VALUES AND CHOICES IN TELEVISION DISCOURSE

A VIEW FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE SCREEN

EDITED BY
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A Word of Introduction

Roberta Piazza, Louann Haarman and Anne Caborn

> [I]t's interesting for practitioners, who often do things instinctively and organically, to see how their processes can be analysed and explained.
>
> (Olivia Lichtenstein)

This epigraph from an interview with independent documentary maker Olivia Lichtenstein in this volume helps contextualise, we believe, the thrust of our book and the intention behind it. As a professional who makes television programmes in what is widely acknowledged as a pressured, fast-paced environment, Olivia Lichtenstein is focused on production and such issues as the coherence of her films and responsibility to her audience (both in terms of professional commitment to the viewers and consideration of their evolving tastes). She can rarely take the time to reflect on how the potentialities of her texts and images will be interpreted outside of these more immediate broadcast imperatives or how her productions are understood and analysed by other professionals, for instance academics, at a different pace and away from the process itself. Such television analysts study the final product and attribute intention with often limited direct knowledge and appreciation of the production processes, its practicalities and imperatives. *Values and Choices in Television Discourse: A View from Both Sides of the Screen* offers the possibility of a reflection on television for and from both parties, as well as an insight into the final product and the choices made during its preparation.

The volume was originally inspired by a small colloquium at the University of Sussex in 2013 that brought together television analysts interested in news and other non-fiction broadcasting, and practitioners involved in or with experience of programme production. The volume allows readers to reflect more broadly on the television product and the production choices that are made when presenting a particular item of

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news, selecting a specific angle from which to discuss it, opting for certain images to accompany the text, or a particular camera angle. All these are elements that may result in promoting a distinct perception in the mind of the viewer and of those viewing through the more remote lens of study and/or analysis.

The assembled collection of chapters and interviews offers different approaches to and perspectives on the medium of television, as the various contributors explore many aspects of televisual discourse, including attention to the verbal texts, the role of the camera, the images, the editing techniques, the impact of commissioners' demands, the evolving nature of digital audience participation via social media and much more.

Contributors retain their own epistemological and professional perspectives. Television practitioners express their comments in interviews and reflective narratives which focus on the procedures and activities in conceiving, creating and preparing the programmes, in the attempt to uncover some of the challenging work that is never apparent on screen. The variety of styles of presentation is in keeping with the book's intention to provide a range of diverse perspectives on current trends and practices in contemporary television discourse.

The result is a promising, albeit still evolving, discursive space for those people who are in the television business and those whose purpose is intellectual investigation and analysis. We hope this space opens an interesting route in a fruitful direction.

Part I

The Analysis of the Television Product

Roberta Piazza and Louann Haarman

Part I is a collection of chapters offering a number of perspectives on television discourse by academics working in the fields of media and discourse analysis. While the practitioners' contributions in the following section address the preparation and the production stage of the television product, revealing choices made on the 'other side of the screen' invisible to viewers, the studies in this section address what appears on the viewers' side. Practitioners' choices are principally dictated by pressing pragmatic and contingent reasons, deriving for example from time, money or marketing constraints. Academics, while not ignoring this, tend to analyse the finished broadcast product, offering a reading of its multiple aspects. From this perspective the product may be seen as having entailed other kinds of choices, which, rather than by practical imperatives, are motivated by adherence to a system of cultural values and personal or social beliefs.

Similar to the practitioners' part, this collection is characterised by its multidisciplinarity. The authors represent different theoretical and methodological backgrounds, some of them bringing in expertise derived from a professional past in the production of news. The analytical approach is prevalently comparative (either across countries or private and public networks), for, as Entman (1991) notes, it is precisely through the careful *comparison* of texts that features peculiar to one or the other emerge, features that would have otherwise remained unremarkable.

Part I opens with a comparative analysis by Bednarek and Caple on the way four British and Australian news providers (BBC World and ABC News 24, *The Guardian* and *Sydney Morning Herald*) represent themselves in promotional television advertisements. Taking a multimodal approach, the authors show the different types of engagement that the

news media aspire to achieve with their audiences, and the journalistic values that they claim for themselves.

This is followed by chapters focusing specifically on television news and other factual programming. In Chapter 2, Duguid explores values which emerge in the visual and verbal texts of four English language world news channels (France 24, Russia Today, Al Jazeera and China's CCTV) whose mission statements characterise them in contraposition to the hegemonic power of older world news channels BBC and CNN. She is followed by Koga-Browes (Chapter 3), who analyses a corpus of British and Japanese news images and discusses how camera angles may impose particular standpoints on viewers from which to position themselves vis-à-vis the image. Writing from previous experience as a practising television camera man, he gives examples of how practical problems in filming may determine a certain kind of shot which in turn may suggest a 'meaning' to viewers beyond any intentionality on the part of the producer. In Chapter 4, Bonfiglioli offers a quantitative analysis of news angles and frames. Starting from the assumption that news media language and images help shape our understandings, she discusses ideological positioning in news coverage of overweight and obesity by investigating their reported causes, attributions of responsibility and promotion of solutions. In Chapter 5, Lorenzo-Dus addresses the representation of commemorative events by CNN and by British, Argentinian and Spanish broadcasters in television news and documentaries. Her analysis points out similarities and differences in the television data and emphasises the cross-cultural valence of such manifestations in memorialising the cultural traumas of the past.

The two final chapters on factual programming are also carried out in a comparative perspective. In Chapter 6 Piazza discusses the role of the omniscient narrator in the realisation of two documentary films on commercial and public networks (Channel 5 and BBC) regarding Britain's mobile community of travellers. Piazza's analysis highlights the interplay of the representation of a disenfranchised group with, in one case, the desire to entertain and, in the other, the desire to offer as far as possible an objective ethnographic report. The closing chapter is a reflection on an example of reality, lifestyle-based programming, the cooking competition, in which Haarman compares British, Australian and American versions of *MasterChef*. Focusing on the various formats, production strategies and broadcasting styles, she highlights the choices which, within the limits of the programme franchise, enable the country versions to adapt to and represent stereotypical characteristics of the different cultural contexts.

By adopting a comparative and often interdisciplinary approach that considers both the verbal and visual planes, these academic reflections on television discourse in news and other factual programmes bring to the fore the ideological, cultural and commercial choices that can be identified in the discourse of television, choices whose motivations will be discussed by practitioners in Part II of the book.

1
Promotional Videos

What Do They Tell Us about the Value of News?

Monika Bednarek and Helen Caple

Introduction

In this chapter we investigate values in contemporary journalism as expressed through the promotional television advertisements of news organisations. When news organisations advertise themselves, they make claims that are meant to attest to what they stand for: be it that they give us 'the whole picture' (*The Guardian*, UK), that we should 'know no boundaries' (the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Australia), that they offer audiences 'your news, your way' (ABC News 24, Australia), or that they demand that we 'stay ahead, stay connected' (BBC World News, UK) by engaging with their programmes. In questioning the concepts of 'value' and 'value creation' (Picard 2010: 10) and what these mean for news organisations and their increasingly active audiences, this chapter explores the way in which news providers sell themselves and/or their products to audiences through promotional television advertisements. This initial study examines promotional television advertisements produced in 2012/2013 for four long-established, well-resourced and widely recognised, and hence 'legacy', quality news media organisations: the BBC and *The Guardian* in the UK, and the ABC and the *Sydney Morning Herald* in Australia. Through analysis of both the verbal and visual features of these advertisements we ask the following questions of these texts: What kind of values do these news organisations present to the world? Do they attempt to redefine themselves in the face of evolving practices? If so, how do they achieve this? The analysis demonstrates the differing degrees of uptake of interaction with audiences, of digital

innovation and the 'values' that stand as the measure of worth or importance placed in the products and services that these news organisations claim to provide. We start by providing an overview of values in general and values with respect to journalistic practice, before introducing our data and methodology in more detail and presenting and discussing our findings. We conclude by summarising the values that are emphasised by these legacy news outlets today.

Values

The study of promotional television advertisements in this chapter is part of a wider interest that we have developed in recent years around values and journalistic practice. Before considering values in this professional and institutional context, however, it may be useful to consider the general meaning and usage of the word *value*.

As Table 1.1 shows, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) has two main definitions, with several sub-definitions within each.

Table 1.1   Definitions of *value*

OED definitions for *value*
Definition 1: 'Worth or quality as measured by a standard of equivalence.' 15 sub-definitions (incl. rare/obs.)
Definition 2: 'Worth based on esteem; quality viewed in terms of importance, usefulness, desirability, etc.' 6 sub-definitions (incl. rare/obs.)

What these definitions illustrate is that *value* concerns some kind of standard and is evaluated positively. *Value* also seems an important concept: the OED includes about ten phrases within the entry for *value* (e.g. *of value, to add value to, value for money*…), and the word *value* also occurs in 91 phrases in 87 other entries (e.g. *asset value, family values, land-value, news value*…). Most of these 91 phrases have to do with business and law and *value* in the sense of money, and many technical terms are present (e.g. *significance value*). Interestingly for us in the context of this chapter, *news value* is one of these recognised phrases in the OED. We will return to this phrase later in the chapter. That value is an important concept can also be inferred from the fact that *value* occurs in many compounds (e.g. *value growth, value system, value-driven, value judgment*), including compounds where value is constructed as an objective: *value-creating*,

value-enhancing, *value-making*, *value-adding* and so on. These compounds reinforce the notion that value appears to be inherently positive.

To briefly consider how the word *value* is actually used in general British English we can consult the British National Corpus (BNC), a corpus of 100 million words of spoken and written British English, mainly from the 1990s. Table 1.2 lists the top 20 lexical collocates – words that co-occur significantly with the word form *values* – limited to those collocates that occur across more than 20 texts (log likelihood measure, maximum window span of 4). Here we can see that apart from the economic *land/property* and the technical *serum/rateable/parameter/reflectance/range*, *values* are often associated with beliefs, attitudes and norms; that they are perhaps said to occur in a set; that they are associated with culture (*moral*, *cultural*, *social*, *traditional*, *society*, *Victorian*) and that they may be objects of (dis)agreement or negotiation (*shared/different*). Interestingly, *news* is not a very frequent collocate of *values* in the BNC (the exact term *news values* occurs 15 times across as many texts).

Table 1.2   Collocation analysis: *values*

Top 20 collocates for *values* in the BNC (>20 texts)	
Nouns	*beliefs, attitudes, serum, norms, parameter, land, set, reflectance, society, property, range*
Adjectives	*moral, cultural, traditional, different, rateable, shared, social, Victorian*

To sum up this general overview, it appears that values concern some kind of standard; they define a culture; they are often seen as positive or as an objective to attain; they are important for our society; and they are open to negotiation. In the context of this chapter's focus on journalism, we can thus ask the following questions: *what kinds of standards can we discover*; *how do values define journalism as a culture*; *how do news institutions try to attain 'value'*; *what kinds of values are important for journalism*; *which values are emphasised at different times (negotiation)*; *are there any value shifts*; and so on. We believe that these are important questions to ask of our news media in times of such monumental change, and that values are therefore an interesting object for journalism research.

Values and journalistic practice

As mentioned above, this chapter is part of our wider research interest in values and journalistic practice. There are in fact different ways in

which values could be addressed in this professional and institutional context. To name but a few perspectives, we could study journalistic values as the moral-ethical principles that journalists hold (partially codified in the codes of practice that members of news organisations are supposed to adhere to). This relates to values such as objectivity, fairness, truthfulness and accuracy in reporting, values that news media consumers may still share, as confirmed by the latest Reuters Institute Digital News Report (Newman and Levy 2014: 16). We could also study how news organisations create 'value' through strategies constructed around business models, and we will say more about this below. Finally, we could approach values from the point of view of news production, investigating the values that make something worthy of being news, or newsworthy. In fact, for linguistics the latter approach – usually discussed as news values – is probably the most well-known approach in journalism research. We have already mentioned the term *news values* above in our investigation of *values* in the OED and the BNC.

This area (news values) is also where we have done most research so far, taking a discursive perspective (Bednarek and Caple 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Caple 2013; Caple and Bednarek 2013). In contrast to Bell (1991) who distinguishes three classes of news values, we take a more narrow approach and reserve the term *news values* for the newsworthiness of an event, issue or actor (Table 1.3). Factors other than newsworthiness that influence the production of news have been noted by Cotter: 'availability of space, the amount of news occurring on a particular day, a balance or mix of types of news [...], the time to deadline [...], day of the week [...], the audience or readership [...] and the focus [...] of the news outlet' (Cotter 2010: 80).

Table 1.3 also points to the fact that key concerns for news institutions are commercial or market factors, in particular with respect to the

Table 1.3   Defining news values

News values vs. other considerations	
News writing objectives	General goals associated with news writing (e.g. clarity, brevity, colour)
Selection factors	Any factor or criterion impacting on whether or not a story becomes published, not necessarily values (e.g. commercial pressures, availability of reporters, deadlines)
News values	To do with the newsworthiness of actors, issues, happenings (e.g. negativity, proximity, eliteness)

seismic shifts that are affecting their business models. Therefore, in this chapter, we consider how news organisations attempt to differentiate themselves in this now saturated digital information age. To be clear, we are not undertaking an analysis of selection or market factors here that impact on publication; rather we discuss how values relate to the ways in which news organisations promote and differentiate themselves from their competitors in the marketplace. Thus, we are taking the second perspective mentioned above: the examination of how news organisations create 'value' through strategies constructed around business models. In our view, this is *not* a 'news values' analysis.

Media economist Robert Picard (2010) assesses the key drivers of journalism in the 21st century from two perspectives. The first of these is the moral philosophical perspective which relates to the traditional fourth estate ideals that the public needs information to partake in democratic governance and to be engaged in society. The second, the economic perspective, takes into consideration the sustainability of news organisations and the social and economic conditions that are currently threatening this position, first in terms of financing the production of news, and second in relation to the role of audiences in the digital age. In relation to this second point, Picard suggests that there is a 'fundamental power shift' happening in the news: the locus of control over content has basically shifted from the communicators (journalists) to audiences who are now able to select and filter news and information into a form that suits them (Picard 2010: 20). Given such radical shifts in the industry, we ask these questions: *How do news organisations attempt to redefine themselves in the face of such monumental change? How do they create value for themselves?* In other words, *how do news organisations present themselves to the public as being valuable or worthy purveyors of news?*

One of the ways in which we can begin to investigate value creation is to examine how news organisations sell themselves to the public, and a key strategy in selling is to create a 'brand identity'. Brand identity denotes the perception that management intends its brand to have for the consuming public (Arvidsson 2005: 254, footnote 8; but cf. Kim et al. 2010 for an exploration of 'brand personality' in the news media). It includes tangible elements (e.g. its name, logo, slogan, music, typography, colour etc.) that consumers can rally around. BBC World News, for example, uses the same logo with red background and white font on all of its news bulletins, which is consistent with the main news page used on the website (see Figure 1.3 below). Danesi (2013: 465) describes this as

a process of 'semiotizing a product into a brand' involving the naming of a product, the design of a logo, slogan/jingle, ads/commercials and the packaging of a product.

