda in war journalism (ibid). Lyon summarises his objections towards the peace journalism option by pointing out that he does not disagree with the fundamental attitudes of the method, namely that objectivity is unattainable, that journalists can influence the situations on which they report, and that there may be more than two parties to a conflict. What he objects to is the argument that journalists should play an active role in attempting to find a solution to and end war and conflict (Lyon 2002a: 1). The fundamental principle of peace journalism – to “*help prevent and moderate violence, promoting understanding and peace*” (Adnan 1998: 3), is therefore the real controversy of the method.

#### 4.6.4 Summary

Jake Lynch's method proposes some important changes within war journalism that would likely account for some of the common war journalism criticism to which Lynch refers. Journalists should have better knowledge of an area and its people before parachuting into a war. They should also be more alert as to the use of antagonistic and stereotypical language, and should work harder to obtain information from non-governmental sources. Journalists should examine a conflict thoroughly and look beyond military hardware and body counts for their stories. They should also examine the reasons for war, the effects of war and contribute to peoples' comprehensive understanding of war. On the other hand, even this standard of war reporting is difficult to attain. The journalism corps is comprised of fewer experts and more parachuters than ever before, and wars are increasingly administered by governments and the military to obstruct journalistic access to independent sources. Movement in and around a war zone is restricted and the demands of live television nevertheless inhibits reporters from making long trips. These and countless other obstructions present a great challenge even to the objective journalist. The demands on peace journalism suggest that a peace journalist working for a daily news media outlet is an unlikely possibility. Peace journalism is however an academic project and as such, may have a potential in periodicals, local media and in the production of documentaries.

#### 4.7 Summary

According to Wilhelm Kempf, the two aforementioned methods represent contradictory approaches to obtaining the same goal, namely "*to change the nature of journalistic responsibility*" (Kempf 2003: 2). The attempts of advocates of methods such as the journalism of attachment and peace journalism can perhaps be seen as urging reporters to 'think outside the box'. Bell and Lynch acknowledge many of the problems within war journalism today, as do most academics and professionals participating in this debate. Peace journalism and the journalism of attachment propose solutions to the perceived problems of war correspondence by appealing to morality and ethics. The notion that such standards rather than the objectivity norm should come to guide the war journalism profession, is one opposed by many.

Whereas these subjective methods may seem to have become increasingly popular – among high profile war reporters as well as in general – there are also strong objections to these methods in the professional community. The influence of Bell and Lynch on war journalism is not all-encompassing; however it can be argued that peace journalism and the journalism of attachment have influenced the nature of the profession. For one thing, an increasingly moral and ethical approach to war may have contributed to a 'feminisation' of the profession. The improved awareness of the effect of war on civilian life as opposed to a perspective on military hardware and body counts may also have been a factor in the increased understanding of the emotional strain of war reporting. Additionally, the popularity of the new methods may testify as to the degree to which personal sentiments are a larger part of war journalism now than before.

## CHAPTER 5

### WAR JOURNALISM AND PROFESSIONAL IDEOLOGY

#### 5.1 The Professional Ideology of War Journalism

Objectivity is here perceived as the professional ideal of journalism in general<sup>12</sup> and war journalism in particular. It is my impression that the objectivity ideal is accompanied in this ideology by other principles such as the fourth estate and personal engagement. Together these are thought to be significant ideals within journalism. In this regard, journalism's role as the fourth estate is thought to reside at the top of the pyramid of legitimacy within the profession<sup>13</sup>. The purpose of the fourth estate is to provide citizens with adequate information rendering them capable of performing their civic duties. In this function journalists are responsible for the dissemination of information upon which democracy is based (Dahlgren 1995: 2, Habermas 1996: 298; Taylor 1997: 3). The role of the fourth estate can therefore be said to entail the primary ideal of journalism and the news media. Supporting the ideal of the fourth estate is the objectivity ideal, which may in this sense be placed directly below the fourth estate ideal in a pyramid of legitimacy. As such, objectivity is that which lends legitimacy to the ideal of the fourth estate, and therefore holds a prominent and central position within journalism ideology. Personal engagement, on the other hand, is a somewhat more ambiguous ideal. Although it bestows on the journalism profession and the fourth estate a sense of authority and purpose, personal

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12 See for instance Eide 1992: 36, 41; Hallin 1989: 63; Manoff 1998: 4; McNair 1994: 25; Schudson 1978: 3; Tuchman 1972; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 221.

13 See journalistic codes of ethics, for instance the European Code on the Ethics of Journalism and the Code of Ethics of the Norwegian Press Association ([www.ijnet.org](http://www.ijnet.org)).

engagement is somewhat problematic in respect to the objectivity ideal. Personal engagement can give journalism and the fourth estate a certain amount of legitimacy, yet it can also damage the legitimacy of the profession in light of its position vis-à-vis the objectivity ideal. This paradox will become apparent in the debate concerning war journalism subjectivity and professional ideology.

In light of the discussion surrounding subjective methods of war journalism examined in this thesis, one may ask why methods such as the journalism of attachment and peace journalism have created such a strong a debate over the principles of journalism. I will in the following establish how the field of journalism struggles to maintain its objectivity ideal and how the stability of the field is dependent on the strong presence of this ideal. Therefore, subjectivity in war journalism methods can be perceived as a threat to the professional ideology and indeed the basis of the field's legitimacy.

## **5.2 Objectivity as Professional Ideal**

During the Enlightenment era, the main scientific paradigm consisted of a belief in photographic realism and the objectivity of science. The general belief within science and philosophy was that certainty could be achieved through methodology. This confidence in the possibility of an independent achievement of objective knowledge free from the subjective interference of the practitioner influenced journalism as craft. It was assumed that one through objectivity could obtain and convey information about the world that could be considered true from all possible standpoints. In this environment the press was considered a mirror to the world – an institution that could simply reflect the events in the world as they actually happened (McNair 1999: 32-33; Schudson 1978: 1-11).

According to Howard Tumber and Marina Prentoulis, the press underwent a transformation in the 1920s. A concept of responsibility became more essential to journalism because the ideal of objectivity was perceived as being increasingly at odds with the concept of representing 'truth' in public relations terms (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001: 72-73; Schudson 1978: 134-142; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 215). Journalists had become ambivalent about the meaning of 'truth' in the wake of successful government propaganda efforts during the First World War – creating a need for the press to

develop a standard that would ensure their own credibility (Allan 1999: 24; Schudson 1978: 122). Facts were no longer pure and objective statements about the world, but, "*individually constructed interpretations*" of the world (McNair 1999: 33; see also Schudson 1978: 6-7, 141). Rather these interpretations could be presented objectively by a method – "*professionally agreed rules which could minimise the impact of subjectivity on reporting*" (McNair 1999: 33). Thus the objectivity ideal was born, "*reflecting the need, as it were, to reassert the possibility of a transcending truth*" in the face of subjectivity (McNair 1999: 33; see also Schudson 1978: 151, 157-158)<sup>14</sup>.

Walter Lippmann maintains that journalist should be taught the ideal of objectivity regardless of its possible unattainability, as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. Lippmann claims: "*As our minds become more deeply aware of their own subjectivism, we find a zest in the objective method that is not otherwise there*" (cited in McLaughlin 2002: 160, Schudson 1978: 151). Being objective means reporters have no interest in the outcome or effect of their coverage (Gans 1980: 183). Objectivity furthermore entails an accurate representation of reality that can be "*measured by neutrality (not taking sides) and information balance indexes*" (Garon 1996: 3). The objectivity method demands that the personal opinion of the reporter remains hidden, and that "*one should separate facts from values*" (Schudson 1978: 5, see also Gans 1980: 183-184). This ideal insists that reports be written in such a way that audiences may make up their own minds as to what has happened (Gans 1980: 186; McNair 1994: 25; Tuchman 1972: 666). Contrarily, subjectivity means the journalist has a specific goal in mind when reporting. The question of who is an objective and who is a subjective reporter therefore lies in the intent of the journalist (Gans 1980: 188). Journalists who claim to be using the objectivity method shall be considered objective reporters for the purpose of this thesis, regardless of whether or not the actual outcome of the work can be seen as containing an interest in the effects of the work, hidden or otherwise, because the distinction here lies in intent. When journalists claim to be objective, they accept the methodological disinterest in the effect of their reports. Reporters who claim to be subjective,

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<sup>14</sup> I shall refrain here from entering a discussion of journalistic objectivity in a broad sense. The debate over the possibility, necessity and viability of objectivity is not essential to the questions asked in this thesis. Bearing in mind that objectivity is a highly contested term in journalism (see for instance Schudson 1978), and broadly discussed both in professional and academic circles; suffice it to say in this context that objectivity is a leading ideal in journalism - important to the authority of the profession. My main concern here is to demonstrate that the position of journalistic subjectivity is relative to the position of the professional objectivity ideal. Therefore, I wish to leave the objectivity debate aside, short of acknowledging and accounting for the controversy of this term.

however, admit to having assumed an interest in the outcome of the situations on which they report.

Regarding the ideal of objectivity, few professionals still proclaim the epistemological possibility of achieving and conveying to the public an objective truth (Cunningham 2003: 2; Ettema & Glasser 1998: 9-10). Nevertheless several practitioners continue to champion the ideal of objectivity, many claiming that although practically unattainable, objectivity should still remain something to which reporters should aspire (Cunningham 2003: 2; Pedelty 1995: 172; Ward 1998: 123). However, professionals have to some extent distanced themselves from the term objectivity in favour of less contentious terms such as detachment, balance, fairness and impartiality (see for instance Cunningham 2003: 2; Cutter 1999: 1; Wilson 1996: 42-46). State broadcasters such as the BBC make few mentions of the objectivity ideal but still hold their reporters to a standard of detachment and impartiality (McNair 1999: 34). The move away from objectivity suggests uneasiness connected to the term that can be suspended by substituting objectivity with less disputed words such as neutrality and detachment. The new words describing the journalistic ideal nevertheless derive from objectivity, a fact that supports the notion that objectivity is still the legitimating force within the field. Being objective thus means being balanced, fair, accurate, impartial and detached (Pedelty 1995: 173, 190). Objectivity is consequently not removed from the journalism ideal by these terms of substitution, but remains a foundation for the constant development of the profession in its encounter with philosophical fluctuations.

### **5.3 The Ideals of the Fourth Estate and Personal Engagement**

In the standard professional ideology journalists have an obligation toward upholding democracy and a viable public debate that essentially sustains democracy. The role of the press is furthermore to ensure the fairness and quality of the public discourse. Journalists should also expose the abuse of power and other wrongs in society. As such it is widely accepted that journalists have an obligation toward the weaker members of society – by extension ensuring that the rights of individuals are not violated<sup>15</sup>. Daniel Hallin maintains that the ‘mirror’ analogy of

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15 For references see Allan 1999: 49; Alleyne 1997: 34; Berger 2000: 85; Black et al 1999: 19; Dahlgren & Sparks 1991: 195; Dahlgren 1995: 2; Kieran 1997: 25; Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001: 17, 51, 112; Marris & Thornham 1996, 401; McNair 1994: 24; McQuail 1994: 3; Merrill 1989: 99-100; Reese 2001: 175; Robbins 1993: 76.

the press – the belief that the media does not construct reality but merely reflect the world objectively – has dominated “*the self-conception of American journalism in the twentieth century*” (Hallin 1989: 5). This analogy places the journalist as neutral observer of events in the world, disconnected from the political strata of society (Hallin 1989: 5; Raaum 2001: 64). However, journalists also see themselves as agents of the fourth estate. This ideal positions them as adversaries of power, and as advocates of truth and openness (Hallin 1989: 5).