Establishing a sense of community between producer and consumer is also a key strategy in brand design. This includes a sense of trust (Neumeier 2003: 8), shared ideas, attitudes, lifestyles (Tungate 2005; Machin and Niblock 2008: 247; Klein 2009: 201), essentially the feeling that consumers belong to 'an elite group of people who will be admired for their wisdom and good taste' (Berry 2012: 147). Thellefsen and Sørensen (2013: 477) describe this as a form of 'cognitive branding' wherein a brand is able to create communities, attract advocators and communicate values.

As far as the news media is concerned, there are several approaches to how branding can add or communicate value. McDowell (2011) stresses the importance of '*the competitive advantage of a brand name*' (p. 39, italics in original) in brand management. This means using the reputation that the organisation has established with audiences over many years and through their traditional journalistic practices (Johnson 2013: 315). The legitimacy of a news organisation is also said to be enhanced by '*good* journalism' (Sjøvaag 2012: 56, italics in original), which can be turned into strategic, economic value in the news market. For the legacy outlets, such as BBC World, they can draw on their 'brand heritage' (Tungate 2005: 32, 231), and rather than being viewed as merely a source of information for readers/audiences, they see themselves also acting as lifestyle statements for their audiences. Moreover, important for the analysis undertaken in this chapter is McDowell's summing up of the essence of brand management as 'providing what your rivals cannot' (2011: 48).

Chan-Olmsted (2011), writing in relation to branding in the dynamic era of Web 2.0 and beyond, stresses that key practices include delivering 'experience, personalization, use of multiple platforms (incorporating mobility), relevance, and multipoint presence' (p. 4). A further approach concerns the notion of brand participation. In this model, consumers are given the opportunity to co-create content and to form relationships with both their peers and the content providers. Mooney and Rollins (2008) conceptualise this as an 'OPEN' brand: one that is on-demand, personal, engaging and networked.

By way of summarising and adding to these approaches to branding in journalism and providing a set of analytical tools for assessing the values promoted by news organisations, we turn now to the notion of value creation as conceptualised by Picard (2010). Picard proposes four ways of creating value in journalism:

1. *By becoming a trusted advisor, respected interpreter, providing leadership, clarity, knowledge* (p. 120).

   As noted above, the legacy news organisations are best positioned to achieve this as they can draw on their reputation, reliability, credibility and breadth to keep consumers coming back for more. Many news organisations do in fact use this notion to inform the writing of their journalistic principles and codes of practice, for example AP at http://www.ap.org/company/news-values.

2. *By paying attention to the packaging of stories and their potential for new ways of telling stories* (p. 121).

   Journalists are expert at getting at the meaning of an event, how it will affect the lives of audiences and what can be done next. So, it is in the transformation of raw information by journalists who are able to put it into a digestible 'story-like' form, link it to other information and add context, that the audience gains knowledge and in which intrinsic (inherently good: factuality/truth) and instrumental (functional) value and ultimately exchange (willingness to pay) value are created (Picard 2006).[1]

3. *By becoming the preferred provider across platforms* (p. 123).

   Important here is to recognise the different affordances of each platform and to allow each to do what they do best. This also includes understanding that content cannot merely be reproduced on each platform. Thus, the idea of brand here needs to encompass the entire approach to news and information and provide clear values across each of the platforms.

4. *By providing the opportunity for participation in the journalism process* (p. 125).

   This is similar to Mooney and Rollins's (2008) idea of 'engaging' in their OPEN journalism model. Such approaches create value by opening up a dialogue around a story that already exists (e.g. through comment sections, Twitter hash tags), or more radically, by allowing the audience to gather and disseminate news as well.

In the analysis that follows, we have taken these four ways of creating value – trusted advisor, packaging and new ways of storytelling, preferred provider across platforms and opportunity for participation – as our base parameters for the interpretation of the promotional television advertisements used by four heritage news media organisations.

Data and method

Our data consists of promotional television advertisements for four long-established, well-resourced and widely recognised quality news

media organisations: the BBC and *The Guardian* in the UK, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the ABC in Australia. These promotional videos were the most recent when we started this initial study and date from 2012 and 2013. *The Guardian* video (two minutes), titled '*Three little pigs*', was published in February 2012 and is well known in the UK. It was winner of the 'Ad of the Year 2012' category by BBH London, winner of 'Best Crafted Commercial' at the British Arrow Craft Awards and winner of a Cannes Lion award. At the time of writing it had been viewed over two million times at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= vDGrfhJH1P4. The BBC video (30 seconds) promotes BBC World News and was published on 8 January 2013 as it had been produced to coincide with BBC World News being broadcast live from a new studio, starting on 14 January 2013. It is much less well known and at the time of writing had only been viewed 639 times at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= sUJCCu9pgFc. Similarly, the promotional video (45 seconds) for the Australian metropolitan newspaper the *Sydney Morning Herald* (*SMH*), published in 2013, had attracted over 140,000 viewers at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= BWPv3Z_Ss1M, whereas the link to the ABC video (34 seconds) promoting its channel ABC News 24, published on 14 June 2012, which we originally accessed at http://about.abc.net.au/media/abc-news24-network-promo/, has now been removed.

Promotional videos are a key element in the branding of a product and have been described semiotically as texts that hide 'an implicit promise' in that they '[do] not simply present a product for what it is but, rather, for what subconscious desire, need, or emotion it can fulfill' (Danesi 2013: 472). Such a promise in the world of the news media is wrapped up in the values and beliefs that are shared with audiences in relation to the provision of news and information. Advertising discourse often features vocabulary items that are 'strongly connected with the product's proposed "unique selling proposition" – the quality that makes the product a "must" to buy' (Goddard 2002: 73), and we will highlight some of these vocabulary items in our analyses below. Table 1.4 contains the spoken language for each promo (visuals are not integrated, as there are too many to reproduce here, but we have included key shots from each video further below).

To proceed with our verbal-visual analysis, the first step was to compile a shot-by-shot multimodal transcript of each video, with a focus on the aural and visual modality, as exemplified in Table 1.5. As can be seen, the transcript is content-focused and at a macro- rather than micro-level (in contrast to detailed multimodal transcription systems developed, for example, by Baldry and Thibault 2006; O'Halloran et al. 2010). This is

Table 1.4 Spoken text in the four videos

The Guardian	The Sydney Morning Herald	BBC World News	ABC News 24
Little pig, little pig, let us in. It's the police. Move. [Shouts] The third little pig is now being taken into custody. So the spotlight is once again shone on the grey area of home owners' rights to protect their properties. This isn't right. The three little pigs are the victims [also written]. The wolf blew down two houses. He got what he deserved [also written]. The pigs went too far [also written]. You have every right to defend your property [also written]. [Utterances in Chinese, French, also written] Keep your chinny chin chins up fellas [also written]. Boiling someone alive hardly constitutes reasonable force. If someone tried to blow my house down, I'd do the same [also written].	My mind is always searching. While some just accept what they're told. I look for more. I don't listen to the hype. I follow my own path. I visit worlds and question things. And when I find the truth, it leads the way, cause one full stop doesn't end my search.	We all want to stay ahead, to know what the world might bring. Whether it's political change in the Middle East or growth in the Asian markets, we'll be bringing you the global view, so you can see how it affects you. Stay ahead, stay connected with BBC World News, the 24-hour global news network from the BBC. Check your local listings or visit bbc dot com for more information.	The budget will protect our men and women on the frontline. Chin Wu Cheng [?] is a damaged man under a lot of pressure. Barack Obama came to power promising to close Guantanomo Bay. We're here, so you can be anywhere ABC NEWS 24 Your news your way

Table 1.4 (Continued)

The Guardian	*The Sydney Morning Herald*	*BBC World News*	*ABC News 24*
I knew the wolf. There's no way he could've blown down those houses. He had asthma.			
The wolf had asthma. So what's the truth about the pigs' houses being blown down? Inside job?			
There's no reason why those two houses, one made from straw and the other from wood, should have collapsed.			
Not even a healthy wolf's huff and puff could bring them down.			
The three little pigs have confessed to conspiring to commit insurance fraud, framing the wolf in an attempt to cover their tracks. Their motive was financial as they struggled to keep up with their mortgage repayments.			
Guilty.			
I can empathise with the pigs [also written].			
I'm behind on my payments too [also written].			
How could this have happened [also written]?			
I've lost everything [also written].			
We want change.			
[Shout]			

Table 1.5   Example of multimodal transcript for one shot of the *SMH* promotional video

Aural modality		Visual modality	
Spoken text		Written text or logos	Other visuals
Young woman's voice-over	*And when I find the truth*	*The Sydney Morning Herald* (Masthead) *Suspicions confirmed* (headline)	Composite of *Sydney Morning Herald* webpage, mobile phone app, tablet app (most prominent with headline), print newspaper, with news mock-up (Figure 1.1, shot 22)

because our analysis focuses on applying Picard's parameters as outlined above to analyse value-creation in each video. The macro-level transcript appeared sufficiently detailed to allow us to do so. To illustrate our thematic verbal-visual analysis with the help of the shot in Table 1.5, here the *SMH* is positioned as providing confirmation and veracity (*find the truth*, *suspicions confirmed*), thus creating value through the 'trusted advisor' role. The visuals only show the different platforms with their various layouts (see Figure 1.1, shot 22), but do not illustrate innovation in storytelling or audience participation. Thus, the only other value that is created in this shot for the *SMH* is that of 'preferred provider across platforms'. When discussing our findings below, we will summarise the values emphasised in each video, rather than providing a shot-by-shot analysis.

Findings

The Sydney Morning Herald – 'Know no boundaries'

The emphasis in the promotional video from the *SMH* is squarely on the 'trusted advisor' role of this news outlet. In the verbal text, the story is told from the point of view of a young woman (representing a typical *SMH* reader). As can be seen in the verbal transcript in Table 1.4, she is presented as having a searching mind, not blindly accepting what she is told, as independent, following her own path, visiting worlds and looking for more. In this, she is explicitly contrasted with others who are described as *accept*[ing] *what they're told* – likely to be regarded as inferior to searching for the truth and negatively

evaluated through the comparator *just* (cf. the example in Thompson and Hunston 2000: 16–17). Verbally, the woman's personality is mainly constructed through the use of declaratives and active voice, which position the 'I' as agent of various processes (*look*, *don't listen*, *follow*, *visit*, *find*). A journey-metaphor is also present throughout (e.g. *path*, *visit, way*). The searching personality is set up at the beginning through the process-focused *my mind is always searching* (note the use of the progressive), with the final clause closing the circle, as it were, and referring back to this search using a nominalisation (*one full stop doesn't end my search*).

This active verbal engagement is visually supported through the contrast between the physically active woman and the conveyer belt with puppet-like passive/static figures moving in the other direction to her (Figure 1.1, shot 2).[2] The visuals also show us that she is able to discriminate the good from the bad: she jumps through screens of 24-hour TV news, escapes a forest of words associated with sensationalism (Figure 1.1, shot 16) and emerges from this dark and dingy world into the light (visually) and the 'truth' (verbally) in the form of the *SMH* (Figure 1.1, shots 20–23). Thus it is the *SMH* that 'leads the way' and allows the woman/the *SMH* reader to 'know no boundaries' and to leap into the unknown (Figure 1.1, shot 25). The imperative seen in the *SMH* slogan *know no boundaries* is typical of advertising discourse, because the actions that the addressee is invited to undertake are presented as benefits not obligations (Myers 1994: p. 8). Additionally, the imperative has been said to give rise to 'the effect of advice coming from an unseen authoritative source' (Beasley and Danesi 2002: 120; Danesi 2013: 471). In sum, the young woman can be said to represent the *SMH* reader and thus, the audience is positioned as belonging to an elite group of independent, active truth-seekers who are able to see beyond the hype and who are enabled to do so by the trusted advisor, the *SMH*.

This advertisement does not show the value 'packaging and new ways of storytelling', but it does include one shot (Figure 1.1, shot 22) showing the different platforms that the *SMH* can be accessed from, including their various layouts, thus also suggesting that it is the 'preferred provider across platforms'. The video also excludes explicit reference to the value of 'opportunity for participation'. However, it could be argued that the *SMH* symbolically engages with the notion of the active audience, since the young woman portrayed is visually active in the ad: she runs, jumps, steps and leaps, and she is also linguistically agentive as evidenced through the parallel syntactic structure

Figure 1.1 Stills from the *Sydney Morning Herald* promo

emphasising agency: *I look for more/I don't listen to the hype/I follow my own path/I visit worlds and question things.*

The Guardian – 'The whole picture'

As noted above, *The Guardian* promotional video has won multiple awards and has been viewed by over 2 million people on YouTube. It is the longest of the analysed videos, at two minutes, and it is by far the most complex with a total of 87 shots. It tells the story of the three little pigs (a traditional children's fable), recontextualised here as an unfolding news story, involving suspicions of murder, police investigations, a court case and subsequent public protests. The plot twists and turns as more and more information comes to light, moving from a discussion of the right to defend one's property from intrusion, to insurance fraud, to mortgage defaults and corporate greed, ending with a call for debate around reform of the banking/financial system. Verbally, the story is told through multiple voices: a reporter at the scene (Figure 1.2, shot 23), an investigative journalist following up on the story (Figure 1.2, shot 42), expert analysis of the case (Figure 1.2, shot 43), a police press conference, all of which is interwoven with the voices/opinions (in multiple languages) of members of the public. The slogan 'the whole picture' is superimposed over the final shots (e.g. shot 84 in Figure 1.2) of the video.

The *Guardian* promotional video is the only one of the four analysed here that addresses all four of Picard's values. The value of 'trusted advisor' is captured both visually and verbally across the entire video. There is a clear emphasis on the role of *The Guardian*: we see *The Guardian* masthead with front page mock up being edited (Figure 1.2, shot 2) at the same time that the initial police raids are happening and the story is being broken. The *Guardian* webpage shows a news story with embedded video of the reporter at the scene (Figure 1.2, shot 23), and even the contributions of the members of the public to Twitter include *The Guardian* #opennews hashtag, which is made salient in comparison to the other verbal text in the tweet through a fluorescent green font. A story headline and web poll is projected over the unfolding scene at the pig's house (Figure 1.2, shot 32), as forensics enter the property to begin their investigations, again placing *The Guardian* at the centre of the action, here arguably with privileged insider access as their text appears inside the house and thus inside the cordoned off area being guarded by police. Another *Guardian* front page clipping is pinned to the wall by the investigative journalist, seeming to act as the departure point for his continuing search for 'the truth', which is verbalised by the

reporter's question *So, what's the truth about the pigs' houses being blown down?* (Figure 1.2, shot 42). *The Guardian* also brings us the expert analysis of the wolf's actions, by embedding this animation into a story page on the web (Figure 1.2, shot 43), and this is followed by the breaking of the next stage in this unfolding drama with an interactive graphic on mortgage defaults (Figure 1.2, shot 65), again, embedded in *The Guardian* web interface. *Guardian* photographers are also on the scene capturing the imagery of the protests at the end of the video, which is then shown in a story context on the front page of *The Guardian* as viewed via a tablet application (Figure 1.2, shot 83). All in all, *The Guardian*, its logo, web interface or masthead appear 12 times in the video. The end of the video brings us to the slogan 'the whole picture' followed by the words '*The Guardian*' using the simple blue and white colour scheme and typography that epitomises the brand identity of this news organisation. Again, this sequencing reinforces the notion that it is *The Guardian* you can trust to bring you the whole story. Note that in contrast to the SMH video, *The Guardian* gets its message across more implicitly – there is no 'I' that stands for the typical Guardian reader or 'you' that is addressed through an imperative.

The Guardian is the only news organisation in this sample that displays the value of 'packaging and new ways of storytelling'. The richness of new ways of telling stories comes across visually in that we engage with traditional print news stories, online print stories with embedded video, interactive graphics, polls and animated simulations. Further, all platforms are given equal weight in the video, and people are shown interacting with all of these throughout the video. This is also reinforced by the four-way split screen (Figure 1.2, shot 84) showing audiences engaging with *The Guardian* on the tablet, on paper, on the phone and laptop computer, thus clearly marking it as the 'preferred provider across platforms'. Finally, the value of providing audiences with the 'opportunity to participate' is highlighted in this video mainly as the opportunity to comment (including global social media posts in languages other than English). These comments are primarily evaluative moral judgements (*isn't right*; *got what he deserved*; *went too far*; *you have every right to*; *I can empathise with*; *How could this have happened*; *I'd do the same*), encouragement (*Keep your chinny chin chins up fellas*) and comparisons or references to personal experience (*I'm behind on my payments too*; *I've lost everything*). Here the audience is not constructed as participating in news production, but rather as commenting. However, we are also shown how some of the user input drives subsequent investigations, stories and expert analysis by *The Guardian*: the comment by a member

Figure 1.2   Stills from *The Guardian* promo

of the public (*I knew the wolf. There's no way he could've blown down those houses. He had asthma*) and the subsequent user-generated YouTube clip showing evidence that the wolf had asthma is followed by expert analysis of whether it was possible to 'blow' the house down, as alleged by the pigs.

BBC World News – 'Stay ahead, stay connected.'

On 14 January 2013, BBC World News began broadcasting from its new studios, bringing all of its news journalism under one roof in the 'World's Newsroom', and deploying the latest technology in virtual

reality and 3D. At that time the BBC claimed to employ 'more journalists than any other international broadcaster' and to produce news 'in 28 languages' (BBC News 2013). To advertise this new look, a promotional video was released on 8 January 2013. It is 30 seconds long and has a total of 11 shots. In this promotional video the focus is squarely on the value of 'trusted advisor', as 9 of the 11 shots show BBC journalists positioned around the world (Figure 1.3, shots 1–9) co-constructing all of the verbal text preceding the slogan. Through their final promise *we'll be bringing you the global view, so you can see how it affects you* the audience is explicitly addressed through the second person pronoun *you*, which is common in advertising (Cook 2001: 157) as a powerful resource for direct address and the construction of audience positions (Myers 1994: 88). It is the various BBC reporters who are the agents here, that is, responsible for bringing a global view to the audience. The BBC World News logo is present in every frame in this video, which works to keep the focus on the BBC throughout, including verbal repetition of *the BBC* three times in the final two shots. In relation to the slogan, it is again the BBC that allows audiences to 'stay ahead, stay connected' – its agency is indicated through the prepositional phrase (*with* BBC World News).[3] This is reinforced both verbally and visually in the final two shots (Figure 1.3, shots 10 and 11). The use of the imperative in the slogan mirrors the *SMH*'s *know no boundaries* – an authoritative invitation to the audience to enjoy advantages and benefits. Interestingly, though, it is foreshadowed at the very beginning through the use of the reporter's inclusive 'We all want to stay ahead'. Again, as in the *SMH* video, a circle is closed textually.

The value of being the preferred provider across platforms is partially referenced in this video, through the slogan 'stay connected' and in the web address given in the final shot, as well as verbally referenced in another advertising imperative (*visit bbc dot com for more information*). However, there are no references to applications, tablets, social media and the like. This is possibly because the BBC World News network, which is the subject of this advertisement, only makes use of a web page and online streaming. At the time of writing there were no apps available for BBC World News. The other two values of 'packaging and new ways of storytelling' and 'opportunity for participation' are absent from this promotional video.

ABC News 24 – 'Your news, your way'

The ABC promotional video for ABC News 24, like the other videos, emphasises the value of being a 'trusted advisor'. We see a sequence of
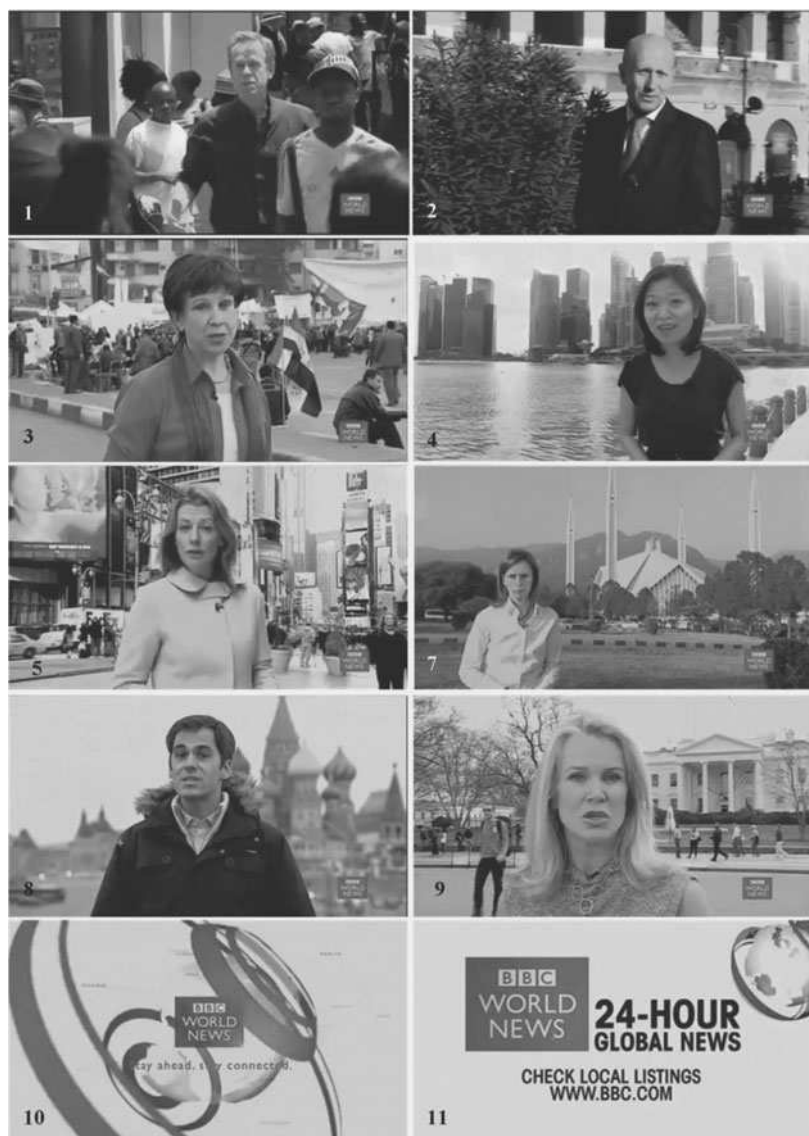
Figure 1.3 Stills from the *BBC World News* promo

Figure 1.4　Stills from the *ABC News 24* promo

shots showing first 'ordinary' people who hold various mobile devices and search for news on different topics. For example, in Figure 1.4, shots 1–3, we see a young woman searching for political news via her mobile phone. Other 'ordinary' people (Figure 1.4, shots 7 and 11) do

the same thing with different devices and topics. After each search, we then see the search results: news images from the ABC and reports by ABC journalists. The diverse search engine terms (*politics latest*; *sports results*; *world*) and the visuals of the relevant events from around the world emphasise the diversity and global nature of the reporting from the ABC. The visuals are accompanied by verbal statements appearing in *ABC* news reports – for example, a statement by then Prime Minister Julia Gillard on the budget; a male and female reporter on world news in two different locations. In a similar manner to the BBC promotional video, we are shown that the ABC has the reporters 'on the ground', which is also emphasised by the voice-over at the end: 'We're here so you can be anywhere'. The '*we*' is the ABC and its reporters, giving a human face to the institution. The video also shows us the diversity of the audience, perhaps emphasising that the ABC is trusted by a diverse audience, including professional women, construction workers and mothers.

The only other value that is referenced in the ABC video is that of being 'preferred provider across platforms'.[4] Visually, each audience member is shown accessing the ABC via a variety of platforms: mobile phones, tablets and the ABC iView app. Verbally, the voice-over states *you can be anywhere*, and the slogan emphasises that the ABC provides *Your news your way*. The use of the second person pronoun for direct audience address is similar to that in the BBC video. As said, this is a powerful advertising device for directly addressing and constructing the audience. The benefits of the different platforms are reinforced visually, with each audience member being in different spaces, at work and at leisure (including the very Australian setting of the beach). The final shot (Figure 1.4, shot 26) shows all the TV channels and web addresses where the ABC can be accessed.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter we posed a number of questions regarding the construction of values in news media organisations today. These centred around what kinds of standards and values are visible in the news media, what values are important and whether we can detect any shifts in values, given the changes in the industry we have seen in recent history. By examining how news organisations promote and sell themselves and their products to the public through promotional videos we can begin to see patterns of values that continue to define journalism as a culture.

It is important to note that these are all legacy news media outlets that have a long heritage that they can draw on. Their standards and values have existed for a very long time and they all have a core, loyal audience that shares these values and standards. This brand heritage is something that the four organisations can still rely on, and thus it is the value of 'trusted advisor' that dominates the promotional material for all four. By positioning themselves as the trusted advisor (both visually and verbally), they in turn position their audiences as belonging to an elite group of people who are able to see beyond the hype, who want the global view, who value investigative journalism and who ultimately value and share an interest in quality reporting. Of the four, the *Sydney Morning Herald* does this most explicitly, and is the only news outlet also to explicitly say that it provides something that its competitors cannot – quality. This is shown visually with the TV screens representing the 'hype' and the tabloids representing 'sensationalism', all of which the audience is able to escape by quite literally stepping through the door and into the world of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The three other news organisations do this more implicitly by emphasising what they can provide as trusted advisor, such as reporters on the ground in strategic locations around the world and investigative journalism.

To differing degrees, all four news organisations also try to position themselves as the preferred provider across platforms. The two public broadcasters, the BBC and the ABC, allow their audiences to connect at their own convenience, as evidenced in their slogans: 'your news, your way' from the ABC and the BBC's 'stay ahead, stay connected'. *The Guardian* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* use the visuals to position themselves as preferred provider across platforms (in print, on tablet, on mobile phone, etc.), as shown in shots 22 and 84 respectively of their videos, and reproduced here in Figure 1.5 for convenience.

Figure 1.5   Examples of how the value of preferred provider across platforms is visually constructed

Interestingly, however, opportunities for audiences to participate in the news process are not emphasised in these videos. This probably has more to do with the fact that these are promotional videos that are attempting to sell a particular brand than they are to do with the reality of open journalism. Even *The Guardian* restricts representation of participation to mostly commenting, although it does to some extent respond to audience input. In fact, *The Guardian* seems to be the only one of the four that is truly attempting to 'redefine itself' in the face of digital technologies and the only one to truly illustrate its new ways of storytelling in its promotional video.

In summary, our findings suggest that these legacy news outlets are still able to rely on the values associated with their brand heritage to sell themselves to their audiences. They are innovating, initially through the provision of content across multiple platforms, and they do recognise that the audience is becoming part of the news process, although they have yet to fully appreciate the implications of this for their brands. These results are mirrored in the 2014 Reuters Institute Digital News Report, which has recorded a rapid growth in the use of smartphones and tablets to access the news (Newman and Levy 2014: 8) and has noted that objectivity and truth at least are still important to consumers (Newman and Levy 2014: 16).

One of the limitations of this study is the fact that we have only looked at quality, legacy news outlets.[5] A vital next step in this project would be to greatly enlarge the data set and to include popular news outlets as well as newer start-ups, such as BuzzFeed, that are now establishing themselves as alternative news media providers. For example, *The Sun*'s 'Get involved' campaign was created by Grey London in 2012. It took the form of a 'walk around Britain' and featured the Rizzle Kicks track 'Traveller's Chant' (The Work Campaign 2012). It responded to *The Sun*'s brief that the promotional ad should 'reflect *The Sun*'s unique position as an influential conversation-starter/opinion-driver and build on the newspaper's inherently sharable and social characteristics' (The Work Campaign 2012). A multimodal analysis of such promotional material can reveal both the extent to which the advertisement meets this brief, but also tell us which values are particularly emphasised by the popular press through such promotional material and what the division of labour is between the verbal and visual modalities in conveying these messages.