As agents of the fourth estate journalists have a duty towards ‘showing society to itself’. According to Brian McNair, journalists, in reporting the perceived problems of society on a daily basis, play a significant role in defining what exactly entails ‘problems’ (McNair 1999: 25; Raaum 2001: 67). To be able to judge what demands and deserves the attention of the media and thus of the public, journalists need a sense of what is considered right and wrong in the society in which they work. This sense of morality is what makes journalists capable of conducting critical reporting so necessary within the ideology of the fourth estate. In surveying society, journalists need a strong personal sense of right and wrong, and to fulfil the role of the fourth estate, the profession requires a strong personal engagement and commitment on the part of the reporter (Raaum 2001: 65). Therefore the paradox of journalism entails a situation where the objectivity ideal provides the legitimacy of the field, and where the ideal of personal engagement ensures the legitimacy of the fourth estate (Ettema & Glasser 1998). The fact that these two somewhat conflicting ideals can exist alongside one another to sustain the field of journalism testifies to the extent to which the profession can be perceived as threatened by any form of journalism that rejects the professional ideology.

#### **5.4 Threats to the Field**

The field of journalism is an ambiguous one. Because journalism is not characterised as a profession in the strictest sense – in that it is not protected as a licensed vocation with fixed criteria for entry – the field is constantly under threat of becoming destabilised (Dahlgren & Sparks 1992: 2-10; Clayman 2002: 197-199; Raaum 2001: 67). The stability of the field is among other things being challenged from different groups of professionals who wish to benefit from the legitimacy of journalism. People working for publications of a less serious character, such as Internet publications and the increasing number of so-called freesheets (free newspapers often based on

advertising and entertainment) have been characterised as a growing vocational group that attempts to borrow legitimacy from the journalism field. Such publications often employ people who are not members of any established journalism organisation. By referring to themselves as journalists this new group of media workers expect the legitimacy of the title, so established by the journalism field, to provide legitimacy for themselves and their medium. The Internet publications and freesheets have however been characterised as having assumed an unfavourable attitude towards the professional ethics of journalism. They have especially been criticised for being lenient with the ethics of privacy, and for publishing information obtained from unreliable sources. In this situation it is in the interest of the field to prevent this new group of media workers from harming the legitimacy of journalism on which the field so depends (Raaum 2001: 77-82). Additionally the field is now being challenged by the new subjective methods of war journalism.

Gaye Tuchman characterises objectivity as a 'strategic ritual' – a mechanism that "*mobilises the society-wide credibility and legitimacy sought after by the journalistic profession*" (cited in McNair 1999: 31; see also Tuchman 1972: 660). Jan Fredrik Hovden quotes Pierre Bourdieu in this respect, who claims that, "*all agents that are involved in a field share a certain number of fundamental interests, namely everything that is linked to the very existence of the field*" (Hovden 2001: 98). The professional ideology of journalism is based on the presumption that journalists are the keepers of a neutral professionalism that enables them to report the news impartially (Ekström 2002: 260; Raaum 2001: 64). According to John Wilson, impartiality is central to journalism because broadcast news in particular has the ability to reach a mass audience (Wilson 1996: 39; see also McNair 1994: 28). Because news production is given such a prominent position within any broadcaster, the legitimacy of the profession is dependent upon a sustained strong position of the objectivity ideal (Eide 1992: 30). The objective or impartial method is, according to Matthew Kieran, an important ingredient in the relationship between the newsmakers and the public, because the assurance of the objectivity ideal is essentially that which encourages public trust in news institutions (Kieran 1997: 37-39; see also Raaum 2001: 64). Because objectivity is important for the authority and credibility of the journalistic field (Eide 2001: 30; Gans 1980: 186), subjectivity can be said to undermine the ideal and subsequently weaken the field's basic claim for legitimacy.

## 5.5 War Journalism Ideology

The legitimacy of war journalism is supported in the largest extent by the objectivity ideal (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 217). Peter Arnett exemplifies what is here considered an objective journalist. Arnett reported the Vietnam War for *Associated Press*. In spite of carrying a weapon his reporting methods can be considered typical of what I term the objectivity method. Firstly, according to Knightly, Arnett was careful in his use of language. Not wanting to be seen as making judgements upon what he witnessed, Arnett proclaims that he avoided using value laden expressions such as ‘war crimes’ and ‘atrocities’, but instead reported merely what had happened, how it had happened and who was involved in the event. This way, he claims, audiences were free to make their own assessments of the incidents he reported (Knightly 2000: 435-436). Both Knightly and Evans refer to a specific incident to illustrate the extent of Arnett’s objective method. When Arnett came across a monk about to set fire to himself outside the Saigon market, he refrained from interfering with the act to instead take photographs of the incident. Arnett said of the event that, “*I could have prevented that immolation by rushing at him and kicking the gasoline away. As a human being, I wanted to. As a reporter I couldn’t*” (Evans 2003: 54; Knightly 2000: 446).

However, the professional ideology of war journalism also contains components that are somewhat paradoxical to the objectivity ideal. As such, the personally involved war correspondent is considered an iconic feature of war journalism. One interesting feature in this respect is the fact that many journalists admit they admire reporters who dare become emotionally involved in their stories<sup>16</sup>. According to McLaughlin, James Cameron is cited by many as an inspiration in their work. Cameron confessed he saw objectivity as on occasion being both “*meaningless and impossible*” (McLaughlin 2002: 162). Cameron in fact often argued that truth was more important than objectivity, “*and that the reporter whose technique was informed by no opinion lacked a very serious dimension*” (ibid). According to Tumber and Prentoulis then,

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16 The Norwegian weekly newspaper *Morgenbladet* has run a series of articles where prominent Norwegian journalists have been given the opportunity to write about their journalistic idols (Morgenbladet 21.05.04 - 23.07.04). These idols are predominantly personally committed reporters who more often than not renounce the objectivity ideal. Examples include George Orwell, Christian Krogh, Tom Wolfe, Barbara Ehrenreich and Martha Gellhorn.

*“the principle of detachment is the locus of the antagonism between the two main axes around which the social identity of war correspondents is constructed i.e. service to the public and professionalism”* (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 222).

War journalists are also subject to the ideals of a certain macho culture (Nicholson 1997: 10). Zelizer and Allan characterise war reporters as a specialist group within the profession – one that *“traditionally enjoys a trenchcoat culture”* (Zelizer & Allan 2002: 260). Peter Maass asserts that much of the status of the war journalist comes from the danger these professionals experience. Moreover, it is the journalistic death rate that gives the profession such a high status (Maass 1996: 98; see also Feinstein 2003: 29). The icon of the war junkie is characteristic of the extent to which male practitioners have dominated the profession. It implies that being able to endure the images of war and the effects of war requires a certain amount of ‘manliness’. Furthermore, the professional ideals of objectivity, detachment and impartiality may perhaps have been conceived as a particularly ‘male’ approach to war and conflict. The macho ideal and the objectivity ideal can therefore be seen as closely related. On the other hand, amidst this environment of machismo, a certain humanitarianism seems to be as strong an ideal as the war junky. Arnett here represents the distanced, cold and male observer, while Cameron represents the compassionate humanitarian and involved reporter. Both men are famous icons of war journalism, which demonstrates the degree to which the profession is influenced both by ideals of objectivity and personal engagement. The fact that these conflicting ideals may coexist without destabilising the field is somewhat curious, especially considering the criticism directed towards the journalism of attachment and peace journalism.

## **5.6 Subjective Ideology**

The professional ideology of war journalism has thus been established as being one of objective methodology seasoned with the ideals and icons of journalistic engagement. To outline a professional ideology of the subjective methods examined in this thesis, one has to keep in mind the presence of these aforementioned ideals in the alternative approaches as well. Seeing as how subjectivity has often developed out of dissatisfaction with the professional ideology of objectivity, alternative war journalistic methods can be said to both draw on and reject the standard professional ideals of war correspondence (see for instance Pedelty 1995: 176).

Herbert Gans emphasises that the journalistic profession holds certain enduring values that are relatively stable over time. However, he says, these values are not uniformly shared among all news publications and news reporters. Certain news institutions serve explicit political values and thereby attract reporters and audiences of similar mindsets. However, “*even these journalists apply some of the enduring values*” that can be found in objective news producers (Gans 1980: 197). Therefore, journalists utilising subjective methods of war journalism also see the role of the journalist as someone who is an active and responsible participant in the world. They believe the press serves a function in civil society where journalists have a special obligation toward upholding democracy, peace, stability, fairness and human rights in the world. They believe journalists and the media have a responsibility towards the weak and oppressed members of the international community, and that they have a duty towards exposing human rights abuses to the powerful leaders of the world (Hammond 2002: 1). As such they believe the media is a powerful institution that can sway public and political opinion. Because of this premise subjective journalists believe they have a responsibility as to how they convey events in the world to an audience. Some also believe that journalists, because of the power of the media, have a responsibility to help make the world a better and more peaceful place. Much of this fit well into the standard professional ideology of the press in the Western world.

Subjective reporters are, in the same fashion as objective reporters, working in the interest of exposing the truth (Bell 1998: 103; Bell 2003: 56; Hammond 2003: 1). However truth to a subjective reporter involves more than simply conveying what happened. For instance, in the event of a market bombing that leaves innocent civilians dead and wounded, the objective reporter will simply say what has happened. The report will contain information about who ordered and conducted the action, how and when it occurred, how many are dead and wounded, and comments about the events from various authority figures connected to the events (if available) (Tuchman 1972: 665-670). A subjective reporter might treat the matter differently. Presuming that the subjective reporter has taken a stand for or against the perpetrators, the bombing might present itself as an act of evil or as an act of necessity. Should the reporter feel compassionate towards the civilian population, the events might further demoralise the attackers, however such a subjective position is likely to manifest itself thus: to an objective reporter the death of children by mortar fire is no more than an event in a war, perhaps evidence of an escalation of the conflict. To the subjective reporter the bombing of children is an act that in and of itself is evil. The

subjective reporter thus refuses that the truth entails merely the fact that children have died. The truth to a subjective reporter contains more than just ‘the facts’ – it often contains some form of attitude towards the events of war in terms of right or wrong (see for instance Hammond 2002: 1). Herein lays a common objection towards the objective method, that story balance – methodological safety – is favoured above exposing the truth (Pedelty 1995: 173-175). As Christine Amanpour has expressed, it would be wrong to insist “*on drawing a balance when no balance exists*” (McLaughlin 2002: 169). If one party is more to blame than the other, this is the truth.

The ideal of the subjective methods of war journalism cannot necessarily be characterised as being one of subjectivity as such. As mentioned, journalists using a subjective method have a specific intention with their chosen method to in some way influence the situations on which they report. Therefore one may characterise the professional ideal of the subjective method as being one of altruism. Subjectivity is therefore the means to an end, chosen for its ability to attain a certain purpose because objectivity as method has been determined as insufficiently suitable to such a cause. Essentially, one may characterise the subjective methods here investigated as believing in the responsibility of journalism. The method of subjectivity often demands that reporters conduct thorough research and follow up on their stories – an aspect of taking responsibility for the situations on which they report. This can be characterised as a similar attitude to that expressed by the ideal of the engaged journalist within the standard professional ideology. However, the assumption of a position of advocacy for the victims of war or for an armed faction does not comply with the objectivity ideal.

## **5.7 Sustaining the Field**

While the aim of the subjectivity method is to influence events, the aim of the objectivity method can be characterised as presenting the issues objectively. However, one may recognise that the objectivity method furthermore inherently holds an interest in upholding the professional codes and ideals of a system in which objectivity may function as the professional ideal (Garon 1996: 3; Hovden 2001: 98). This interest includes the preservation of civil society and a vibrant deliberative democracy in which the press may function as a fourth estate. I consequently suggest that it is the vested interest of the objective reporter to uphold the system that ensures that objective reporting

can be practised. Objectivity can therefore be characterised as a method for self-preservation of the journalistic field.

According to Herbert Gans, news selection involves judgements of importance – a mechanism that suggests that, “*value exclusion is (...) accompanied by value inclusion*” in journalism (Gans 1980: 182; see also Ettema & Glasser 1998: 70). Gans says the values of the profession – specifically ideology, but also objectivity - enable reporters to seemingly leave their personal values aside, thereby protecting the group from criticism and ensuring their legitimacy (Gans 1980: 182-183, 196-197; see also Tuchman 1972: 660-662, 675; Wilson 1996: 39). This is possible because values are ingrained in journalism rather than in journalists themselves, thereby rendering reporters secure in their own detachment. Furthermore, the values of the profession “*are enduring in large part because the basic considerations that underlie news judgement do not change significantly over time*” (Gans 1980: 197). Gans calls this paraideology, which is made possible by pressures of conformity that comes from the individuals that make up the news institutions. Therefore, news judgements made on the basis of values that lie beyond the paraideology invoke questions on journalists’ claim to autonomy (ibid: 203).

Within the professional ideal it is still considered legitimate to become passionate about certain things without the engagement compromising one’s objectivity. Famine and disaster relief, cancer research and the fight against AIDS are examples of cases in which objective news producers such as the BBC can organise fund raisers without this being seen to endanger its impartiality. Ettema and Glasser characterise this situation as paradoxical. This paradox explains how one can, within journalism, become morally outraged without becoming engaged (Ettema & Glasser 1998: 62-63, 81-83). Ettema and Glasser claim that this essentially hidden morality is an interaction between the ideals of journalism as an agent of the fourth estate and the morality of society (ibid: 4, 62, 79). It is in the interest of the field to sustain the type of society in which it can operate as a fourth estate with journalists adhering to the objectivity ideal. Therefore it is in the interest of news institutions to support and advocate the values of Western civil society. The media, as the fourth estate, serves to uphold these ideals and do so by functioning as watchdog upon society itself. As emphasised, the media performs this role through a method of objectivity, by which journalists function as a mirror that reflects the ills of society to itself. What are perceived as ills is however engraved in the morality in the society in which the fourth estate

operates (Ettema & Glasser 1998: 71; Gans 1980: 201), so that, according to Ettema and Glasser, “*value judgements, in other words, become news judgements*” (Ettema & Glasser 1998: 70). Therefore it can be considered unproblematic for an objective news organisation to promote these ideals through championing certain causes such as cancer research and disaster relief. This is because, according to Ettema and Glasser, “*the presumed objectivity of news judgement is made possible by a consensus (...) on the values that constitute the premises of judgement*” (ibid: 61). In this circulation of values, the media maintains the morality of society while continuing to strengthen and uphold the legitimacy of the news media as a fourth estate through its professional ideal of objectivity (ibid: 12, 71).

As values are circulated safely within the journalism field, so is the professional ideology. One may argue that the most respected branches of the profession are hard news<sup>17</sup> journalism and investigative reporting. The ideal method for the practise of these forms of reporting is objectivity, and in the extension of this, detachment, impartiality, balance and fairness (Cunningham 2003: 1; Cutter 1999: 1; Pedelty 1995: 173). Because hard news journalism and investigative reporting are the prominent genres within the field, other forms of journalism borrow legitimacy from these two forms of reporting. War journalism can also be said to occupy a high status within the hierarchy of journalistic genres (Allan & Zelizer 2004: 4; Hamilton & Jenner 2004: 301; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 220), and this practise can be said to have adopted its professional ideals from the journalism of news and investigation. There can therefore be seen to take place an exchange between the ‘higher’ forms of journalism and the ‘lower’ forms of journalism from which the whole field benefits. In this exchange lower forms of journalism borrow legitimacy from the higher forms of journalism while promising to adhere to the professional ideology of hard news and investigative reporting. In this system, the field manages to maintain itself through the constant reaffirmation of the hierarchy of journalistic forms and through the circulation of ideology and legitimacy.

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<sup>17</sup> According to Ulf Hannerz, hard news “*refers to major, unique events, temporally highly specified, with consequences that insist on the attention of newspeople and their audiences*” (Hannerz 2004: 31). The hard news genre can furthermore be characterised by the professional labels to which it is in opposition – for example feature journalism and human interest stories (Hannerz 2004: 31).

## 5.8 In Breach of Ideology

War journalism is here considered to be in the category of hard news reporting. This categorisation is significant because it explains the contention associated with new and subjective methods of war journalism. Because war reporting is considered news reporting it is obliged to observe the objectivity ideal. This is an important point because there are numerous examples of journalistic genres in which some subjectivity on the part of the journalist is considered acceptable. As such, commentary, advocacy and editorialising are tolerated within features and documentaries in broadcasting, and in clearly marked commentaries in newspapers. These are formats in which arguments can be made without endangering the professional ideology. However in the hard news category, a genre that reaches a vast audience, objectivity is necessary to ensure the neutrality and authority of the news producer – in other words it is needed to ensure the public's trust (Gans 1980: 186; Seib 2002: 54). Objectivity can therefore be characterised as a strategic ritual that protects the profession from criticism and the news institution from libel suits – a ritual partially imposed due to economic realities (Tuchman 1972: 660-664). Furthermore, because the public trust in the media is already low, says Philip Seib, “*any modification of the standard of objectivity should be undertaken with great care*” (Seib 2002: 54). Therefore, subjective methods in war journalism are highly criticised precisely because their introduction into the hard news genre has the potential to destabilise professional ideology.

Throughout the history of the war journalism profession, subjectivity and personal engagement have existed within the vocation rather consistently alongside the objectivity ideal. The fact that the journalism of attachment in particular has met such strong resistance from within the professional community may testify to the extent to which this method is considered new and substantially different from war journalism subjectivity of the past. In other words, they present something new in terms of subjectivity. Subjective methods in the past, with the possible exception of Yellow Journalism, which can be likened in some ways to the journalism of attachment (Hammond 2002: 8), have been developed on the fringes of journalism – as alternative methods for alternative publications. As such, the New Journalism of the 1960s and 1970s was a method for a different medium. The journalism of attachment and the peace journalism method, however, insist that these methods should be utilised within the genre of hard news journalism.

## 5.9 Summary

The hard news genre has always enjoyed a high position within the hierarchy of journalism texts. It has also been the most prominent advertiser and protector of the objectivity ideal. Therefore, the exclaimed subjectivity among some hard news journalists presents a problem for the legitimacy of the field. On the other hand, reporters such as Martha Gellhorn and James Cameron have been highly respected professionals despite their subjective approaches to war. Whereas subjectivity in the war journalism genre has been accepted in the past as a level of personal engagement generally admired within the profession, these subjective expressions were never an exclaimed support for subjectivity as such. They were rather seen as valuable personality traits found within certain practitioners of the profession. It is possible that the differences between attitudes towards Cameron's method and attitudes towards Bell's method may lie in the explicit outspokenness of Bell's intentions. Not only does he proclaim his subjectivity, as Gellhorn and Cameron did, he claims his approach provides a method that will improve the entire profession. It is the outspoken subjective methodology, coupled with the publication and proclamation of this subjectivity as a journalistic method to which all other war reporters should subscribe for the betterment of the profession that distinguishes Bell from individual subjective icons of war journalism such as Cameron and Gellhorn.

## CHAPTER 6

### WHY ARE THESE SUBJECTIVE METHODS EMERGING?

#### 6.1 Introduction

The reasons for the emergence of subjective war journalism methods are likely to be highly diverse on an individual level. However I would suggest that there are certain common aspects in this change in methodology can be recognised. I make no claim that the grounds I propose are universal and precluding regarding why we may recognise the emergence of war journalism subjectivity today. However I suggest that the factors I introduce here may offer an overall explanation as to why certain war reporters choose to disregard objectivity as journalistic ideal.

I propose that subjectivity in war journalism may occur because reporters have somehow lost faith in the superiority of the objective method. There may be several reasons for this. First, reporters may believe it is impossible to establish objective truths. Furthermore, journalists may turn to subjectivity because they see the objectivity method as insufficient when trying to promote a certain agenda. Finally, reporters may turn to subjective methods because they believe in the potential power of the media to influence policy and, in their desire for war to have a specific outcome, wish to use their position as journalists to influence the situation. Therefore, the subjective methodologies discussed here, specifically the journalism of attachment and peace journalism, are developed first and foremost through individual choices taken by reporters to become subjective. It is my assumption that this choice is determined by certain factors that are directly associated with the personal experiences of reporters. However, there are aspects of a more institutional nature that may also affect the methodology of war journalists (Ekström 2002: 267-270; Tuchman 1972: 662). As such, the personal choices of reporters to utilise the journalism of

attachment, peace journalism and the patriotic method may be initiated by the restrictions, possibilities and realities inherent in the nature of the medium for which they are working. In essence, therefore, the fact that the media is perceived as a powerful institution in the development of foreign policy can be said to be a precondition in the choices made by war journalists to use this power to influence the situations on which they report.

## 6.2 Institutional Restrictions

As mentioned above, the restrictions, realities and possibilities inherent in the news medium and the journalistic profession can steer certain journalists towards a subjective approach to war reporting. Institutional factors must therefore be taken into account when considering why these new subjective methods have been developed. For one thing, many claim that journalism is a subjective activity in itself (Edgar 1992: 129; Tumber 2004: 201). Martin Bell says: *“I see nothing object-like in the relationship between the reporter and the event. Rather I use my eyes and ears and mind and store of experience, which is surely the very essence of the subjective”* (Bell 1998: 102-103; see also Lynch 2002a: 12). Furthermore, the choices that determine which areas of the globe to cover are in line with established news values<sup>18</sup>, as are the stories reported on the spot. The nature of the coverage itself is influenced by the individuals that make up the news teams and to some degree by the general media attention given to the conflict. Consequently, because reporters are part of society they are as such subjected to the same type of institutional and social pressures as everyone else (Edgar 1992: 118; Gans 1980: 213; Kempf 2003: 4, 8; Raaum 1996: 112; Tuchman 1978: 191). Certain experiences can therefore sometimes inspire reporters to assume the role of citizen and fellow human being and leave professionalism aside (Jones 2002: 4; Seib 2002: 55).

The reality, moreover, is that warring factions have become increasingly media-savvy. As military institutions enjoy a high degree of continuity and the media do not (Taylor 1997: xiii-xiv), knowledge of how to manipulate journalists is increasing while knowledge and experience of being manipulated can be said to be somewhat unstable. Military institutions thus have more tools for managing media coverage than the media have for handling military propaganda efforts (see Gowing 1997: 12; Nord & Strömbäck 2003: 127-129; Seib 2002: 94-95; Webster 2003: 58-64). For instance, journalists may encounter military censorship and propaganda which may foster a level of

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18 See Galtung & Ruge 1965.

patriotism initially unintended by the reporter (Nord & Strömbäck 2003: 127-128; Williams 1992: 158-159). Furthermore, journalists who encounter warring factions may be threatened or forced to choose sides in a conflict. Also, geographical limitations caused by heavy fighting or imposed by the military can lead to additional bounds on the access of reporters to alternative sources and further perspectives on the conflict (Nord & Strömbäck 2003: 129). As such, a move towards subjectivity can be preconditioned not only by an inherent humanitarianism within reporters themselves, but also by the many limitations faced by war journalists in the field (see Seib 2002: 55).