Another important avenue of research would be to conduct a diachronic analysis of promotional videos (and other promotional material) over an extended period of time so that we can more accurately

assess whether there has been a true shift in the values that are pro-moted as defining journalism as a culture. For example, in a BBC News 24 promo from 2000, the focus is solely on the 'trusted advisor' role of the BBC, with reporters reeling off values such as 'standards', 'honesty', 'integrity', 'credibility', as well as pointing to their own personal char-acteristics of 'energy', 'patience', 'time' and 'knowledge of the subject' in keeping audiences informed of what is going on. Such comparative approaches could also be important for the analysis of how start-up online-only news organisations like BuzzFeed are impacting on the val-ues that the new and the old media bring to their practices. Fisher (2014: 26–27) suggests that we are entering a phase of hybrid values, where the 'old-fashioned' values of accuracy and truth (where the practices of ver-ification and fact-checking have always been highly valued) are being combined with the imperative for speed in publishing that comes with the online environment, underpinned by transparency in the process. Evidence for the old-school values impacting on new providers can be seen in the fact that BuzzFeed has recently begun hiring copy-editors, and in stating that it is no longer good enough to correct mistakes after publication (Fisher 2014: 26).

Ultimately, what we hope to have shown through this analysis of pro-motional videos provided by key legacy news outlets is the role that branding plays in engaging with the shifts in journalistic practice in the 21st century. Arguably, an analysis of promotional material can provide useful insights into what values are emphasised by our legacy outlets today.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. According to Picard (2006: 41–52), intrinsic value involves the perception of something as inherently good, and in the context of journalism, the idea that reporting is based in fact and is truthful can be seen as having intrinsic value. Instrumental value is functional in that it involves the factors that support the achievement of intrinsic value. Finally, exchange value in the context of journalism involves the monetary or temporal investment that

customers make in the products of journalism, for example in how much they are willing to pay for a newspaper, as a subscription to a news feed and so on.

2. The number in the bottom left-hand corner of each still indicates which 'shot' this image represents in the sequence. The use of *a* and *b* means that this is a single panning shot that moves from point *a* to point *b* within the same shot.

3. The pattern IMP + *with* prepositional phrase also occurs in other promotional texts (see Bednarek 2014: 210).

4. The fact that audience members are seen using search engines is not an example of showing them actively *participating in* the news.

5. Another limitation is that we have not explored the use of music and sound effects in the videos. Audiovisual data are such rich and complex products that it is not always possible to do justice to all modalities. And because analysis is so time-consuming, only a limited number of audiovisual texts can be analysed. Thus, our findings should not be generalised to other data sets or other news organisations.

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2

Evaluation as Positioning in English Language World News Channels

CCTV, France 24, Russia Today, Al Jazeera

Alison Duguid

Introduction: Transnational news as a form of dialogistic positioning

When asked to identify world television news channels, most people mention CNN (1980), the first provider to pioneer rolling news, and familiar to any traveller who might want to find news bulletins on the hour every hour. BBC World started broadcasting regular news bulletins and other programmes of general interest in 1991 as part of the World Service and launched its dedicated news-only channel, BBC News 24, in 1997. Sky News started its dedicated channel in 1989. Like national news broadcasters they claim objectivity, impartiality and neutrality, though such notions are challenged by a range of scholars (van Dijk 1985, 1988; Biber and Finegan 1989; Bell 1991; Fowler 1991; Iedema et al. 1994; Ungerer 1997; White 1997, 1998, 2004, 2005). National news involves broadcasters addressing a geographically defined imagined community to which news items may be considered to have relevance, with local references and proximity news values, and with prime-time synchrony dictating what gets into the bulletin. In national news, the ethnocentric lens through which the world is viewed is shared between broadcaster and audience, the time frame is the same, the recency value being defined by the day (as Jon Snow makes clear in his account of how the news is planned, in Chapter 8 in this volume). When this time frame changes, as it must in the case of transnational world news, the constant, cyclical repetition suggests also that a different pattern

of consumption is expected: checking-in for updates, sampling rather than watching a complete bulletin at a certain time of day; and as Montgomery says (2007: 67), 'a different relationship between discourse and the audience and discourse and the event'.

National news, the evening news bulletin on state or commercial channels, plays a pivotal role in political communication, as it is involved in the formation of the political agenda, the construction of political meaning and the forming of public opinion. Some of these functions are also fulfilled by transnational news. World news came to be seen as an important channel for soft power, a vehicle for public and cultural diplomacy (Sakr 2007; Tussu 2007; Wojcieszak 2007). An example of this can be found in *The Guardian*'s account of leaked emails from Bashar al-Assad's father-in-law to the Syrian president in 2012. The email contained advice during the government crackdown on protestors in Syria at the beginning of what would later turn into a major conflict of wide geopolitical significance.

> [The cardiologist] told Bashar al-Assad how to 'spin' the Syrian uprising, including rebuttal of apparent child torture footage. On 16 January this year, as international pressure grew on Assad to stand down and the UN secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, described the casualties as 'unacceptable', Akhras urged Assad to launch an English language Syrian state news network *'to enable us to address the world of our case in their own language and mentality'*.[1] He told Assad it was 'an extremely important project to be considered at the highest level'. (*The Guardian* 15 March 2012)

The world news channels BBC World and CNN, addressing the world in their own language, had come to be seen as a key part of the Anglosphere, defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as 'the countries of the world in which the English language and cultural values predominate'. These countries share a cultural heritage and maintain for the most part political and military cooperation aligned under a number of programmes (intelligence, communications, technology and science). In the 21st century many new news organisations began to spring up, broadcasting to the world in English to challenge this perceived hegemony. Each defined its purpose in terms of a position as well as an opposition, a means to project their voice, their policies and their interpretations of events in the global media – to assert and maintain a presence in the global Anglosphere. There has been considerable academic interest in transnational news: for example, Rai and Cottle (2007)

on the changing ecology of satellite television news, Tussu (2007) on global flow and contraflow, Nisbet and Myers (2010) on transnational news and political identity in the Middle East; and there are many studies of individual channels (in particular Al Jazeera) and the way in which certain events (in particular the Iraq war) are presented (Powers and Gilboa 2007; Wojcieszak 2007; Wessler and Adolphsen 2008; Cushion and Lewis 2010; Ning 2013).

This chapter addresses the question of the positioning of transnational news through an examination of a corpus of news bulletins from four providers. We ask how these channels define their position in relation to the Anglosphere, and how their positioning emerges, coincides or diverges in the way they present a sample news item. Do they present themselves as standing with, against, undecided or neutral with respect to assessments, beliefs and assumptions about the world?

Four transnational news providers

Four channels have been chosen for this initial study. Their positioning was made explicit in their mission statements[2]. Al Jazeera's (AJ) mission statement in 2004 reads:

> Al-Jazeera is an Arab media service with a global orientation. With its motto 'the opinion; and **the other** opinion' it acts as a forum for plurality, seeking the truth while observing the principles of professionalism within an institutional framework. While endeavouring to promote public awareness of issues of local and global concern, Al-Jazeera aspires to be a bridge between peoples and cultures to support the right of the individual to acquire information and strengthen **the values** of tolerance, democracy and the respect of liberties and human rights. (Al-Jazeera 2004)

On the launching of Al Jazeera International, its Washington bureau chief declared:

> News in the U.S. clearly comes from a very culturally specific viewpoint that eclipses many important stories and issues. We want to provide **different points of view** from around the world.

The network's stated objective is 'to give voice to untold stories, promote debate, and challenge established perceptions'. In its promos it talked of

'**reversing** the north to south flow of information […] So you can hear the voice […] and the **other** voice'. Powers and Gilboa (2007) provide a critical outline of the history of AJ, including the fact that it has been bombed, hacked and even banned from the Stock Exchange floor. The advertising industry identifies Al Jazeera as the world's fifth most recognised brand (Sakr 2007: 115). At the time of writing it has five journalists in prison in Egypt serving long sentences, accused of aiding a blacklisted terrorist group and spreading false news.

The France 24 (2006) (F24) mission statement was 'to cover international news with a French perspective […] and to carry **the values of France** throughout the world'. The channel's head stated the intention as being 'to cover worldwide news with French eyes […] France 24 intends to present a view of the news **different from that of the leading Anglophone** international news channels CNN International and BBC World […] France 24 wants to put more emphasis on debate, dialogue and the role of cultural difference'. The choice to broadcast in English is significant for a country which has always insisted on protecting its own language.

Russia Today (RT), set up to provide news 'from a Russian perspective', was launched in 2005. In 2006, the director stated: 'in the West, Russia is associated with three words: communism, snow and poverty', and added: 'We would like to present **a more complete picture** of life in our country.' In 2013 on a visit to the new RT studios Vladimir Putin announced:

> When we designed this project back in 2005 we intended introducing another strong player on the international scene, a player that wouldn't just provide an unbiased coverage of the events in Russia but also try, let me stress, I mean – try **to break the Anglo-Saxon monopoly** on the global information streams.[3]

A number of lexical items in these statements (*other*, *different from*, *difference*, *more complete*, *break the monopoly*, *different points of view*, *challenge established perceptions*, *reversing the flow*, *the other voice*) invoke the existence of 'the other'. Their explicit positioning is contrapositioning.

While the Anglosphere broadcasters share English as a first language, thus the name, these new broadcasters choose to use English as a language of international communication in order to reach a global audience. Such provision could be seen as a service for diasporic audiences: new ways have to be found to reach groups of migrants for whom the mother tongue becomes hard to maintain for second and third

generations. It can create a sense of nationhood and belonging across geographical distance. But this is not the only audience that is being addressed. These channels offer nation-states a means to project their voice, their policies and their interpretations of events in the global media.

The fourth news channel in our analysis, CCTV International (established in 2004) or CCTV News, formerly known as CCTV-9 or CCTV International of China Central Television (CCTV), grew from the first monopoly state channel Beijing Television Station (BTV, established in 1958); in 1978 CCTV formally became China's sole and authoritative national broadcaster. The English language programmes of CCTV-9 (established in 2000, one of 21 channels) gradually developed from a 15-minute news bulletin in English to a 24-hour English language news channel, conceived as an effective way of broadcasting the Chinese voice to the rest of the world and a means of soft power under the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT). It declared itself 'China's contribution to **greater diversity** and **wider perspectives** in the global information flow', explaining that 'the target audience is **foreigners** both inside and outside China'. A useful account of the tension between serving national interests and changing international perspectives is provided by Ning (2013) in her outline of the evolution of that channel and the Chinese Reach Out policy.

This chapter questions the imagined audience of these news providers and examines the way the latter position themselves as countering the world view of an 'other': an interesting and complex configuration in the transmission of values. These broadcasters present an audience of 'foreigners' as a *raison d'être* for transmitting national aims and interests, highlighting their own role as interpreters.

National news discourse can reinforce a shared national identity. But for our world news channels, the audience is outside the primary constituency, and the discursively linked community is being addressed in a language which is not that of the community. The relationships between broadcaster and audiences are not based on shared social and geographical space within which the audience has been socialised in the same way, via family, education and social interaction. Transnational media form a community which is not based on shared state-centric identities. The channels position themselves in relation to the local by claiming to give visibility to what is being ignored; and in relation to the global by counterbalancing, providing another view. Thus, they are filling a gap and correcting what they present as the Anglosphere's astigmatic tunnel vision.

   The identifying opening sequences of logos, music and studio images which introduce the news are evidence of the homogenisation of TV news channels. All have high-volume music as introduction and, for three of them at least, we see the revolving globe, slightly differentiated by choice of colour. For background colour, banner streams and other graphics, France 24 favours blue, CCTV red, Russia Today green and Al Jazeera gold. Al Jazeera has a distinctive and aesthetically pleasing logo. The news programmes themselves show a transnational global professionalism, making use of technological affordances in much the same way; all draw on social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Skype in their news; all use relatively young reporters in the field. But there are differences in selection, emphasis and presentation. This chapter aims to examine some of these differences.

Methodology

A corpus of 36 half-hour news broadcasts was recorded for each of the four channels between 2011 and 2014 as part of a project with students of Political and Communication Science at the University of Siena. All were analysed for their content and transcribed, making a verbal corpus of over 100,000 words as illustrated in Table 2.1.

   The corpus was interrogated using Wordsmith Tools 5 for a variety of quantitative data; subsequently a qualitative comparative analysis was carried out for one particular news item, the Ukraine-Russia treaty of 17 December 2013.

Table 2.1   World news corpus

Channel	Tokens used for wordlist
RT	30,214
F24	28,195
CCTV	30,007
AJ	29,359
Total	107,619

Quantitative data: Identity and nationality

Mentioning something is already an evaluation, that of relevance. Nisbet and Myers (2010: 349) claim that national providers are likely to promote a national political identity, and that those that are

Table 2.2   Country and identity

	RT	F24	CCTV	AJ	
Nations & capitals[a]	25%	23%	42%	10%	100%
Nations & capitals less own[b]	14%	23%	42%	21%	100%
Other identities[c]	28%	22%	17%	33%	100%
Anglosphere[d]	42%	11%	35%	12%	100%

[a] Items referring to nationality and nations
[b] The same items but with the 'own' nation terms removed (i.e. China from CCTV, France from F24)
[c] Other identities (Arab, Muslim, Muslims, Christian, Christians)
[d] Anglosphere items (US, Britain, UK, London, Washington)

transnational are more likely to highlight some form of transnational (e.g. Muslim or Arab) political identity, increasing the salience of alternative collective identities at the expense of nation-state-centric identities. We analysed the occurrence of references to nations and capitals and interrogated the corpus for lexical items which might suggest that this process was in play in our data, comparing their frequency across the corpus (Table 2.2). As can be seen, CCTV has the most references to nation-states and nationality (even after its own nation terms are removed). This is followed by F24. RT has the most references to the Anglosphere. AJ has most references to other identities and makes no mention whatsoever of its own nation, Qatar (the only three occurrences are in RT).

Evaluation and dialogistic positioning

All the channels announced in their mission statements that they intended to present a different view of the world, asserting relativity and reproving the Anglosphere for being partial. Partiality involves subjective interpretations of events through evaluations and opinions, and in this section we will examine the concept of evaluation in texts.