This view of journalism as a pursuit that takes place within the framework of an institution (see for instance Edgar 1992: 118; Carruthers 2000: 15-18; Kempf 2003: 2-3; Nord & Strömbäck 2003: 127-129; Seib 2002: 94-95; Tuchman 1978; Tumber 2004: 201; Williams 1992: 165) is one that many reporters will acknowledge. Nevertheless, not all see these restrictions as limitations upon the objectivity of the reporter. In this respect, objectivity is not viewed as a reality, say many objective journalists, but an attitude or an approach. To others, such as journalists using subjective methods, the profession as institution, as well as the execution of the profession, entails sufficient subjective mechanisms for the vocation to be regarded as an activity that is inherently subjective. These reporters say that because they as journalists will have an effect on the world whether they like it or not, it is better to acknowledge this and act accordingly – and act ethically (see for instance Cutter 1999: 3).

### **6.3 Media Power**

One likely reason war journalists may opt for subjectivity as they draw up their agenda for war coverage is a strong belief in news media as institutions in which journalism has the power to influence the public and political agendas. In this regard, many claim journalism is one of the most powerful knowledge producers and distributors of our time (Brewer et al 2003: 493, 496, 504; Ekström 2002: 259; Linsky 1986: 140-145; Manoff 1998: 2; Minear et al 1996: 1-2; Soroka 2003: 28). Furthermore, according to Daniel Hallin, television news “*is believed to be the most powerful force in journalism*” (Hallin 1987: 13). The power of television is to some extent attributed to its ability to reach a mass audience, and to the suggestion that compared to the print media, it is such an immediate, visual and ‘personal’ form of communication (Ekström 2002: 265; Hallin 1987: 26-27;

see also Tehranian 2002: 76). This has been described as the CNN effect<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, Birgitta Höijer claims that television plays the largest part in the development of a collective global compassion (Höijer et al 2002: 5; Höijer 2003: 22), thereby casting the net even wider than Gaye Tuchman, who refers to My Lai and Watergate when asserting that news reports can be “*active participants in the socio-political processes*” (Tuchman 1978: 190). The agenda setting theory of Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw explains how the media’s focus of attention to some extent determines what may become a public issue – which in turn may influence what becomes a political issue (McCombs & Shaw 1972; see also Dearing & Rogers 1996: 22). According to this theory, journalists have some measure of power as members of an agenda-setting medium (McNair 1999: 23). Separate studies by Virgil Hawkins and Piers Robinson found that media coverage may have an effect on foreign policy issues if there is ambiguity about the policy or where no strong policy exists (Hawkins 2002: 233; Robinson 2000: 402). Hawkins’ study of newspaper and television coverage of the world in 2000 shows that conflicts that received heavy media attention to a large extent also received Western aid, thus indicating that media awareness can result in humanitarian support (Hawkins 2002: 226; see also Minear et al 1996: 2). Robinson found specifically that “*media power can trigger the deployment of air power intervention during humanitarian crisis but not ground troops*” (Robinson 2000: 405). Thus in a political environment where politicians are unsure how to act, public pressure led by heavy media concentration can persuade governments to intervene (Minear et al 1996: 73). However, Hawkins and Robinson found that should strong policy already exist, this is likely to remain unchanged even in the face of concentrated media coverage (Hawkins 2002: 232; Robinson 2000: 407; see also Jakobsen 2000: 136-137; Taylor 1997: 93). According to Robinson, journalists as well as politicians believe in the power of the media in conflict coverage<sup>20</sup> (Robinson 2001: 524). This is certainly true in the case of many reporters who covered the Bosnian War (McLaughlin 2002: 190-194).

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19 According to Peter Viggo Jakobsen, the CNN effect can be characterised as a mechanism that works like this: “*Media coverage (printed and televised) of suffering and atrocities → journalists and opinion leaders demand that Western governments ‘do something’ → the (public) pressure becomes unbearable → Western governments do something*” (Jakobsen 2000: 132). Virgil Hawkins asserts that the term is applicable to all conflicts where saturated, simplified and emotion-based media coverage affects the public to such an extent that governments are forced to become involved in the conflict (Hawkins 2002: 225).

20 For support in this claim, see Naveh 2002, for a contradictory claim see Gowing 1997.

Although reporters in Bosnia were unsuccessful in persuading the international community to intervene in the war (Carruthers 2000: 213; Minear et al 1996: 57), there is evidence to suggest that the media did have some measure of impact on US, UK and UN politicians (Carruthers 2000: 214-218; Gowing 1997: 8; Jakobsen 2000: 136-137; Minear et al 1996: 3, 57, 71; Seib 2002: 51). This media effect can be seen in separate and clearly distinguishable cases that despite firm national policies managed to receive considerable political attention (Minear et al 1996: 57-58). Höijer writes of one such incident where images of an orphaned and injured girl called Irma led British politicians to demand an air bridge that would enable the UN to airlift injured civilians out of Sarajevo. It has also been noted that UN sanctions against Serbia were imposed in effect because of the televised images of the Serb shelling of a Bosnian bread line in 1992 (Höijer 2003: 22; Carruthers 2000: 216-217; Maass 1996: 270-271; Minear et al 1996: 58-59). These cases arguably support the claim that human interest stories are becoming a more popular approach to war reporting than the mere focus on military hardware.

#### **6.4 Subjectivity as Personal Choice**

The conditions required to assume a subjective method or take sides in a conflict cannot be said to represent a precise formula. However, as suggested above, certain institutional realities may present journalists with the option of subjectivity more readily than others. As is often the case, reporters who feel a certain responsibility for or connection to the armed forces or a civilian population in peril have developed this position as a result of prolonged and direct interaction with combatants or civilians. The choice of allegiance, so to speak, can therefore be preconditioned by the actual location of the reporter. This is not to say that journalists will always come to sympathise with the armed faction or civilian population they are reporting on. The possibility of subjectivity is greater when location coincides with the preconditions of compassion. In this sense one may suggest that certain ideologies and positions are more appealing than others. One may therefore perhaps more easily sympathise with revolutionary students than with their communist oppressors; democratic armies rather than Fascist armies; and small groups of freedom fighters rather than dictatorships. The fact is that the reality of war reporting involves certain limits and possibilities that may enable subjective methods more easily.

Nevertheless, however preconditioned this turn to subjectivity might be, it is preliminarily a personal choice made by reporters on an individual basis.

#### 6.4.1 *Promoting an Agenda*

Practitioners of subjective war journalism methods often have an agenda. The agenda is based on a degree of altruism – that the efforts of the reporter may serve a greater, often humanitarian purpose. As such, the journalists practising the methods examined here have all taken sides in a conflict. Samantha Power says taking sides implies “*thinking prescriptively*” (Powers 2004: 9). This type of coverage will be framed according to the agenda of the journalist – “*what one would want one’s readers to do [and] what one would want one’s readers to influence their governments to do*” (ibid). Reporters practising the journalism of attachment are on the side of the victims of war; peace journalists are advocates of a peaceful outcome to a war and can therefore be seen to also favour the victims; and journalists practising the patriotic method are on the side of one of the parties in a conflict. Whether they are opposed to war and harbour an intense wish for peace, whether they want one party to win and another to loose or whether they look for a way to help the victims of war, subjective reporters have assumed an expressive stand in the conflict they are reporting. My assumption is therefore that one premise for turning to subjective methods is that correspondents experience some form of emotional attachment to the events they are witnessing.

#### 6.4.2 *Making a Difference*

Höijer claims there is a *global compassion* developing within international media and politics - one that is rooted in humanitarianism (Höijer 2003: 19; see also Hammond 2002: 7). Höijer quotes Nussbaum when she defines compassion as “*a painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person’s undeserved misfortune*” (Höijer 2003: 20). She characterises global compassion as entailing “*a moral sensibility or concern for remote strangers from different continents, cultures and societies*”, influenced and instigated by media coverage (ibid). According to Wilhelm Kempf, the media is indeed becoming an increasingly important component in the construction of foreign policy (Kempf 2003: 2; see also Minear et al 1996: ix, 1-3). He claims it is the self-perception of journalism as an important player in foreign policy formulation that has led to the establishment of the journalism of attachment and peace journalism (Kempf 2003: 2).

Many war reporters have emphasised the importance of ‘making a difference’. War journalists who turn to the subjective methods certainly harbour a wish for their work to have an impact on the situation they are reporting on (Blitzer 2004: 1; Maass 1996: 114-115; McLaughlin 2002: 13; Blair 2003). Martha Gellhorn was one of the most outspoken journalists supporting the Republican side during the Spanish Civil War. According to her, journalism is a weapon to create a better world. She criticised other journalists for “*writing less than they know and caring less than they should*” (cited in *Reporters at War. Timeline. 1930s: Choosing Sides*). Zelizer and Allan therefore caution that war journalists who report humanitarian interventions may become “*the voice of the victims*” (Zelizer & Allan 2002: 263). The difficulties of the locals are mediated through visiting Western reporters – the effect being that journalists become part of the aiding forces rather than merely observers of events (Zelizer & Allan 2002: 253; see also Tumber 2002: 252-253). In essence, they say, “*The physical and psychological hardships of war correspondents can affect the way in which the coverage is constructed and represented*” (Zelizer & Allan 2002: 253).

So, war reporters can sometimes experience painful scenarios that produce in them feelings of empathy and compassion (Feinstein 2003: 28-29). Because of the personal emotional impact of war on them, journalists often hope their work will make a difference for the people on whom they are reporting (Blitzer 2004: 1; Maass 1996: 115; McLaughlin 2002: 13; Blair 2003). This is a fundamental function of journalism after all – to expose wrongs for the benefit of society – and it should not be surprising that many who become war reporters pursue the profession for the very reason that they wish to have a positive impact on this world. However, an emotional attachment to an aspect of war alone is not enough to inspire subjective methods. Plenty of reporters remain truthful to the objective method despite harbouring strong feelings towards a conflict. Journalists have to act on their emotions to become subjective reporters.

#### 6.4.3 *Fighting for a Cause*

When war journalists turn to the patriotic method they have assumed a position of support for one of the parties to a conflict. I suggest that should a war reporter sympathise with an armed faction in a conflict and wish to assist in the triumph of such a party, he or she is likely to find that the objectivity method does not accommodate such a goal. The patriotic method is thus distinguished by the reporter’s professed support for one of the parties and consequent disregard for objectivity.

According to his biographer, Spanish Civil War reporter George L. Steer of *The Times* was fiercely anti-fascist. Steer believed strongly in the cause of the Republicans, admired the Basque armies, advocated that the French help them in their war effort, and may even have joined in the fighting himself (Rankin 2003: 5, 86-87, 129, 134-138). Much of the same can be said of Herbert Matthews of the *New York Times*. Matthews hated the fascists, but more than anything the war made him feel part of something glorious and important (Matthews 1946: 67-68, 127). Rankin maintains that during the Spanish Civil War, “*everyone took sides*” (Rankin 2003: 80). The same is claimed by George Orwell, himself a reporter during the war, who alleged that, “*everyone who writes about the Spanish war writes as a partisan*” (cited in Rankin 2003: 87).