Evaluation is a complex phenomenon, involving many different linguistic resources from a wide range of categories. Attitudinal meanings can only be fully explained by analysis of the context. There is a large body of work on the concept of evaluation or subjective meaning in texts (for a useful account see Hunston and Thompson 2000; Jullian 2008) and a number of terms have been used to indicate such concepts as personal feelings, attitudes, value judgements or assessments. These include appraisal and engagement (Martin and White 2005);

modality (Stubbs 1986); point of view (Simpson 2003); ideology (Fowler 1991); (Fairclough 1995, 2003); affective meanings (Cheshire 2005); and stance (Conrad and Biber 2000). Evaluation can be explicit or implicit, averred or attributed, not only in propositions but also in presuppositions. CCTV, for example, provides the most examples of positive self-evaluation, mostly through the voice of representatives and specific references to national policy, often in the form of presuppositions (e.g. *China **will continue to be** a brother and a partner to the African people*; . . . ***continue** to nurture China's global competitiveness*; . . . *goodwill, responsibility and **the** growing confidence of China . . . reflects **the** strength, tenacity and courage of the Chinese military*; . . . *as the face of Chinese diplomacy to show our national dignity and friendship*; . . . ***to reflect the** strength maturity and honour of everyone in the Chinese military as a united front*).

Every act of evaluation is an addition to a system of values and so we get some idea of the values that China is presenting through CCTV. One can detect a real or imagined audience to whom these evaluations are directed and a dialogue in which China is positioning itself.

Dialogistic positioning (Martin and White 2000, 2005) concerns the means by which speakers and writers adjust and negotiate the arguability of their propositions and proposals. Martin and White define it as:

> The means by which speakers/writers represent themselves as engaging in a 'dialogue' to the extent that they present themselves as taking up, acknowledging, responding to, challenging or rejecting actual or imagined utterances from other speakers/writers or as anticipating likely or possible responses from other speakers/writers. [. . .] To different degrees and in different ways, they all acknowledge or invoke representations or points of view which are to some degree different from the representation/point of view currently being advanced by the text. It is this alternative position therefore with which the speakers/writers present themselves as engaged dialogistically. (Martin and White 2005: 5.2)

From many analyses of the ways in which evaluation is carried out in news (Bednarek 2006; White 2006; Jullian 2008) it is clear that all news will contain attitude, but some attitudes, as it were, have more attitude than others. Consideration is also given to the way the resources present the speaker/writer as opening up (expanding) the dialogue to divergent positions (evidence, likelihood) or as closing it down (contracting) so as to limit or suppress divergence (denial, pronouncement and authorially endorsed attribution). There are a number of these features which are key in dialogistic positioning in our corpus, and the quantitative data

can reveal which strategies are preferred by which channel. The evaluations expressed by RT involve more superlatives and saturated lexis, more stance adverbials to contract the dialogistic space (such as *clearly*, *obviously*, *of course*) and perform more denials. Strong evaluation is easily identifiable in qualitative analysis, as we will see as we examine the use of headlines and attribution to convey positioning. As in the section above, in the following analyses italics are used to present verbal text taken from the items; bold is used for emphasis or to highlight specific linguistic features.

Headlines

The main functions of newspaper headlines are to provide a summary or focus in terms of choice of theme, but also evaluations (Morley 1998). For the most part the television news headlines reveal focus without other evaluation. F24 and CCTV have many more headlines with national content. Participle headlines, which avoid making agency explicit, are a frequent pattern; for example:

> ***CONFRONTING*** *ISIL* (AJ)
> ***FIGHTING*** *ISLAMIC STATE* (CCTV)
> ***SECURING*** *AUSTRALIA* (CCTV)
> ***FIGHTING*** *TERRORISM* (CCTV)
> ***FIGHTING*** *THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP* (F24).

Other strategies are to use the name of a country plus a noun; for example:

> *UKRAINE* ***CRISIS*** (AJ, CCTV, RT)
> *YEMEN* ***UNREST*** (AJ)
> *SYRIA* ***CONFLICT*** (CCTV)

> or slightly more evaluative phrases such as:

> *IRAQ* ***IN TURMOIL*** (AJ)
> *EGYPT* ***ON EDGE*** (RT).

RT chooses to make agency explicit, particularly when the US is involved (**US** AIR STRIKES ON SYRIA). It also highlights its positioning towards the Anglosphere by its frequent use of punning and cryptic headlines, familiar to British newspaper readers but often inscrutable to non-native speakers, such as:

> *RAZE OR RISE* (about the air strikes)
> TERROR CR-**ISIS**
> *DEVOLVING DOOR* (about the Scottish referendum, pun on 'devolu-
>   tion' and the film *Revolving Doors*)
> *PEACE IN PIECES* (about the Ukraine crisis)
> *NO-FRACKING WAY*, *GET FRACKED*, *FRACKING UP* (about shale gas
>   extraction policy in US and UK)
> *SANCTI-MONIOUS* (about sanctions on Iran)

and intertextual references:

> *MISSION ACCOMPLISHED* (David Cameron on troop-withdrawal from
>   Afghanistan echoing the controversial Bush announcement)
> *LOSING MY RELIGION* (an item about increasingly secular Britain
>   echoing a song by the group REM).

These seem to be used particularly to headline issues on which Russia is in conflict with the US or UK, revealing a certain *Schadenfreude* about what is happening in those countries. The fracking issue clearly has repercussions for Russia's dependence on its own oil and gas reserves. Sometimes AJ also resorts to this kind of headline. Though the evaluation is less jokey in tone, they reflect the mission statement about the 'other voice':

> *NO WARM WELCOME* (about migrants' negative experiences[4] when
>   they arrive in Europe)
> *REVERSING THE NEGLECT* (about Mozambique's elections and a lack
>   of Western investment).

Attribution

Another feature of evaluation whereby positioning can be manipulated is that of attribution, using other voices to convey certain values that do not match any impartial, neutral reporting of facts by the news presenters. As Jullian (2008: 120) says:

> The skilled exploitation of the interplay between averral and attribution allows the writer to construct a stance by transferring the role of the averrer. Thus, authors can make convenient use of attribution by quoting heavily evaluative materials while delegating their accountability to someone else.

All the news channels use the words of legitimated persons (LPs), named expert and elite participants speaking as public figures through speeches and announcements. In these cases the footage is often from official occasions where we see the rest of the world's press gathered, although occasionally an interview is used. F24 usually prefers to summarise a speech. Al Jazeera makes the greatest use of VOX (selected members of the general public who appear in news broadcasts speaking on their own behalf) in line with its mission statement of listening to the 'other voice'; RT makes frequent use of experts from other countries, in particular geopolitical experts, often academics or journalists, but also disaffected nationals (such as Ron Paul) to voice strong evaluations, frequently with an anti-Anglosphere stance.

Qualitative analysis

The news coverage of one international news item is analysed here to exemplify some of the linguistic and discursive features of evaluation; to highlight aspects of news report structure and visual production styles; and to show how TV audiences for these channels are presented with occasionally startlingly different representations of the same event.

On 17 December 2013, the signing of a trade deal between Russia and Ukraine in the Kremlin in Moscow was covered by all four providers represented in our corpus. Ukraine had been a news item for some time as demonstrations in Kiev against the government had continued for several weeks, and the broadcasters were able to use previous archive footage as well as current visual material related to the event. It is the first item on the CCTV news broadcast (5 minutes 40 seconds), the fifth item for Russia Today (5 minutes 51 seconds), the second to last item for F24 (2 minutes and 16 seconds, the same as Al Jazeera).[5]

We focus on both verbal and visual texts, following Entman who notes that 'through repetition, placement, and reinforcing associations with each other, the words and images that comprise the [news] frame render one basic interpretation more readily discernible, comprehensible and memorable than others' (1991: 7). A comparative perspective in the study of news frames can reveal 'critical textual choices' (1991: 6) which can seem natural and unremarkable until compared with other sets of choices which highlight a particular interpretation of events and exemplify the different positioning of the broadcasters.

Three levels of meaning – linguistic, discursive and visual – combine to produce a view of the same news event. At the linguistic level, we examine the features of the verbal text that reveal evaluation.

At the discursive level, adapting Hartley's categories (1982, see also Thornborrow et al. 2012), we examine the news presenter's introduction as the opening frame, and look at the development or focusing, considering the ways in which the news presenters' introductions are elaborated. We also examine the 'realisation' features, that is the selection of visual material, the way verbal and visual texts are combined in the editing process and the voices that are included (the news presenters (NP) and reporters, LPs and VOX). In some cases the coda or closing comments are also considered (Haarman 2009).

The first two items have some points in common.

CCTV

The CCTV NP, viewed slightly from below and speaking to camera for the whole of the introduction, frames the event as a meeting of two presidents (*the presidents of Russia and Ukraine have met in Moscow, amid continuing demonstrations in Kiev*). In an authoritative tone he describes the Ukrainian president as having secured a 35 per cent discount of natural gas supplies from Russia in order to help save the Ukrainian economy from financial collapse. Presidential roles and decisive action (*decision to abort plans to enter into a trade agreement with the EU*) and strategy (*a strategic pivot towards Moscow*) are highlighted as values in the verbal text. The NP then passes to a reporter in Moscow for the focusing phase of the report, which consists of three different elements: two to-camera LP statements from Putin and Yanukovic (extracts from filmed formal interventions), each one framed by the comments of the reporter who introduces them as having reached agreement on *some very sensitive issues* after hours of negotiation behind closed doors. Speaking from Moscow with a night-time scene of the city behind her, the correspondent first announces the deal to camera, attributing to Putin a statement in summarised reported speech which foregrounds a historical relationship:

> Correspondent: *Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed the importance that Moscow places on its historic ties to Ukraine.*

The relationship between the two presidents is described in terms of host and guest but it also sets out an economic relationship: Russia accounts for 30 per cent of Ukraine's trade balance. Over the verbal text the realisation choices highlight the two presidents, seen together in a formal reception room, then in middle close-up Putin speaks to an audience

in voice-over translation. His statement makes a deontic assertion about necessary action, though only in vague terms:

> Putin (in voice-over): *We have witnessed during the last two years a certain decrease in exchange of goods. Last year was 11 per cent and this year is an additional 14.5 per cent. A time has come to take energetic measures, not only to return to the level of previous years, but also to establish the conditions to move this issue forward.*

The anaphoric nouns (*energetic measures, issue*) are not unpacked but the subtext of control of energy resources will be reinforced by a later visual text focusing on gas supply lines.

The images which accompany this first part of the report continue to show Putin and Yanukovic in various formal settings in palatial halls, signing the treaty, shaking hands or apparently engaged in small talk (Figure 2.1).

The reporter's voice-over underlines a discourse of agreement and cooperation through repeated terms *agreed*, *also agreed*, *joint*, *joined*, *coordinate*. Both are seen to nod in agreement. The visual text thus foregrounds first the pomp and circumstance of the signing of the treaty, while the two presidents are given prominence as protagonists.

The reporter's voice-over orients the focus towards current and future economic needs, including details of the deal and some evaluative

Figure 2.1   Two presidents, CCTV news, 18 December 2013

comments (*cash-strapped*, *huge discount*) over archive shots representing gas supplies: a gas-tank, a gas-flame, a gas-pipe in snow, a pipeline being dug and a vast sprawling power station site on a wintry plain.

The deal is presented by Yanukovic, again with voice-over translation and speaking to an audience, in positive terms, through a strong epistemic assertion with intensification:

> Yanukovic: *It will let us significantly improve our performance in the sphere; its realisation will bring more tangible positive results to entire sectors of the economy and our governments.*

This choice of attribution constructs the frame as a reciprocal deal (*a two way road map*) which will benefit both sides (*our governments*).

The voices presented in this report are those of the political elite: the two presidents. The CCTV news coverage unfolds as a report which highlights the economic aspects of the deal and plays down any dissent in Ukraine. As we can see, however, the item also problematises the economic future of Ukraine and foregrounds the need to move forward. The reporter closes with the statement that key questions remain unanswered, bringing the focus to the internal opposition, while mentioning that there was no discussion about a possible Russian-led customs union, as if that had been an expectation.

> Correspondent: *The question is whether this will be enough to appease the Ukrainian's pro-Western opposition, and help resolve the escalating tension there.*

This provides transition to – and frames – the next segment from Kiev, a live two-way with split screen introduced by the NP (Figure 2.2 below):

> NP: *Good afternoon Stephanie, well, obviously Ukraine is just about one step closer to Russia by clinching the deal, but how this has been received by the factions in the political makeup in Kiev?*

Note the presupposition that oppositions consist of 'factions' rather than a united front.

The correspondent becomes full screen with the daytime Independence Square behind her showing people mingling and reading newspapers. The banner reads *UKRAINE TENSIONS. Russia, EU vie for*

Figure 2.2 Victory salute in split screen, CCTV news, 18 December 2013

importance. Yet there is a slight mismatch between the title and the actual report.

The correspondent talks of *a large question mark over the entire process*, and a lack of consensus becomes the repeated trope in the segment. In response to a question from the NP, the correspondent is vague:

> Correspondent: *Well, the demonstrators, they say, numerous things they say, they concur on the fact that many say they are going to stay until it's over. 'Until it's over' means different things to different people.*

Remarkably, during the great majority of this report the visual track, rather than focusing on possible tensions in the Kiev square, repeats the same footage which accompanied the first segment of the item from Moscow, returning to live images from Kiev only at the end. The images, in long shot, show people milling about, a small blue camping tent, and a man holding a hard hat and the Ukrainian flag worn like a scarf (giving what might be a victory salute) as the crowd moves on.

No one is given a voice to camera, but the correspondent assures us that many of the protesters vow not to step down, concluding however with the possibility that some might take a break for Christmas.

The NP closes the item, promising, somewhat ironically given the lack of Ukrainian visuals, *We will keep a close watch on what is going on in Kiev.*

Al Jazeera

This package opens with a voice-over reference to the image of the two presidents, heads together smiling and talking: '*it was a very **public display of affection***'.[6] The headline banner reads: UKRAINE AGREEMENT PUTIN AND YANUKOVIC REACH TRADE DEAL as the correspondent in voice-over announces *an affirmation of the close economic and cultural links between Russia and Ukraine*, adding that the meeting *produced more than just memories of a shared history*. Details of the deal are given in voice-over as the camera pans out to show essentially the same scenes of the signing ceremony and the friendly interaction between the two men, smiling and nodding, as in the CCTV report. The deal is called a *landmark agreement* and the advantages are highlighted: *an immediate saving of 10 billion dollars for the hard-pressed Ukrainian authority*. This information is accompanied by images referencing the nature of the deal: shots of a gauge, enormous gas-pipes in close-up, or in rows in the snow, men in hard hats examining machinery. The visual text then returns to Putin in close-up speaking from a document, the shot panning out to include the large formal meeting in an elegant mirrored and gilt reception room and focusing finally on Yanukovic, also in close-up, reading from a prepared statement with voice-over translation. The extract is exactly the same part of the text used by CCTV.

The correspondent summarises the political situation in voice-over as the scene switches to the square in Kiev, showing, again, the same images as in CCTV of the man with the hard hat wrapped in a Ukrainian flag. The camera pans from the square's iconic angel to a ground level close-up of the backs of rows of riot police in black, facing a crowd with many furled flags before them as the voice-over reports:

> *[Yanukovic's] visit deepened the political crisis in Ukraine where for weeks protesters have been demanding closer ties with the EU, now the opposition is blocking the work of the country's parliament asking for government resignations and early elections.*

Images of men walking as if in a demonstration, singing or chanting, and of the police accompany a verbal text which underlines the question of a trade agreement with Europe, the visuals here showing the pro-EU allegiance of the protesters foregrounded by the long-shot of men holding the EU flag (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3   EU flag at Independence Square, Al Jazeera news, 18 December 2013

> *The protesters had been **fearful** that Yanukovic would sign a deal with Russia committing Ukraine to a Russian customs-union which would finally close a door to a trade agreement with Europe. That door remains open, the customs-union was never signed and never even discussed said President Putin.*

The package returns to the correspondent in Moscow.

> Peter Sharp: *President Yukanovic **will be delighted** with this deal, he got what he wanted, without having to sign the Russian-led customs-union document that would be **a signature that would further enrage** his political opponents in Kiev where tens of thousands still mass in the streets.*

AJ uses distancing in its framing of the event, opening the account with irony, and cataphorically introducing the whole package with *it was a very public display of affection*, as if to create suspense. The emphasis is on the public face of a relationship with the hint that this might not reflect reality. AJ has chosen to foreground the political process, with the scenes of the grandiose surroundings, orderliness, evidence of planning and organisation. The deal is evaluated in terms of importance (*a landmark agreement*, *a huge 30 per cent*) to the Ukrainian economy, presented as being in difficulty (*hard-pressed*, *shore-up*, *battling*). Emotions are foregrounded and personalised through attribution of affect (*fearful*, *enraged*, *delighted*). The visual text uses many rapid cuts and scene

changes. The opposition is depicted via the outside footage, essentially a peaceful scene, but the images give salience to a heavy police presence.

France 24

The F24 NP segues into the Ukrainian item with a banner PM PRAISES RUSSIA DEAL ENRAGING PRO-EUROPE PROTESTERS thus:

> NP: *Meanwhile, Ukraine's government has been talking up Tuesday's deal with Russia, which it says will help stave off economic crisis. This, after Moscow agreed to slash the price of, er, its gas to Ukraine and buy up government bonds there.*

The use of *it says* is a distancing strategy, as is the reporting signal *talking up* with its meaning of promotion or enthusiastic support, also suggesting that F24 does share the Ukrainian government's view of the matter as the NP then immediately moves on to reference Yanukovic's *'pro-European opponents'* and to deal with the ongoing situation in Kiev:

> NP: *Now Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovic's pro-European opponents are demanding to know what he's given the Russians in return. Protesters have been out on the streets in Kiev since, er, he last month turned his back on a trade agreement with the EU and sought closer ties with Russia.*

The correspondent begins her voice-over report on the details of the deal over scenes of riot police, helmets raised, in waiting. The political split is thus immediately foregrounded and, unlike in the CCTV report, both opposition and protesters are thematised: the political reactions in Kiev to the deal, rather than the signing itself.

> Correspondent: *Not far away from ongoing protests, inside the cabinet building, Prime Minister Azarov praises a deal which could save Ukraine from a possible default. Russia will buy fifteen billion dollars worth of Ukrainian bonds and reduce the cost of gas.*

On mention of the cabinet meeting the camera enters the building to show the cabinet meeting itself, in a formal, very sober room with the cabinet seated and the PM reading his statement, voiced in translation. The correspondent characterises the prime minister's statement (it is

somewhat hyperbolic: *the really historic development*, *bleeding our economy dry*, *an end to the history of treason*) as **praise** for the deal. As the visual text opens on Independence Square – people meandering about through a gap in improvised barricades, several tents, a stage with an audience standing watching, some reading newspapers, and a zoom-in of the front page of a newspaper with a photograph of riot police – the correspondent summarises the PM's words as **blame** of the opposition forces, who in turn *are standing their ground*, saying the deal *will cause Ukraine to **drift away** from the European Union, [and get] **stuck in Moscow's orbit***.

More metaphors are produced by the opposition spokesperson (Oleh Tyahnibok) expressing fears in an impassioned speech (with an EU flag in the background): *Russia will **continue to hold** Ukraine **on a hook** because the gas deficit debt is either constant or it's growing. If the Ukrainian government makes any unwelcome moves, **Russia can at any time** make the political decision to **collect that debt***.

His warning is followed by images of the square again: bedding being aired, a woman asleep in a sleeping bag, men sitting around a brazier eating, all very well wrapped up against the cold weather or warming themselves by the fire (Figure 2.4).

The sequence ends with a long shot of the square. In short, the scenes in the square record the protests as a rather static and very cold activity,

Figure 2.4   Picnic in Independence Square, F24 news, 18 December 2013

people walking, reading, eating, and sleeping in winter conditions with the hint of a slightly menacing police presence. The correspondent closes with: *Opposition forces have vowed to block the bailout package's passage through Parliament.*

The framing in F24 provides evaluations and a number of strategies used to foreground particular readings of the event. This time neither names nor presidential roles get mentioned. Instead the NP uses elements of distancing (informal phrasal verbs and metaphors of physical action) to present the event. Again the protesters are thematised and portrayed, visually and verbally, as standing their ground, and their fears are represented via metaphors with connotations of losing such steadiness and independence.

Russia Today

The NP opens the item speaking to camera in front of a maxi-screen showing a banner headline which frames the trade deal with positive evaluation: *REAL DEAL*. The screen presents a carefully created effect of a torn photograph, though it is actually two separate stills with a simulated tear between them: on the left a scene of young people marching, with young women in front holding an EU flag and apparently chanting, on the right a large number of people with many Ukrainian flags. The picture highlights and represents a split.

> NP: *The trade deal that Ukraine struck during recent talks with Moscow may bring some respite to the country's economy but not to the anti-government protesters in Kiev, that, even though the issue that troubles them most, a possible customs union with Russia, was not touched upon at the meeting.*

She too refers to the possible customs union with Russia that was not touched on, but unlike CCTV and Al Jazeera, no mention is made of Putin.[7] The item is then passed on to *RT's venture capital host* Katie Pilbeam in the studio, thus placing the item in an economic framework. Before a split maxi-screen of the signing of the agreement and iconic visuals (a bond, a bag of money with $15BN written in black), she gives a great deal of economic detail, mainly comparing the Russian deal (*very good terms*) with the one previously offered by the EU in terms of economic parameters. There are repetitive contrasts of the two deals, positive evaluation for the Russian deal, negative evaluation for the EU

deal (*famously called* **humiliating**) through mention of *risk* and *harsh spending cuts*. The information is presented as part of an ongoing dialogue with an opposing viewpoint in mind (*at the end of the day it was an economic decision*; **but** *investors are happy* **though**; *the point is;* **no-one's arguing** *that, what we* **are** *saying is*).

The NP then picks up the item with attributions from the Ukrainian opposition, then frames the following segment, focused on the Ukrainian opposition:

> NP: *Despite the economic benefits, the agreements with Moscow have been* **branded as treason** *by one of the most outspoken protesters in Kiev, the head of the nationalist party Svoboda says President Yanukovich has* **pawned** *the country's assets to win concessions from Russia. RT's Alexi Roshevsky takes* **a closer look at who's leading the opposition** *movement in Ukraine.*

On the maxi-screen behind the NP we see scenes from the square in Kiev, flags and slogans, a man in the foreground wearing a hard hat and a face mask, men gathered with hard hats or motorbike helmets and improvised shields.

The headline banner reads *HOMOPHOBIC NEO-NAZI WITH MANDATE PART OF UKRAINE'S OPPOSITION TROIKA*, dateline 5 December, Kiev. This banner remains throughout the ensuing package, though dateline and place change.

> Correspondent: *Oleg Tyahnybok's party, Svoboda, has made its position on homosexuals quite clear, attacking gay parades.*

The correspondent speaks over agitated and violent visuals: a rapid cut to a summer scene, a march with women holding a rainbow flag and a banner. Suddenly a man erupts into the march pushing the women aside, tearing the banners, snatching one after the other and ripping them apart. The visuals then show a man being bundled into a van by police; then the man speaking, named on screen as Oleg Tyahnybok LEADER SVOBODA PARTY. The scene cuts back to the summer march as police chase the man who had torn the banners as photographers run to take photos. The dateline just reads *Kiev*.

As can be seen, the verbal text has shifted to very different semantic fields (*openly gay*, *homosexuals*, *attacking gay parades*) all evaluating Oleg

Tyahnybok, the opposition leader presented more neutrally by F24 giving an impassioned speech about the dangers that Russia poses to the Ukraine, but here shown voicing homophobic sentiments:

> Tyahnybok: *We're being dragged into homosexual values by the Western states and we will not allow that.*

The correspondent's narrative then moves to foreground another semantic field, that of political violence (*assault*, *scuffles*, *reckless vandalism*, *insurgent army*, *Nazi-collaborators*, *mercenary*, *militarised right-wing forces*, *burning*, *pro-Nazi slogans*), reinforced by the visual text showing images of Tyahnybok speaking before a cheering crowd; black smoke pouring from a building as a crowd below gives Nazi salutes; masked men at a window spraying the crowd; a night scene of a statue toppling; a crowd surging onto the toppled statue of Lenin. The correspondent (now to camera) walks round the pedestal and points out the threatening slogans mentioning UPA, thus bringing other voices into his narrative, in some cases careful to give alternative evaluations. He reports the words of graffiti writers (*Yanukovic you're next*, *Glory to the UPA*), describing UPA as *the insurgent army of the 1940s in Ukraine which* **some** *in this country believe to be freedom fighters who fought for independence* **while many others** *describe them as Nazi-collaborators*),[8] presenting two voices though clearly favouring one interpretation with end-weighting. The remainder of the item continues to focus verbally and visually on Tyahnybok and the opposition forces. The photograph of a large man in combat dress is superimposed on a flag and the quotation '*until the end of my days I will kill Russians, Jews and communists*' appears. Another voice is brought in:

> Correspondent: *British reporter Brian Flynn had a first-hand glance at the militarized right wing forces in Ukraine. Ahead of the Euro 2012 Football Championship, he went undercover into their training camp.*
>
> Brian Flynn (voice-over): *These are people very serious about what they do, they train physically to back it up with violence. I watched while they fired with live weapons.*

He is also pictured in a wood, with men in balaclavas and camouflage uniforms, followed by scenes of men rushing into a building with guns, then in training on an improvised parade ground, all masked or with balaclavas. A shaven-headed young man shouting and lunging forward towards the camera; a crowd chanting and clapping in unison; a close up

Figure 2.5   Lunge, RT news, 18 December 2013

of men, trees in the background, blackface masks and balaclavas hiding their features, Nazi salutes, lunging violently towards the camera (Figure 2.5): all images leading up to the correspondent's statement, by way of transition to the final segment:

> Correspondent: *And the presence of such people among the protesting crowds seems to cause no concern among European officials walking on the same square.*

Another voice is brought in: a historian from Oxford in a live two-way interview with split screen, on the left showing men in hard hats, on the right, the expert from Oxford (a spire and dome logo behind him). As he speaks, the visual text offers various stills of Oleg Tyahnybok in the company of US Republican Senator John McCain and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton.

> Mark Almond: *Well it is rather extraordinary isn't it? To see somebody that the United States has banned from entering the country on the same platform as Senator McCain, to see somebody who's been banned by the United States for anti-Semitic statements, for denying the Holocaust, whose supporters actually in the streets of Kiev still do make anti-Semitic as well as anti-Russian gestures and chant slogans.[…] It does signify that the Western politicians are quite happy to use nationalist forces when it suits them.*

Both the correspondent and the expert from Oxford express disingenuous surprise, using the strategy of counter-expectation to evaluate Western politicians (exemplified visually by McCain and Ashton) and their support of the anti-government protesters.

While the correspondent continues in voice-over the visual text unfolds, with a series of rapid scenes escalating in a crescendo of violence: an assault on a vehicle (dateline 2 December, Kiev); a close-up of a man in full-face balaclava; men marching with arms linked; police in riot gear, four deep, confronting a crowd; a man with a chain thrashing the police who protect themselves with their shields. Then the reporter reaches his coda:

> Correspondent: *So, if Ukraine does make it into the EU someday, it will be interesting to see how people **with such different values** sit at the same negotiating table.*

As the reporter signs off we see men throwing stones or other objects, beating on the heads of the police who raise their shields to protect themselves. The headline is still that referring to homophobic neo-Nazis.

This segment shows an interesting and complex strategy of positioning with some dog-whistle tactics. Mentions of homophobia and neo-Nazis call for a response from a liberal audience, while it is usually the Russian leadership that is thought of as being homophobic. Here it is anti-Russian movements who are involved in scenes of violence with masked men and thuggish behaviour, attacks on peaceful marches for homosexual equality, brutally pushing women aside and juxtaposed with archive footage of militarised right-wing forces. The footage is a collage of disparate occasions and voices but it has a cohesive harmony: the aim is to denigrate the opposition to Yanukovic, who are represented as being more or less identical with right-wing factions and militarised anti-Russian, homophobic, anti-Semitic mercenaries. This is a message to would-be sympathisers with the protesters, deliberately calibrated both by visual and verbal text. The mention of a *troika* also sends a signal to people who are opposed to the EU policies on austerity. The stills of American politician John McCain and the European foreign minister alongside the homophobic anti-Russian portray the foreign powers involved, thus calling for an alignment against the opposition to Yanukovic. The riot police are presented as victims under attack while protecting the vulnerable from sinister and militarised forces. The amount of editing and searching for footage and

stills indicates how much the channel was prepared to put together a complex package which sends many messages to delegitimise the Independence Square protesters by association while not openly criticising them as a group. It is clearly a carefully constructed position with an eye to its imagined audience particularly when contrasted with the packages from the other channels that show the occupation of the Square as a somewhat aimless but certainly peaceful affair, the only menace coming from the massed riot police. It exemplifies many of the strategies of dialogistic positioning used by world TV channels, in particular the use of other voices.