Patriotic reporters are often stationed in warring areas and come to feel sympathy for those involved in the struggle. They may be so persuaded because they follow the troops into battle and therefore feel part of the war effort. Reporters may also feel sympathy for the cause for which an armed faction is fighting, or they harbour feelings of patriotism because their own country is at war (Williams 1992: 156-157, 164). Journalists covering the two world wars often saw themselves as part of a national campaign to win the war. In such an environment journalists are inclined to undergo self-censorship and participate in an effort to demonise the enemy to help keep up the public’s war morale (Knightly 2000: 84-85, 299-301). During the Spanish Civil War many Western reporters were opposed to fascism and therefore supported the Republican Army for ideological reasons. Others followed the Republican troops or the international brigades, or were stationed in Madrid alongside the civilian population. Many experienced a surge of idealism in the fight against Franco, and were impressed with the determination of the Republican troops to defeat the Nationalists. As a result several correspondents in Spain underwent self-censorship to aid the Republican cause and wrote numerous inspired accounts of Republican courage under fire (Knightly 2000: 208-215, 232-235; Williams 1992: 163-164). Allan and Zelizer emphasise that patriotism occupies a particular position within war journalism. They point out that reporters who are considered to be emotionally too close to a story in a news journalism sense are more often than not taken off the story. In a war journalism situation, however, this almost never happens (Allan & Zelizer 2004: 4).

Patriotic reporting is a subjective method but distinguishes itself from the journalism of attachment and peace journalism because it is a somewhat more institutionalised approach to war.

The Spanish Civil War is a special case in this tradition, and may be characterised more as partisan reporting rather than patriotism. Here, a near unanimous and yet highly diverse international press corps proclaimed sympathy for the Republican side. In this sense, a large number of journalists made individual choices of allegiance that largely coincided, but nonetheless the choice for subjectivity was made on an individual level. This is also the case with journalists who turn to the journalism of attachment and peace journalism – taking sides and writing for peace is a personal choice. Patriotism, on the other hand, involves a more organised and collective endeavour, sometimes born out of some sense of necessity from within various sections of society, such as during the two world wars. Resisting such an institutionalised war journalism method may moreover be so difficult in the practical sense that journalists may become patriotic by default – through such measures as propaganda and censorship. Nevertheless, journalists who supported the fight against Nazism and Fascism often proclaim they believe in the importance of such an ideological struggle – that they are convinced that their side is right – and this should be considered, relative to the objectivity ideal, a subjective choice.

#### 6.4.4 *Knocked into Subjectivity*

*“The very nature of war’, Kate Adie (...) once observed, ‘confuses the role of the journalist’ (...). Confronted with the often horrific realities of conflict, any belief that the journalist can remain distant, remote, or unaffected by what is happening ‘tends to go out the window’ in a hurry” (Allan & Zelizer 2004: 3).*

According to Mark Brayne, the route to bias or partiality often goes through emotional exhaustion or burn-out (Zelizer & Allan 2002: 252). Therefore, Danny Schechter claims, *“it is not surprising that when journalists are personally affected by what they see, they tend to become more compassionate towards the suffering of others”* (Schechter 2001: 2). Consequently, Zelizer and Allan allege that remaining objective becomes increasingly difficult when the incidents of war are controversial and reporters become part of the events. *“Taking into account the specific circumstances under which war reporting takes place, journalistic objectivity is almost impossible, they say (Zelizer & Allan 2002: 252).* Factors that obstruct objectivity can therefore be seen to range from institutional restraints to the emotional life of reporters themselves (ibid).

According to Nic Gowing, many journalists came to empathise “*with the Bosnian government because of personal outrage at Serb aggression*” (Gowing 1997: 12). Herbert Gans explains that when journalists change their opinions, or go from being neutral to opinionated, it is often a reaction to highly visible, and often dramatic, events. He calls this an ‘intraprofessional process’ in which reporters alter their opinions in reaction to a change among a high number of peers - in an environment where they react to the news around them, at the same time supplying the flow of news themselves (Gans 1980: 200). Gans gives the Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War as an example of a ‘critical mass of events’ that demonstrates how journalists both react to and deliver a change in attitude (Gans 1980: 200; see also Carruthers 2000: 119; Taylor 1997: 110). Likewise, the events of the Bosnian War, a war from which “*just about every journalist (...) came back somewhat shaken*” (Lane 1994: 43), can be seen as having reached a critical mass, in reaction to which many reporters took a stand (Seib 2002: xiii). Michael Nicholson is one of a number of reporters who admitted the Bosnian War made a great impression on him personally (Nicholson 1997: 7, 10). He says reporters found it difficult to refrain from emotional involvement and subjective reporting because they were living in Sarajevo alongside the civilian population, sharing in their misery (McLaughlin 2002: 154-155). Sarajevo was a violent area, and reporters enjoyed little protection from UN or NATO forces. The conflict involved Serb, Croat and Bosnian armed factions and all parties involved often targeted civilians. There is also evidence that the Serb militia attempted genocide. Reporters were free to move around, but the extreme danger of such an endeavour resulted in 12 deaths from 1993 to 1995 (CPJ 2004a), and overall, the Balkan wars resulted in the death of 84 correspondents (Blair 2003). The devastation and the brutality of Bosnia, according to Michael Nicholson, “*shocked every correspondent who came to cover that war*” (Nicholson 1997: 1).

Specifically, Nicholson claims he lost his objectivity when he visited wounded children in a Sarajevo hospital (McLaughlin 2002: 155; Nicholson 1997: 29-30). Consequently, he says this experience led him to contemplate the idea of an allied air attack on the Serbs (Nicholson 1997: 30). As Nicholson demonstrates, personal experiences can have an effect on reporters’ professionalism (Gowing 1997: 12; Maass 1996: 114). Nicholson was not alone in advocating an allied intervention on behalf of the Bosnians (Carruthers 2000: 240). Reporters who called for outside help include journalist and writer Michael Ignatieff (Hammond 2004: 186); freelancer Anthony Loyd (Loyd 2002: 112); *The Guardian*’s Maggie O’Kane and Ed Vulliamy (Carruthers 2000: 242; Hammond

2002: 8, see also Cutter 1999: 2; Gowing 1997: 12); *Newsday*'s Foreign Editor Roy Gutman (Carruthers 2000: 242; Cutter 1999: 2; Hammond 2002: 1-2); Kurt Schork of Reuters (Bell 2003: 162); Martin Bell (Carruthers 2000: 240) and Allan Little of the BBC (Hammond 2002: 1-2); and CNN's Christiane Amanpour (Hammond 2002: 1; Manoff 1998: 6; Seib 2002: 52-53). Experiencing the violence of war first hand can encourage certain reporters to take on the role of fellow human being at the expense of professionalism. Watching children and other civilians die; being shot at and targeted personally; being kidnapped; being surrounded and attacked; and being injured as a result of shooting or bombing, can change a person's perspective of his or her role in the war. Some, such as Martin Bell, find that it knocks them into subjectivity (Bell 2003: 164), while others manage to keep their professional cool. Few war reporters seek these experiences themselves; however some journalists are probably more predisposed to subjectivity than others.

As Mark Pedelty and Anne Holohan found, reporters' level of personal involvement may be determined by factors such as age and proximity to the conflict. Pedelty studied the culture of foreign correspondents in El Salvador in the early 1990s. His research revealed that stringers (local reporters working for larger US news media), more so than US correspondents, rejected the objectivity ideal and harboured strong feelings about the conflict (Pedelty 1995: 206-207). Likewise, Holohan found in her study of American reporters in Haiti in the early 1990s that younger reporters were more preoccupied with journalistic values and the ideals of the conflict than their older colleagues, who believed firmly in objectivity and the ideals of journalistic detachment (Holohan 2003: 742-744). The common denominator for these groups of younger journalist and stringers was that they ventured into the local community more than the older US correspondents. Therefore, these journalists often encountered the local population and used local sources. They also visited hospitals and interviewed victims of war, and socialised with locals and aid workers. Older US correspondents, who spent their days at official US press briefings and at the embassies and upscale hotels, saw little of the real war and subsequently kept their value-free objectivity method intact (Holohan 2003: 738-739, 742-745, 751-752; Pedelty 1995: 75). The stringers and younger reporters had an arguably closer and more personal relationship to the wars in question than the older US correspondents. Although there is no consequential connection between factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and subjectivity, it is an assumption that because these reporters were more exposed to the effects of war, they more often questioned the values and standards of their profession.

#### 6.4.5 *The Strain of the War Journalism Profession*

Tumber and Prentoulis suggest the work of war reporters is particularly strenuous and stressful (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 219). Dr. Anthony Feinstein says there is a notion within war journalism that because reporters are not combatants, they can confront war with impunity (Feinstein 2003: 8). However, as Pedelty's study has shown, a certain proportion of war journalists experience frustration, exhaustion and burn-out (Pedelty 1995: 142). According to research performed by Feinstein, war journalists experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) on a level three times higher than non-war reporters (cited in Haggart 2001: 6). Feinstein interviewed 140 war journalists (of which over 70 per cent were males) with an average of 15 years work experience, 70 per cent of whom had covered Bosnia, and many of whom had covered multiple wars (Feinstein 2003: 24-26). Feinstein found that depression and social dysfunction are more common among war correspondents than among domestic reporters. Twenty-nine per cent of his sample group had suffered PTSD. In comparison the rate among policemen is between 7 and 13 percent and among combat veterans it is approximately 30 per cent. Moreover, the diagnosis was unevenly distributed, and symptoms were found more frequently in photojournalists and cameramen, followed in turn by journalists and producers<sup>21</sup> (ibid: 38). Twenty-one per cent of war reporters had suffered major depression, while the overall figure for the Canadian population is about 8 per cent (cited in Haggart 2001: 6). Nevertheless, Feinstein emphasises that three-quarters of his survey have reported war for 15 years and "*generally end up okay*", and that "*some journalists with post-traumatic stress disorder recovered after little medical intervention*" (ibid: 6). Nevertheless, certain symptoms persist in this group of reporters as well. Feinstein found that all the reporters in his survey had one specific experience that stood out as particularly harrowing. These experiences were either a close encounter with death, or a disturbing meeting with the survivors of war (Feinstein 2003: 27, 39-40). He says that,

*"It was the plight of the distraught - people who had lost their children, families, livelihood, homes and communities; people who were overtaken by events often not of their making and devastated by the magnitude of their loss - that shocked the*

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<sup>21</sup> Feinstein found that "*PTSD symptoms were differently distributed according to the type of journalism practiced*" (Feinstein 2003: 38). Feinstein suggests that it is the proximity to the event that determines the level of PTSD - which in his opinion is captured in photographer Robert Capa's dictum, "*If your photographs are not good enough, you are not close enough*" (Feinstein 2003: 38).

*journalists' sensibilities, outraged their morality or triggered compassion and pity*" (ibid). "[Therefore,] *journalists may find that suddenly confronting something familiar in one of the bereaved or dispossessed (...) is enough to shatter the cocoon of detachment and force the tragedy of some nameless victim into that well-defended, inviolable frame of personal reference*" (ibid: 28-29).