Conclusions

Transnational news channels have harnessed the satellite technology which allows them to transcend borders and geography and have taken up the 24-hour rolling news with in-depth follow-up format as a content strategy. They have chosen to do this through the medium of English, although all have similar services in their own and sometimes other languages.[9] All these channels are presenting a particular view of events; all have an aim in the way they present news. These state-run channels choose to spend our time in a particular way, pointing us to particular interpretations with a number of different strategies. As state-run channels they will also have some kind of state oversight, no matter how much they attempt to assert their independence: Ning (2013) gives a good account of the forces bearing on CCTV and three of the four networks emanate from countries with fierce restrictions on press freedom. We see an interesting set of absences in the data and choices of what is shown while the verbal text is in voice-over.

F24 is the only one to mention national values explicitly in its mission statement, but it is clear that there is cohesion of evaluation, a red thread of national concerns which runs through all the broadcasts. The choice of other voices to express hyperbolic evaluations, the choice of shots to foreground a particular view, headlines which assert or avoid asserting agency, are obvious strategies, weighting particular interpretations outside their own territories. These strategies are equalled by the deafening silences: of AJ on Qatar (an absolute monarchy and the richest state per capita in the world) and its treatment of its migrant workers; RT and CCTV's playing down of Russia and China's role in the Security Council; F24's silence about the less savoury elements in the Ukrainian opposition or the democratic deficit in the European Union. These are all being evaluated tacitly as not relevant, not worth talking about. With their

omissions and inclusions, evaluative lexical arrays, interplay of averral and attribution and their choice of visuals, the providers construct an evaluative narrative which represents the world in a way which suits a national purpose, but is aimed across borders, regions and continents, at those outside their boundaries, a positioning which is both defensive and attacking in a permanent dialogue with the other.

Notes

1. Bold is used throughout to indicate my emphasis in a citation. Italics are used for citations from the corpus of news items.
2. Al-Jazeera (2004) Al-Jazeera Code of Ethics. Doha: Al-Jazeera, cited in Sakr (2007:106); https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=France_24;http://english.cntv.cn/20100426/104481.shtml;http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/russias-cnn-wants-to-tell-it-like-it-is/2005/08/15/1123958007022.html
3. http://rt.com/news/putin-rt-interview-full-577/.
4. This is in contrast with the lack of interest AJ shows in the harsh working conditions and many work-related deaths of migrant workers in Qatar preparing for the 2022 FIFA World Cup which have been widely reported, as has the broader controversy of Qatar itself as a venue.
5. Because of a downloading error we have only the single Al Jazeera item on the Ukraine deal and not the whole news bulletin; the position of the item in the bulletin and the opening framing by NP are thus unknown.
6. Public displays of affection are a favourite concern of the tabloid press, usually with a prurient interest in the sentimental life of celebrities in the entertainment world.
7. Of the 21 occurrences of the name *Putin* only two come from RT.
8. Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiya or Ukrainian Insurgent Army.
9. RT also broadcasts in Arabic, Spanish and German. CNTV (the internet-based Chinese TV service) broadcasts in French, Spanish, Russian, Korean and Arabic. Al Jazeera broadcasts in Arabic, but also has a Balkans service which broadcasts in Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian. It also has plans for Spanish and Urdu services.

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3
Camera Angles in Television News
Designed to Communicate?

Scott Koga-Browes

Introduction: Camera angles and theory

This chapter discusses the theory surrounding the semiotic resource of 'camera angles' and examines the consequences of bringing theoretical categories into contact with a diverse body of actually broadcast images. I start with an outline of the accepted – if we understand repeated appearance in academic work as a mark of acceptance – theoretical understandings of camera angles. Real-world camera positioning can be descriptively complex, and it is conventional to see camera angles as resolvable along two perpendicular axes, the horizontal and vertical planes dealt with in this study.

Vertical angle and 'power'

The convention of using variations in vertical camera angle, that is, whether an image presents a (generally) human subject from above or below their own eye level, as an indication of the power-relation between viewer and object is perhaps the best known of any aspect of visual expression, and its interpretation forms part of the 'accepted knowledge' of image production.

> By controlling the viewer's positioning vis-a-vis the characters, objects, or events in an image, including the image sequences of film or television, the image's producer can elicit responses that have been conditioned by the viewer's experience of equivalent interrelationships with real-life people, things, and actions. This kind of analogical connection is probably most clearly evident in the well-worn cliche [*sic*] of filming someone from a lower angle to make her or him appear more imposing […] [Camera positioning is] a variable

that is in virtually constant use in many movies and TV programs. It is one of the principal visual means for such effects as heightening the intensity of a scene as it moves towards its climax, maintaining the viewer's sympathy with the hero and emotional distance from secondary characters, or releasing the tension of a scene or of the movie as a whole following the resolution of the action, etc.

(Messaris 1998: 4)

The convention of using vertical angle to denote relationships of power is well established in visual expression. The subject seen from a high angle is generally understood as being portrayed in a position of relative powerlessness. Likewise, a portrayed participant we 'look up to' may be seen as having some power over us. Echoing such earlier writers as Metallinos (1996: 226–227), Messaris (1998) suggests this convention may have its ultimate origins in the analogical relationship between child and parent; the child necessarily views adults, those with the authority to determine the course of many fundamental aspects of the child's life (such as when food will be available, when it will be time to wake up and time to rest), from a low angle and 'looks up to' them. However, basing interpretations on psychological analogs is not so straightforward. As well as being a source of authority, power and control, the parent is also a source of love, tenderness and protection. If one assumes an experiential basis for the 'low-angle ≈ authority' convention, then one might also reasonably add an interpretation of low-angle portrayals as showing the portrayed as a source of affection and protection as well.

   Whichever particular interpretation we end up choosing, an understanding of the importance of camera angles as a potential means of expression is shared by academics, critics and, crucially, practitioners. The influence of camera angle on audience perception is commonly acknowledged by manuals; for example:

Where you place your camera, relative to a subject, will have a strong influence on what it looks like to your audience, and how they feel about it. [...] Looking down at any subject tends to make it look less impressive than looking up at it. Although steeply angled viewpoints are usually too dramatic for most purposes, even a slight variation from an eye-level position can affect the impact of a subject.

(Millerson 2001: 56)

But, as film theorists Bordwell and Thompson (1993: 213) point out, it is far from being the case that 'framing from a low angle "says" that

a character is powerful and that framing from a high angle presents him or her as dwarfed and defeated' is an absolute rule. Given that this expressive possibility is widely acknowledged, it is probably also most easily *avoided* by those who might wish to do so. Factual television, thoroughly imbued with an ideology that includes objectivity as an ideal, presumably will attempt to present 'facts' whilst avoiding any type of expression which might be seen as 'opinion'. Thus it might be expected, given this self-consciousness, that news visuals will largely and purposefully *avoid* use of such potentially value-judgement-laden image-making techniques. Yet, in order to make television, the camera must be placed somewhere.

It should also be borne in mind that there are physical 'real-world' factors which affect an image-maker's ability to make use of the camera angle as a 'semiotic resource'. Taking an acceptable (relatively stable, in-focus, well-lit) low-angle shot is nearly always an available option – the camera operator merely has to squat, resting the camera on a knee, or on the ground – whereas a high-angle shot, which requires the camera to be above the eyeline of the object, may not be possible in all situations; there may be nothing around to stand on, and/or the camera operator may not be strong enough or dexterous enough to operate the camera proficiently with it held over the head. The image-maker is working in a physical as well as an expressive space.

Horizontal angle and 'involvement'

Differences in the horizontal angle from which a subject is shown have been interpreted as implying relationships of relative detachment or involvement with the portrayed subject. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 134–140) suggest that this can be assessed by looking at the coincidence of the frontal plane of the camera and that of the depicted. Elsewhere this subject receives comparatively little attention in the academic literature and when it is mentioned it is often only in the context of the formal interview when the idea of 'the line' (and, more importantly, not crossing it!) is discussed as a piece of basic production knowledge (Millerson 2001: 72–73).

One of the few works that does go further than offering practical advice is Fiske and Hartley's *Reading Television* (1978) which, while generally avoiding any comment on purely pictorial aspects of television, does propose a link between horizontality and perceptions of speaker reliability and expertise:

> if a speaker is televised in half profile, the shot tends to be decoded as being of a more reliable and expert figure than if the speaker is

televised full face. Television normally shows 'expert' interviewees in half profile talking to an interviewer, whereas performers or newsreaders (who present other people's knowledge) are shot full-face.

<div align="right">(Fiske and Hartley 1978: 62)</div>

However, let us take apart the reasoning behind this. Outside contributors (i.e. those individuals not employed by the broadcaster or producer) are conventionally not allowed to address the camera directly, so their contributions must be mediated through an insider by means of an interview; the conventional way to shoot interviews is as a conversation with interviewer and interviewee consistently facing each other; the net result is that outsiders (often sought for their 'expert' views) are generally seen in half-profile; the linkage between half-profile images and expertise is thus established, and anyone so portrayed can partake of the aura of 'expertness' associated with it. It can thus be seen that the cause of the linkage of image to interpretation resides in the convention of eliciting expert contributions via the medium of the face-to-face interview, rather than something inherent in the nature of the half-profile shot itself. If the convention was that expert contributions were, for instance, shot in a darkened room, we could, following the same reasoning, expect an association of expertness with 'dark interviews'.

Fiske was writing in 1978 when the satellite or land-line link-up between remote location and studio was not the commonplace it is now. I would suggest that this conventional association of half-profile shot with expertise has been weakened – perhaps to the point of extinction – by both the routine presentation of 'expert' interviewees via a 'link'[1] shot full-face, and the routine use of 'non-expert' interviews, 'vox pops', street interviews with eye-witnesses and so on. Fiske's observation may have been useful in 1978 but given changes in production techniques, use of his interpretation some decades later may be problematic. My analysis thus concentrates on the more general interpretation offered by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 134–140).

In this view variations in the horizontal angle from which social actors are portrayed are seen as depicting the degree to which the portrayer considers them to be 'involved' with 'us':

The horizontal-angle encodes whether the image-producer (and hence, willy-nilly, the viewer) is 'involved' with the represented participants or not. The frontal angle says, as it were, 'What you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with.' The oblique

angle says 'What you see here is *not* part of our world; it is their world, something we are not involved with.'

<div align="right">(Kress and Leeuwen 2006: 136, original emphasis)</div>

To summarise: despite the readings of vertical and horizontal camera angles suggested by individual scholars showing a degree of variation, and more or less subtlety of interpretation, it can be said that there is general agreement on the potential influence of camera angles as semiotic resources, and furthermore that variations in vertical angle refer to values along an 'empowerment–disempowerment' dimension, and – though there is much less consistency and agreement here – that variations in horizontal angle index the degree of 'involvement' between viewer and portrayed.

Methodology

In order to begin to assess the usefulness of the ideas which deal with camera angles as an expressive feature of images, the first step must be to identify and isolate a population of the images which share the attributes under consideration. If we want to consider the discursive implications of certain camera angles we must first identify the circumstances of their appearance, and when and if they do appear, understand with what sort of frequency and in what context. If it turns out that the phenomena we theorise as significant are actually 'freak' or 'extreme' events, then we may need to change the focus of our analysis in order to reach a valid understanding of the reality of the television viewing experience.

The content analysis described here was designed to create data which describes the camera angles that would be encountered in the course of viewing television news. The material used is drawn from the recording of two national public service broadcasters, the BBC in the UK and *Nihon Hoso Kyokai* (NHK, also sometimes known as the Japan Broadcasting Corporation, JBC) in Japan. This choice was partly pragmatic, as the two sources most reliably available to the author, and partly influenced by a desire to expose theory to a broad range of real-world material. The content analysis performed is admittedly a rather blunt tool, but the initial move of simply looking at images in the context of the stories in which they appear seems to be a very necessary first step in approaching an appreciation of the validity of the theoretical categories currently available to analysts of television images.

Table 3.1   Coding scheme

Vertical	very high angle	2	Horizontal	full face	0
	high angle	1		half profile	1
	eye level	0		full profile	2
	low angle	−1		rear	3
	very low angle	−2			

Images were assigned two simple values, one for horizontal and one for vertical camera angle,[2] according to the coding scheme shown in Table 3.1. It should be emphasised that this simple coding scheme is very far from ideal. While coding horizontal angle was reliant on certain visual cues (the visibility or otherwise of both eyes or ears for example), the coding of vertical images is far more problematic and, except in the relatively uncommon 'very high' and 'very low' categories, to some extent dependent on subjective understandings of what the image is an image 'of', and where 'eye level' seems to be. As a general rule, images where the subjects' eyes, as portrayed, were seen to be significantly above those of any individuals standing on the same level behind them, were coded 'low angle', and vice versa. Obviously this rule of thumb is not applicable in all, perhaps even the majority of, situations.

   Images were drawn from a corpus of news stories taken from recordings of NHK and BBC news programming in three periods between 2006 and 2013; each still image represents a single cut. This image corpus was derived from edited general news stories, in industry terminology 'packages', of between two and four minutes in duration. This limitation was imposed first, to eliminate packages too short to develop their own visual flow, and second, to avoid the difficulty sometimes encountered in identifying individual 'stories' when they appear in a lengthy flow of uninterrupted video material. NHK sometimes covers major stories with such segments which incorporate smaller sections covering different aspects of the same story. A total of 50 stories were used, 25 from each broadcaster, and the corpus ultimately consisted of 1,081 cuts. Not all cuts could be coded in a meaningful way – for example, it would have made little sense to code two-dimensional graphics, or images consisting primarily of documents and other non-human objects. Although exact numbers varied across categories and broadcasters, about 65–70 per cent of images were found to be codeable. Cuts that were not deemed codeable were those which, for example, did not portray any human subjects, or those where there were wide variations in camera angle, for

instance pans which follow an individual as they walk by and which can, in the course of a single cut, move from a full-face portrayal to an image which shows the back of the subject's head as they walk away.