Seib asserts that war reporters often experience many of the same fears and emotions as those affecting the people they cover (Seib 2002: 121; see also Feinstein 2003: 17; Tumber 2002: 252). Herbert Matthews, the *New York Times* correspondent during the Spanish Civil War, wrote that he felt "*somewhat shell-shocked*" after his assignment had ended (Matthews 1946: 192). After returning from the war, he said he suffered claustrophobia, depression, feelings of failure and estrangement (ibid). Others, such as Gloria Emerson, the *New York Times*' reporter in the Vietnam War, and Peter Maass, covering the Bosnian War for the *Washington Post*, confess they are still plagued by the memories of war (Emerson cited in Blair 2003; Maass 1996: 102-104; for more examples see Feinstein 2003). Höijer refers to a study by Mellum (2000) of Norwegian journalists who reported on the Kosovo War. According to Mellum, many were emotionally affected by what they witnessed in the refugee camps, and some said their emotions had an impact on their professional work (cited in Höijer 2003: 23). Consequently, Dr Frank Ochberg's<sup>22</sup> opinion is that "*war correspondents can put their brains and minds in danger by overdosing on images of cruelty*" (cited in Haggart 2001: 11).

Many have claimed that despite a growing awareness of PTSD in the profession, scepticism towards the condition remains in the journalistic community (Haggart 2001: 9, 12, 17; Zelizer & Allan 2002: 260). Traditionally, the display of emotion has been considered unacceptable within journalism (Zelizer & Allan 2002: 260). In this regard, Mark Brayne criticises the fact that what he terms emotional literacy until now has been completely excluded from journalism training<sup>23</sup>. He claims knowledge about emotional experiences will make for better war journalists, not least because he claims this tool will help reporters process their emotions, allowing them to keep their feelings out of their reports (cited in Haggart 2001: 16). Feinstein makes a similar observation. He claims that journalists, unlike policemen, firemen and soldiers, are not trained in dealing with

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22 Dr. Ochberg is part of the team that wrote the post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis. He also defined the Stockholm syndrome (cited in Haggart 2001: 11).

23 The American DART Foundation has over the last 10 years begun to educate journalism students about trauma, and several centres have become involved in teaching and research on these issues (Haggart 2001: 12).

traumatic events (Feinstein 2003: 38). However, Zelizer and Allan say the American coverage of the 11 September incidents has opened up a debate about emotional reporting. The display of feelings of sadness and shock in connection with the 11 September events has arguably made it more acceptable to put a more human face on war reporting (Zelizer & Allan 2002: 256).

As demonstrated, it is not uncommon for war reporters to experience emotional exhaustion, trauma and depression. Consequently, Pedelty found that the male reporters stationed in El Salvador in the 1990s dealt with their experiences through rituals such as storytelling, sex and intoxication, rather than therapy (Pedelty 1995: 135; see also Feinstein 2003). The women in Pedelty's study, on the other hand, tended to address their experiences more directly - by talking about them (Pedelty 1995: 135). Perhaps then, as a result of the introduction of more women into the profession – assuming that women deal with feelings of shock and sadness more openly – emotions will gradually receive a more legitimate place in the war journalism experience.

## **6.5 Why are These Methods Emerging?**

One may ask why subjective methods such as the journalism of attachment and peace journalism have become more popular of late. Below I will suggest some reasons why this may be the case. Some of the explanations offered are of an external nature, while others suggest more internal mechanisms. It is however likely that all factors presented here are elements in this development towards a more subjective war journalism. It is my assumption moreover that this increase in subjectivity might signal an impending paradigm shift in war journalism.

The literature surveyed for this thesis suggests that a shift towards a more emotional, personal, subjective and ethical war reporting occurred in the early 1990s<sup>24</sup>. What transpired during this period is a culmination of wars and conflicts that cannot be characterised as conflicts between nation states, and that cannot be explained by using the previously dominant Cold War world-view (see Höijer et al 2002: 3; Jakobsen 2000: 131; Seib 2002: xi, 20). As such, the very nature of war can be said to have changed somewhat during the period in question (see Höijer 2003: 20; Plaisance 2002:

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24 See for instance Allan & Zelizer 2004; Bell 1996; Bell 2003; Hammond 2002; Hammond 2004; Holohan 2003; Hume 1997; Kempf 2003; McLaughlin 2002; Pedelty 1995; Seib 2002; Tehranian 2002; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003; Zelizer & Allan 2002.

209; Seib 2002: 105; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 225-226). One may therefore assume that the experience of war may have changed as well.

### 6.5.1 *A Breakdown in the Contract between Journalism and Society*

According to Allan and Zelizer, war reporting is the litmus test of journalism (Allan & Zelizer 2004: 4). This is because the media is the principle source of foreign news for most people (Soroka 2003: 28), and because war journalism has the ability to influence public perceptions (Allan & Zelizer 2004: 4; Brewer et al 2003: 493; Sreberny-Mohammadi 1995: 442). Few people have the resources to find out for themselves what is going on in trouble spots around the world, so instead we have journalists who do it for us. This can be characterised as a contract between journalism and society<sup>25</sup> – in which reporters gain the privilege of access to information which they in return communicate to the public (Raaum 1986: 27). At the heart of this contract is the professional ideal, which offers the public an assurance that journalism is executed in line with certain standards – which in turn creates trust between journalists and the audience. Journalists consequently deliver information about society to which the public in turn responds. As such, the basis for the legitimacy of journalism's presence at war is that "*the public [has] something to say about the conduct of wars*" (Godkin cited in Williams 1992: 167).

In this exchange, journalists and society communicate on the same basic moral terms. This is necessarily so because journalists need to understand how the public wants society to function in order to shed light on its ills (Ettema & Glasser 1998: 70-71). Because this is a discourse that is based on social criteria, journalists expect their work to have a certain degree of effect on the world. In other words it is inherent in the job they perform that their efforts receive a response from the members of society. Although the 'mirror' analogy of the press states that journalists merely report without having an interest in the effects of their work, the relationship between the media

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<sup>25</sup> Media ethicist Matthew Kieran speaks of the 'implicit contract' that exists between the news media and the public. Kieran says this contract implies expectations as to what is good journalism - essentially that which covers what we ought to know about how society is governed (Kieran 1997: 26). According to Kieran, the implicit contract holds reporters responsible for giving us the news we not only want to know, but also for giving us the news we *should* want to know (ibid: 34). Journalism according to this contract is therefore also responsible for conveying to the public information we should have an interest in - such as the difficulties of others (ibid). The contract to which I am referring here, however, is best described by Raaum. According to him, the contract entails a complex exchange between journalism and society - in which journalists assume the valuable responsibility of distributing useful information in exchange for press freedom and certain professional privileges (Raaum 1986: 23-29; Raaum 2003: 13).

and civil society suggests that this is disingenuous. Journalists do expect their work to have some effect; however the professional ideal ensures that their social engagement remains masked as objectivity. This is possible because together these factors successfully maintain the media-society contract, the legitimacy of the profession and the role of journalism as an element of the fourth estate and thus a catalyst for social change. Therefore, journalists expect the public to trust their role as watchdog. When this does not happen – when the public disregards its reporters – the rules of the media-society relationship no longer function according to the contract.

The reporting of the Bosnian War demonstrates this point. War journalists reporting on the Bosnian War began their task with all the professional standards of objectivity, impartiality and detachment intact. The professional ideal ensures that these methods should suffice when alerting the public to an imminent problem within society. However, when the public and its leaders do not react, the contract between journalism and society becomes invalid. Because in exchange for objectivity, journalism demands influence. Therefore, reporters in Bosnia – seeing that their detachment had no effect on the public and the politic – became more adversarial in their reports. The journalism of attachment was born when objectivity failed to produce the results it normally would have been able to yield. This demonstrates the degree of personal engagement in war reporters. One can assume that this level is always high; however it remains concealed when the contract between journalism and civil society works optimally. Therefore, during the reporting of the Bosnian War, journalists who would normally hide their engagement in the objective method could no longer do so.

### *6.5.2 The Rise of the Subject*

During the 1990s the world witnessed a surge of what has been somewhat simplistically explained as tribalism – primarily demonstrated by the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Chechnya and Rwanda, where ethnicity largely determined the conflicts' main adversaries. These conflicts could not be described by a Cold War news frame, and therefore, journalists often characterised them as ancient tribal and ethnic strife (see Höijer 2003: 20, 21). Furthermore, the wars in Yugoslavia and Rwanda were not fought through the means of modern technology, but rather with machetes and World War II weapons such as mortars, mines, rifles and grenades (see Loyd 2002: 222). Additionally, these were ground wars, the likes of which had not been seen since the Second

World War, and the casualties were principally civilians. The genocide of Rwanda was very difficult to understand, and so horrific in nature that reporters found it hard to remain objective (Seib 2002: xiii). Likewise, the wars in Croatia and Bosnia took place in central Europe – very close to home for most reporters (Carruthers 2000: 237; Feinstein 2003: 45). The political environment was one in which both NATO and the EU were perhaps struggling to find their identity in the post-Cold War world, and the unwillingness of NATO, the EU and even the UN and the US to intervene was something that many reporters found unacceptable.

A rise in humanitarianism and so-called ‘global compassion’ is also a factor. War reporters covering the Kurdish refugee crisis in Iraq, the wars in Yugoslavia and the civil wars in Rwanda, El Salvador and Haiti perhaps encountered the effects of war more closely and personally than before. These reporters were often stationed inside the war zones, experiencing the dangers of war themselves. The previous wars of the 1980s had been highly organised military operations in which the media were kept far from the action, such as the US invasions in Grenada and Panama (McLaughlin 2002: 83-88; Taylor 1997: 118, 131), and the conflict between Britain and Argentina over the Falklands (Carruthers 2000: 123-131; Hallin 1997: 211-212; Knightly 2000: 469-482). In the 1990s, however, Western journalists were less restricted by military organisation, predominantly because the US and European governments were only indirectly involved in the conflicts in South America, Europe and Africa. Therefore, a more personal experience of war, danger and human suffering can be seen to have contributed to a rise in humanitarianism and subjective reporting.

Furthermore, the correspondent corps had been going through a change up until the 1990s (Hamilton & Jenner 2004: 303, 313-315; Höijer 2003: 22), as has the news media itself (Hamilton & Jenner 2004: 303; Jakobsen 2000: 131; Sambrook 2004: 7-9). One such change is an increase in the number of female war reporters. It has been pointed out that female war reporters might generally have a different approach to war reporting from the attention typically devoted by male reporters to the military. More attention to human interest stories and a heightened focus on the plight of civilians and refugees have been attributed to the increase in the number of female war correspondents (Andersson 2003: 23; Blair 2003; Hume 1997: 18; Höijer 2003: 22; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 225). Attention to victims of war cannot be said to be directly linked to war journalism subjectivity, but there is a

perception that the focus on humanitarian aspects may be more closely associated with emotionalism and subjectivity than a focus on troops, bombs and body-counts.

More importantly, the conditions of subjectivity require a frame of mind in which individual autonomy is more imperative than institutional legitimacy. Therefore, because subjectivity is more dominant now than before, this might indicate a change in the perception of the war journalist as subject rather than object. We may ascribe this to an increase in the number of female war journalists. The assumption here is that during the male domination of the profession, war journalism could be seen as an activity that could be performed by almost anyone. This is because the profession was guided by the objective method, which states that it is the role, rather than the man performing the role, that matters. Objectivity is therefore a method that ensures that wars will be reported according to certain professional standards, regardless of the man doing the job. However, with the introduction of women into the profession, war reporting is no longer something reserved for the object man in an object role. When women become war reporters they choose to do so actively. This entails a new way of perceiving the activity of war reporting – this becomes a job that (for whatever reason) *I*, the subject, must do. Because the importance of the subject increases in men and women alike with the advent of female war reporters, the importance of the war reporter as object is diminished. Furthermore, when the war correspondent becomes subject, the objective method (created for the object reporter), is destabilised. The objective method is no longer viable as a method for the subject journalist. As such, subjectivity develops as a method more suitable for the subject reporter.

Because war journalism can be a traumatic occupation, reporters who see themselves as subject might be inclined to value their own emotions as being of importance in their overall reporting of a conflict. Therefore, when it is the subject rather than the object that is experiencing war, the impressions and opinions of the subject also become important. Perhaps now the group of reporters who claim *they* matter is larger than those who still proclaim it is the *role* that matters. When the journalist is more subject than object, therefore, subjectivity takes precedence over objectivity. Should this be the case, it can be seen as a further explanation for the increase in subjective reporting.

## 6.6 Summary

A conception of media and journalism power is a likely factor in the development of subjective methods in war reporting. Perhaps this specific apprehension can even be seen as a concise prerequisite for the development of a new journalistic subjectivity. The arrival of journalism as a powerful vocation whose efforts can have a profound impact on the actions and beliefs of civil societies and politicians could quite probably have directly influenced certain reporters to speak their minds in their news reports. Coupled with a feeling of frustration for the situations in which reporters find themselves, where governments and civil society refuse to intervene on behalf of desperate people in unfair situations, the possibility of influencing powerful leaders and publics through the power of the media could certainly encourage reporters to 'take sides'. Whether the growth of a 'global compassion' and a new humanitarianism has been instigated by the media alone, or whether this trend has instead contributed to a rise in subjective war journalism methods is a question I will not attempt to answer here. Nevertheless, subjectivity in war journalism is a trend whose causes are difficult to pinpoint accurately. A change in global political and military realities, combined with the introduction of the subject into a professional field that is highly aware of its potential power to influence policy, in an increasingly humanitarian environment, faced with a surge of violent civil wars to which civil society will not respond through the contract objectivity method, may explain why certain war journalists turn to the subjectivity method. It can also demonstrate a development toward a breakdown in ideology that may lead to a paradigm shift in war journalism.

## CHAPTER 7

### IMPLICATIONS FOR WAR JOURNALISM

#### 7.1 Preliminary Findings

This thesis examines subjectivity in war journalism. Specifically I have found the recently developed methods of peace journalism and the journalism of attachment to be of interest. In particular, the journalism of attachment is the source of greatest controversy within the debate concerning the use of these methods. This is perhaps because the journalism of attachment has been developed in interaction with a war environment, and because the method has spread in use beyond coverage of the Bosnian War. The journalism of attachment has met with strong criticism from academics as well as professionals. The main objections to the method are that it leads to false coverage, and that it breaks with established professional standards.

The debate concerning these methods is founded on the values presented in professional journalistic ideology. The journalism of attachment and peace journalism see no use in objectivity as method or ideal, something which has fuelled controversy both in the British and the American journalistic community. Peace journalism and the journalism of attachment argue that advocacy is one of the responsibilities of war journalism. Media power presents reporters with the opportunity to contribute to a war's peaceful outcome, or the triumph of one of the sides in that war, and therefore journalists should assume a position in favour of the victims of war. The controversy revolves around the nature of this responsibility – and therefore this is ultimately a question of what a journalist should be: someone who observes with detachment, or someone who becomes involved through attachment?

Ultimately, criticism of the journalism of attachment and peace journalism illustrates the extent to which these methods represent something quite new within the profession. Although the methods developed by Martin Bell and Jake Lynch resemble earlier forms of war journalism subjectivity, subjective news journalism practises have not been stated as normatively in the past. Therefore, by presenting subjective war journalism methods to which others are encouraged to subscribe, the journalism of attachment and peace journalism represents a challenge to the professional ideology.

In examining the reasons for the development of subjective methods in war journalism, I have attempted to demonstrate that subjectivity can be considered the personal choice of war reporters who intend to help improve the situation for those with whom they sympathise. Therefore, the fact that there is little room for emotion in war journalism is likely to have contributed to the development of these methods. The protest of reporters against objectivity in war journalism perhaps signals a change in the view of how wars can be reported, as well as a change in the nature of war itself. Likewise, the increasing acceptance of the display of emotion in war reporting perhaps indicates a change in the attitude towards war, as well as a change in the constitution of the field of war journalism. The development of war journalism subjectivity therefore demonstrates some of the complexities and paradoxes of war journalism – specifically the simultaneous demand for engagement and detachment in the war journalism profession. The increasing objection to the idea of the reporter as neutral observer therefore suggests a disruption of the professional ideology that renders the future of the profession somewhat uncertain. The growing acceptance of subjectivity in war journalism can indeed be seen as a symptom of a general ambivalence towards the professional ideology in the entire field of journalism. Perhaps we are seeing signs of a paradigm shift in war journalism.

## **7.2 The Effects of Subjectivity on War Journalism**

All subjective war journalists, in this case those practising peace journalism, the journalism of attachment and the patriotic method, believe their journalism may benefit society. Peace journalists therefore see their trade as one that may help create peaceful solutions to war and conflict. Although peace journalism is largely an academic project at present, its ethical principles can be seen as somewhat beneficial to the profession. The fact that certain sections of

this group of media workers find it plausible that peace journalism may be an asset to world peace indicates there are aspects of war journalism ethics that position journalists first and foremost as agents of the fourth estate. As such, peace journalism, in its moral attitude towards war reporting, can be seen to bestow upon the profession a sense of authority and legitimacy in terms of fourth estate ideology. This method demands a level of personal engagement on the part of the war reporter that can be likened to that of investigative journalism – a genre within the profession that is largely responsible for the continued legitimacy of journalism as an agent of the fourth estate. However, it is difficult to forecast the future of peace journalism because of its questionable viability. The method has also met with criticism, although not extreme. Most critics of peace journalism continue to acknowledge that the perceived problems to which the method proclaims to be a cure are detrimental to war journalism. The essence of peace journalism, therefore – that reporters should do their best to contribute to a de-escalation of conflicts – conforms to the fourth estate ideal, which sees journalism as a tool that may improve society. If peace journalism were to influence how audiences view war and conflict, however, this would almost certainly have a positive effect in terms of increased knowledge and understanding.

However it remains to be seen how peace journalism may be practised. The fact that the method is being taught at universities and media centres nevertheless shows that there is interest in the potential of peace journalism as an asset to war correspondence. Peace journalism can teach students of journalism and other media workers a method that focuses on giving audiences a better understanding of war and conflict. As war journalism in general has been accused of poor standards throughout the history of the profession, peace journalism should certainly enable war correspondents to better face some of the challenges of war coverage.

The history of war journalism demonstrates the degree to which patriotism can be considered a subjective approach to war and conflict, albeit in a more institutional form than the methods developed by Lynch and Bell. Patriotism is a method within war journalism that to a certain extent determines how war and conflict are perceived in civil society. Because the role of the patriotic reporter is to support the continuation of state institutions in the face of imminent threats of military force, certain standards of the profession are suspended in the interest of national survival (Williams 1992: 156). Furthermore, because military institutions are under the

impression that the media can affect how a conflict is perceived, certain propaganda mechanisms are mobilised to encourage maximum patriotism among reporters. Therefore, the inherent constraints of the media and of warfare suggest that patriotism entails a more institutionalised subjectivity than do peace journalism and the journalism of attachment.

Patriotism has been, and continues to be, an enduring aspect of war reporting. There is a sense that patriotic subjectivity will always be a part of war journalism because of the necessarily close connection between journalists and military institutions in times of war. As such, there are problems associated with patriotism that are difficult to resolve because of its institutional restrictions. Nevertheless, because patriotism can occasionally be regarded as a necessary part of warfare, this subjective approach can be seen to represent a challenge to war journalism rather than a threat. As patriotism has beneficial effects as well as obvious problems, its endurance in history suggests it is a subjective sentiment that is an integral part of war journalism – something that continues to be disputed.

Whereas peace journalism can possibly be said to have certain positive effects on war journalism, and patriotism may be said to have rather negative effects on the profession, the journalism of attachment is difficult to classify in this sense. The journalism of attachment may possibly be a threat to war reporting, yet it could also be an asset – a catalyst for the improvement of war journalism. It is difficult to determine the effect of the journalism of attachment on the profession, and therefore it can also be seen as the most interesting of the three subjective methods examined in this thesis.

### **7.3 A Cancer Infecting Journalism?**

Nic Gowing has good reason to characterise the journalism of attachment as a 'cancer which is infecting journalism'<sup>26</sup> (cited in Foerstel 1999: 6). There are problems with the method that are not

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<sup>26</sup> It might be considered rather extreme that Gowing should resolve to liken the journalism of attachment to a destructive disease such as cancer. The metaphor in fact identifies subjectivity as an unhealthy tendency whose nature it is to consume its surrounding and spread to other areas of the organism. In paralleling attachment with cancer, Gowing not only suggests the method's fatal threat towards war journalism, he also indicates the only cure for such a menace is something akin to surgical removal or chemical treatment. Incidentally, Gowing's comment is supplemented by Foerstel's description of the journalism of attachment as a 'virus' (Foerstel 1999: 1). The disease-analogy is perhaps used for its strong effect - and its ability to describe the strong objections towards the method held by Gowing and Foerstel – but should nevertheless be regarded as an unusually strong parallel in this debate.

only associated with professional ideology. Greg McLaughlin comments on the journalism of attachment in the conclusion to his book *The War Correspondent*:

*“Is it proper for journalists to witness a war or some humanitarian crisis, report on the blood and the gore to some symbolic backdrop of horror and human degradation, and then with great emotion and passion single out the guilty party and call for them to be bombed? Most of the journalists I interviewed for this book said it was impossible to be objective in such situations and some of them make no apologies for calling for military force where that seems necessary, but I sensed in their responses (...) that they do not fully appreciate the many dangers inherent in emotionalism”* (McLaughlin 2002: 197).

The danger of advocacy journalism is that when it influences a critical mass of the journalist population, public impression of the conflict may be seriously distorted (Hammond 2002: 1-8; Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001: 97). The question is therefore whether we can trust subjective journalists to take the right side, to see conflicts clearly and to be justified in their assumptions. The essential aspect of the problems associated with advocacy or attachment is therefore that audiences no longer perceive reports as trustworthy.

Tumber and Prentoulis nevertheless claim that the journalism of attachment does not lead to a feminisation of news values, but instead renders journalists capable of better processing their own as well as audiences' experiences of traumatic events. They therefore maintain that in the post 11 September environment, *"the notion of a 'journalism of attachment' requires re-assessment from its earlier expressions during the Bosnian conflict"* (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 228). As the journalism of attachment can be seen as a new method for disclosing acts of war to the public, its goal is necessarily to compensate for the lack of effect on civil society and the body politic normally reserved for objective journalism. However, as the journalism of attachment method has so far failed to inspire humanitarian missions, it is unlikely that subjectivity is the only option available to engaged war journalists in the fluctuating environment of a paradigm shift.

#### 7.4 A Paradigm Shift in War Journalism?

Philip Seib maintains the challenge within war journalism today is that of "*personal involvement and the extent to which correspondents' personal views should be reflected in their reporting*" (Seib 2002: 40). As such, Tumber and Prentoulis see a trend in journalism developing after 11 September 2001 in which there is growing space for attachment and emotion in war journalism (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 228; see also Harcup 2004: 66; Tumber 2002: 256; Zelizer & Allan 2002: 2). As the psychological dimension becomes "*fully embraced into the culture of journalism*" (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 228), Tumber and Prentoulis say we are approaching a paradigmatic shift that can increasingly account for the 'human face' of war reporting (Tumber 2002: 256; Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 228).

Tumber and Prentoulis claim a sure sign of paradigmatic changes within an occupation is what can be seen as "*interruptions of the cultural expressions of the occupational ideology*" (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 223). As such, signs of such a development can be found in reporting of the wars in Bosnia, Chechnya and Rwanda. Tumber and Prentoulis see the journalism of attachment as a method that adds to the challenge and ambiguity of objectivity as professional ideal. Therefore, the development of a journalism that embraces expressions of emotion and trauma challenges the traditional ideological framework, and may lead to a breakdown of professional ideology (ibid: 225, 227-228). The fact that the political establishment has largely refused to take into account the reports of war correspondents presents us with the possibility that war journalism is going through a paradigm shift where objectivity is, relatively speaking, no longer the most beneficial method of reporting war and conflict. At least not if reporters wish to have some impact on the world. As journalism changes – "*from detachment to involvement, from verification to assertion, from objectivity to subjectivity*" (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 228) – there is a need for a re-examination of the professional ideals (ibid). As such, Robert Karl Manoff claims, "*contemporary journalism is in flux [and] the future of the profession is very much up for grabs*" (Manoff 1998: 6). Therefore, say Tumber and Prentoulis, "*changes in the occupational subcultures may signal the beginning of deeper, more radical changes, related to the occupation as a whole*" (Tumber & Prentoulis 2003: 223, see also Allan & Zelizer 2004: 3).

## 7.5 Solutions to the Subjectivity Problem?

As a paradigm approaches its end, there are a number of competing voices suggesting journalistic cures for the current confusion. One such suggestion comes from Stephen Ward. He maintains the enduring dispute surrounding objectivity calls for a new theory that can account for "*the needs of today's journalism*" (Ward 1999: 3). Because there is a growing scepticism towards objectivity in the newsroom, Ward claims, the profession is steadily moving towards a more interpretative journalism. He asserts that unless an alternative to objectivity is developed, more irresponsible and undisciplined journalism will result. Because he sees total detachment as an unrealistic demand on reporters, he launches an alternative to objectivity – pragmatic news objectivity – a method he claims will account for the human aspect of war reporting (ibid). Ward maintains journalism needs the "*passion of attachment*" as much as it needs the "*restraint of objectivity*" (ibid: 8). Nevertheless, he rejects the journalism of attachment as a viable option. Ward claims that because Bell's method has relinquished objectivity altogether, it crosses the line and is therefore a danger to journalism rather than an asset (ibid), because, he says, "*the moralizing attached journalist might get it wrong, with harmful consequences*" (Ward 1998: 124).

Ward here displays a fear of the war journalist as subject. However, he also rejects the idea of the war journalist as object. Ward therefore seems to propose that attachment is important in war journalism, however an expressed *method* based on subjectivity is not acceptable. It is somewhat curious that a call for more personal engagement in war journalism seems so categorical about how this engagement is to be expressed. One may ask, then, how a journalist should manage to balance the passion of attachment with the restraint of objectivity.

The debate over the journalism of attachment demonstrates the contentiousness of subjectivity in war journalism. It nevertheless seems that some form of subjectivity is a continuing and indeed important presence in the war journalism profession, and an outspoken method of advocacy seems to be rejected by some and embraced by others. It seems critics of the method would prefer war reporting to continue as it has – remaining loyal to the objectivity ideal while balancing professionalism with the degree of personal engagement needed to perform satisfactorily. Should the profession be approaching a paradigm shift, however, continuing to practise war journalism in accordance with the objectivity ideal may no longer be an option. On

the other hand, the journalism of attachment is unlikely to prevail as a dominant method in a new war journalism paradigm, simply because it presents too much of a break with existing standards. What seems more likely is a combination of the two approaches, where ideals such as impartiality, fairness and balance will continue to guide journalism, and where emotional literacy will develop to compensate for the subjectivity of reporters.

## **7.6 Conclusion: Attached or Detached?**

The journalism of attachment is of great interest as a method of subjective war journalism. Its popularity suggests there is a growing dissatisfaction with the objectivity ideal within the war journalistic community, and its development moreover signals an imminent paradigm shift in the profession. While history demonstrates that subjectivity continues to be an enduring and important aspect of war reporting, the developments over the past 10-15 years imply the profession has come up against challenges that may perhaps no longer be resolved by a strict adherence to the objectivity ideal. Indeed, dissatisfaction with the objective method may have always existed in all forms of journalism, but the problems associated with objectivity have a tendency to materialise more in war reporting than in other journalism genres. The journalism of attachment in particular demonstrates the problems associated with objectivity – which particularly materialises in frequent confrontations with the paradoxes of the profession. As such, reporters need to be attached and detached at the same time in order to accomplish the tasks of journalism in civil society. Detachment ensures legitimacy both for the profession and the news institution, and attachment lends authority to the fourth estate ideal. Objectivity has until now been the mechanism that keeps these paradoxes relatively stable. When resistance to objectivity mounts within war journalism, however, the result is a situation in which paradoxes become particularly apparent, and one is consequently confronted with a range of seemingly irresolvable professional difficulties. It is this situation which leads me to believe that we are seeing the signs of a paradigm shift within war journalism. The result of this paradigmatic breakdown is uncertain, however. It is unlikely that subjectivity will emerge as a dominant and indeed acceptable form of war journalism – but subjectivity must be accounted for in a more satisfactory manner than before. In other words, this is ultimately not a question of whether one should be attached or detached, but rather a question of how one may be both.

## CHAPTER 8

### LITERATURE

#### 8.1 Literature

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## APPENDIX

### 17 TIPS: WHAT A PEACE JOURNALIST WOULD TRY TO DO

1. AVOID portraying a conflict as consisting of only two parties contesting one goal. The logical outcome is for one to win and the other to lose. INSTEAD, a Peace Journalist would DISAGGREGATE the two parties into many smaller groups, pursuing many goals, opening up more creative potential for a range of outcomes.

2. AVOID accepting stark distinctions between "self" and "other." These can be used to build the sense that another party is a "threat" or "beyond the pale" of civilized behavior — both key justifications for violence. INSTEAD, seek the "other" in the "self" and vice versa. If a party is presenting itself as "the goodies," ask questions about how different its behavior really is to that it ascribes to "the baddies" — isn't it ashamed of itself?

3. AVOID treating a conflict as if it is only going on in the place and at the time that violence is occurring. INSTEAD, try to trace the links and consequences for people in other places now and in the future. Ask:

- Who are all the people with a stake in the outcome?
- Ask yourself what will happen if ...?
- What lessons will people draw from watching these events unfold as part of a global audience?

How will they enter the calculations of parties to future conflicts near and far?

4. AVOID assessing the merits of a violent action or policy of violence in terms of its visible effects only. INSTEAD, try to find ways of reporting on the invisible effects, e.g., the long-term consequences of psychological damage and trauma, perhaps increasing the likelihood that those affected will be violent in future, either against other people or, as a group, against other groups or other countries.

5. AVOID letting parties define themselves by simply quoting their leaders' restatement of familiar demands or positions. INSTEAD, inquire more deeply into goals:

- How are people on the ground affected by the conflict in everyday life?
- What do they want changed?
- Is the position stated by their leaders the only way or the best way to achieve the changes they want?

6. AVOID concentrating always on what divides the parties, the differences between what they say they want. INSTEAD, try asking questions that may reveal areas of common ground and leading your report with answers which suggest some goals maybe shared or at least compatible, after all.

7. AVOID only reporting the violent acts and describing "the horror." If you exclude everything else, you suggest that the only explanation for violence is previous violence (revenge); the only remedy, more violence (coercion/punishment). INSTEAD, show how people have been blocked and frustrated or deprived in everyday life as a way of explaining the violence.

8. AVOID blaming someone for starting it. INSTEAD, try looking at how shared problems and issues are leading to consequences that all the parties say they never intended.

9. AVOID focusing exclusively on the suffering, fears and grievances of only one party. This divides the parties into "villains" and "victims" and suggests that coercing or punishing the villains represents a solution. INSTEAD, treat as equally newsworthy the suffering, fears and grievance of all sides.

10. AVOID "victimizing" language such as "destitute," "devastated," "defenseless," "pathetic" and "tragedy," which only tells us what has been done to and could be done for a group of people. This disempowers them and limits the options for change. INSTEAD, report on what has been done and could be done by the people. Don't just ask them how they feel, also ask them how they are coping and what do they think? Can they suggest any solutions? Remember refugees have surnames as well. You wouldn't call President Clinton "Bill" in a news report.

11. AVOID imprecise use of emotive words to describe what has happened to people.

- "Genocide" means the wiping out of an entire people.
- "Decimated" (said of a population) means reducing it to a tenth of its former size.
- "Tragedy" is a form of drama, originally Greek, in which someone's fault or weakness proves his or her undoing.
- "Assassination" is the murder of a head of state.
- "Massacre" is the deliberate killing of people known to be unarmed and defenseless. Are we sure? Or might these people have died in battle?

- "Systematic" e.g., raping or forcing people from their homes. Has it really been organized in a deliberate pattern or have there been a number of unrelated, albeit extremely nasty incidents?

INSTEAD, always be precise about what we know. Do not minimize suffering but reserve the strongest language for the gravest situations or you will beggar the language and help to justify disproportionate responses that escalate the violence.

12. AVOID demonizing adjectives like "vicious," "cruel," "brutal" and "barbaric." These always describe one party's view of what another party has done. To use them puts the journalist on that side and helps to justify an escalation of violence. INSTEAD, report what you know about the wrongdoing and give as much information as you can about the reliability of other people's reports or descriptions of it.

13. AVOID demonizing labels like "terrorist," "extremist," "fanatic" and "fundamentalist." These are always given by "us" to "them." No one ever uses them to describe himself or herself, and so, for a journalist to use them is always to take sides. They mean the person is unreasonable, so it seems to make less sense to reason (negotiate) with them. INSTEAD, try calling people by the names they give themselves. Or be more precise in your descriptions.

14. AVOID focusing exclusively on the human rights abuses, misdemeanors and wrongdoings of only one side. INSTEAD, try to name ALL wrongdoers and treat equally seriously allegations made by all sides in a conflict. Treating seriously does not mean taking at face value, but instead making equal efforts to establish whether any evidence exists to back them up, treating the victims with equal respect and the chances of finding and punishing the wrongdoers as being of equal importance.

15. AVOID making an opinion or claim seem like an established fact. ("Eurico Guterres, said to be responsible for a massacre in East Timor ...") INSTEAD, tell your readers or your audience who said what. ("Eurico Guterres, accused by a top U.N. official of ordering a massacre in East Timor ...") That way you avoid signing yourself and your news service up to the allegations made by one party in the conflict against another.

16. AVOID greeting the signing of documents by leaders, which bring about military victory or cease fire, as necessarily creating peace. INSTEAD, try to report on the issues which remain and which may still lead people to commit further acts of violence in the future. Ask what is being done to strengthen means on the ground to handle and resolve conflict nonviolently, to address development or structural needs in the society and to create a culture of peace?

17. AVOID waiting for leaders on "our" side to suggest or offer solutions. INSTEAD, pick up and explore peace initiatives wherever they come from. Ask questions to ministers, for example, about ideas put forward by grassroots organizations. Assess peace perspectives against what you know about the issues the parties are really trying to address. Do not simply ignore them because they do not coincide with established positions.