Results

The distributions of the different values for vertical and horizontal camera angles are shown in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.[3] As can be seen from the figures presented in Table 3.4 the most common shots (23.4 per cent of all coded cuts) are those which view the subject from directly in front and at eye level. This can be taken as the 'default' – possibly, the ideal – camera-to-subject relationship. An interpretation of this view from the theoretical perspective outlined earlier would characterise it as 'power neutral' – the viewer is placed at eye level as regards the portrayed subject, neither above nor below, neither in a dominant nor submissive attitude – and 'fully involved', the portrayed represented by the image producer as being fully 'part of our world'. The result can be dismissed as trivial but it provides an invaluable perspective when we come to consider the less common, and more interesting, uses of certain of the more potentially meaning-laden camera angles.

In its use of camera angles then, we would have to conclude that television news's visual presentation of social actors often seems to
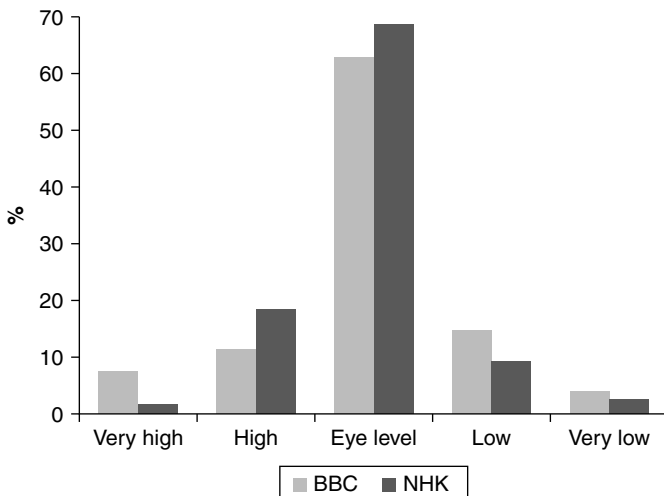
Figure 3.1   Distribution of vertical camera angles
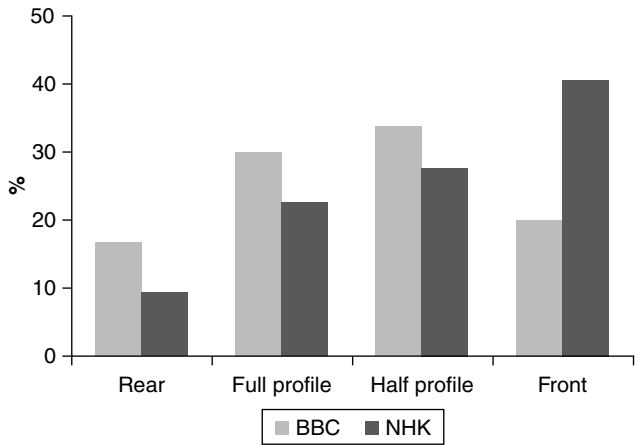
Figure 3.2　Distribution of horizontal camera angles

Table 3.2　Distribution of vertical camera angles

	BBC		NHK	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Very high	26	7.3	6	1.6
High	40	11.3	70	18.3
Eye level	223	62.8	263	68.7
Low	52	14.6	35	9.1
Very low	14	3.9	9	2.3
Total	355	100	383	100

Table 3.3　Distribution of horizontal camera angles

	BBC		NHK	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Full face	62	19.9	139	40.4
Half profile	105	33.7	95	27.6
Full profile	93	29.8	78	22.7
Rear	52	16.7	32	9.3
Total	312	100	344	100

Table 3.4 Cross-tabulation of distribution of cuts taken from varying vertical and horizontal camera angles, BBC and NHK combined total

	Very high		High		Eye level		Low		Very low		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Full face	1.1	7	3.5	23	23.4	152	2.5	16	0.5	3	30.9	201
Half profile	0.5	3	3.9	25	20.5	133	4.9	32	0.9	6	30.7	199
Full profile	0.8	5	4.6	30	16.8	109	3.1	20	1.2	8	26.5	172
Rear	0.9	6	1.1	7	8.8	57	0.5	3	0.6	4	11.8	77
Total	3.5	21	13.1	85	69.3	451	10.9	71	3.2	21	100	649

approach the objective ideal it ostensibly aspires to (putting aside for one moment any reasonable doubts we might have about the potential for objectivity of *any* image) showing the broad variety of social actors it deals with, male and female, old and young, senior members of government and factory workers, in a broadly power-neutral manner. We might, if we were ideologically so inclined, look beyond this initial impression and interpret this standpoint as a manoeuvre on the part of the mass media to obscure the power relationships in which they themselves are involved, and their influential position in society. As Freeman points out, in order to carry out the roles of provider of information and political watchdog the media take upon themselves, they 'must locate themselves within the political and economic centers of state power' (2000: 3). The mass media must face both ways: they must have an outward-facing audience identity which presents an image consistent with the former roles and an inward-facing identity which it utilises in its dealings with other elite groups within society. It may be necessary for this latter identity to remain concealed from the audience if the former is to remain serviceable. Herbert Gans, referring to the US, suggests that the professional identity and values of journalists there are built on a tacit acknowledgement of the power hierarchy in which they work:

> They work with apolitical source considerations that are nevertheless sensitive to political power; they apply product considerations that professionalize the commercial imperatives of their firms; they practice value exclusion that similarly professionalizes the avoidance of judgments which could upset the powerful; and in the process, they hide the existence of power even from themselves.
>
> (Gans 1980: 284)

As well as any possible ideological reason the mass media might have for consistently representing the social actors they portray in this way, there may also exist other sound reasons. It is this 'neutral' point of view that most closely approximates an ideal everyday interpersonal interaction: an individual of roughly average height will roughly be at eye level when standing talking to another similarly sized individual; they will generally face one another and doing so will optimise the visual availability of communicational material, movements of the mouth, facial expressions, direction of gaze and, initially, identity (Wieser, Pauli, Alpers and Mühlberger 2008). A clear view of the eyes is particularly important in regulating the smooth flow of conversation (ibid.: 93). Indeed any interpretation of the images created by news media industries needs to take

into account the fact that they are produced by real, physical human beings working in real, physical spaces, generally with quite definite pragmatic goals in mind.

Discussion

Horizontal variations

As can be seen from Figure 3.2, the distribution of horizontal angles across the two broadcasters is largely similar in contour, except for the 'full face' category; where NHK material exhibits a continuing increase and the BBC shows a marked decrease. NHK uses proportionately twice as many full-face portrayals. Overall both full-face and half-profile portrayals make up slightly over 30 per cent of coded images, full-profile images make up somewhat less (26 per cent) and images of people from the rear just under 13 per cent.

Taking Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) suggested interpretation (see 'Horizontal angle and involvement' section above) at face value, we would conclude that there is a difference in the degree of 'involvement' between subjects as portrayed by NHK and NHK's viewers, and those portrayed by the BBC and the BBC's viewers. Assuming a simple linear relation between increasing frontality and increasing engagement we could also conclude that NHK's presentation of human subjects implies a relationship where subject and viewer are more fully 'part of the same world'(Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 136). By comparison to the BBC news audience, do viewers of NHK experience a televised world which positions them as more closely 'engaged' with portrayed social actors? A comparative study of framing sizes, interpreted as an index of 'social distance', concludes similarly that 'NHK's typical portrayal can be interpreted as portraying a closer relationship between viewer and viewed while the BBC is rather more "distant", perhaps stereotypically "stand-offish" ' (Koga-Browes 2013: 86). Another possible interpretation might be that BBC image-makers are simply more tolerant of images which are further from the ideal, perhaps indicating that providing viewers with an image that allows them to view the whole of the subject's face is less important in the UK than in Japan.

Vertical variations

This study, through the coding process, has resulted in a collection of images which can be viewed (if we accept the notion that image features are semiotic resources) as realisations on the material plane of the meanings intended by the producers. However, we have also seen that in

interpreting texts we must acknowledge the fact that they are the result of what social semiotics calls 'regimes of production' (Hodge and Kress 1988: 4–8), which take into account the real processes and circumstances of the creation of the text. So, (a) to what degree can we interpret images as the realisations of semiotic resources by communication-oriented individuals or bodies, and (b) what is the extent of the influence of the physical circumstances and process of creation? The following sections try to consider images not purely as expressive vehicles but, in part at least, as a concrete consequence of a material process. Before starting, though, it is important to point out that close to two-thirds of images were coded as 'eye level', that is, shot from neither above nor below, neither high-angle nor low (see Figure 3.1). Thus the discussion below concerns a minority of the television news images typically encountered by viewers. Moving on to deal with some of the actual images that make up the research sample, what follows deals in particular with one type of image – that which diverges from the 'standard' eye-level representation of the world – as illustrative of alternative interpretations, often unrelated to the readings proposed by theoreticians, that may cast a different light. The following sections suggest a few of the types of motivation that may have applied in the creation of some of the images encountered. These types should not be considered definitive or exclusive but as a set of prompts useful in considering the images of television news.

Alternative interpretations

The images used here illustrate the diversity of images found in the corpus and hint at the variety of motivations behind the camera operators' decisions to portray the subject from the chosen angle. These images can be divided into a number of broad groups based on a consideration of various aspects of the actual circumstances within which the image was created, and in some cases, the subject matter of the image.

Positional motivation

This refers to images of objects or people where the camera operator is unable, because of the limitations of time and physical surroundings, to be on the same level as the object. For example, Figure 3.3 shows part of a sequence of a young girl, deeply worried by a recent earthquake, at the top of the stairs of the family home after getting out of bed to seek reassurance from her mother; either there was no time for the camera operator to go upstairs to take the shot, or it may have been inappropriate given the circumstances. Figure 3.4 shows the then leader of the Komeito political party, Ota Hiroaki, addressing a crowd of supporters

Figure 3.3   NHK low-angle shot of girl at top of stairs: Positional motivation

Figure 3.4   NHK low-angle shot of campaigning politician: Positional motivation

from the top of a campaign bus. As is often the case in Japanese political campaigning, the vehicle used is fairly small and there would be little room for a camera operator as well as the candidate, even if permission to shoot from the roof of the bus could be gained from the Komeito organisers. Thus the pictures are from ground level.[4]

The BBC image shown in Figure 3.5 is another example: this image is part of a heavily modulated,[5] 'generic' sequence which shows police breaking down a door as part of their anti-terrorist activities. It seems as if the camera operator has chosen to portray this event (probably staged for the camera) from a raised position in the stairwell or hallway outside the door in question; s/he is probably standing on the stairs looking down at the scene and thus able to capture an overview. There

Figure 3.5   High-angle BBC shot of police: Possible positional motivation

may have been a practical explanation for the choice of camera angle, for instance there may not have been physical space for the operator to stand safely at the same level as the police in the landing. Sometimes the angle of the shot is determined merely by the physical space within which the camera operator and the subject find themselves. However, technical considerations cannot rule out the fact that the images can be read as intentionally constructed. Whether or not we read them this way largely depends on our analytical standpoint: if our emphasis is on trying to understand 'what the broadcaster was trying to say' then these practicalities should be taken into account; if, however, our interest is in the audience reception of these visual messages then they become far less important.

Relational motivation

These images attempt to illustrate not the objects or social actors portrayed but the *relationship* between them. As an example, in Japan where summer temperatures can reach 40°C, a regularly recurring image is of 'people under the sun' (e.g. Figure 3.6), that is, ordinary people suffering the effects of very hot summer weather. In these images it is not the sky or the sun that is the object of interest, nor is it the passers-by as individuals; it is the relationship between the two determining the shared condition of being human in temperatures of 40° and more. A related image is Figure 3.7: this shows the relationship between a group of tourists, waiting in the sweltering summer heat in the town

Figure 3.6　Relational low-angle shot: People and sun

Figure 3.7　Relational low-angle shot: Visitors with fan

hall of Miyazaki Prefecture in the south of Japan to catch a glimpse of celebrity mayor Higashikokubaru Hideo, with the small fan (shown in part on the right-hand side of the image) placed on the floor in the foyer of the building. The fan is significant in the context of the story as

it symbolises the money-saving activities of Higashikokubaru's administration, who have decided to turn off the building's air conditioning despite the high temperatures.

Another image in the sample shows (or purports to show) the moment electricity is restored to a family home after being cut off in the wake of an earthquake. The return of power is illustrated by the family gathering in the home's main room for the mother to switch on the light on the ceiling. The important elements in understanding the situation are *the family* and *the illuminated electric light*.

Technical motivation

Another reason to move away from the 'standard view' can perhaps be found in the limitations of the technology used in image creation, for example in the image shown in Figure 3.8. This is taken from a BBC story covering a new development in pain-relief technology which has been useful in alleviating the patient's chronic back pain, allowing him to begin to walk again, even if with crutches. The shoot took place in the fairly limited space of a hospital treatment room. Both the nature of the material to be portrayed and the nature of the work space may be factors in the creation of an image which, interpreted naively, might be construed as disempowering. An attempt to capture the recovering patient's first steps as the new treatment took effect and the expression of relief and happiness on his face, combined with the difficulty of taking a shot wide enough to create a full-length portrayal of the patient, have

Figure 3.8   Foreshortening used to increase pictorial scope

led the camera operator to opt for a shot which utilises foreshortening to squeeze more information into a limited framing space. A camera placement which creates an angle – the more acute, the greater the effect – between the frontal planes of the object and the camera lens can thus bypass the technical limitations imposed by the image-creation equipment.

One might also place in this category the common high-angle images of parliamentary debates and politicians' statements that often appear in BBC packages;[6] the position of the eight cameras that provide the images are regulated by a parliamentary committee. There are 'technical' reasons for the cameras' positions being around the edges of the gallery and not at floor level within the chamber, as the movement of remote-controlled cameras could be 'potentially distracting for the person speaking and those nearby' (UK Parliament Administration Committee 2012). These cameras all look down into the chamber, the result being that while the angles they provide are felt to be less than satisfactory (ibid.), they result in parliamentary proceedings which are universally seen by television viewers from a 'high' or 'very high' angle.

Many of the non-eye-level shots encountered are in some degree under the influence of one or more of the motivations above, but there are some examples in the corpus which exhibit quite specific motifs.

The shape of human beings: Hands and head

Figure 3.9 shows a senior politician, Ota Akihiro, this time shaking hands with supporters at an outdoor rally. Why has the camera operator chosen to capture this particular image? We might put it down to

Figure 3.9   Low-angle shot showing politician shaking hands

the fact that the individual portrayed is a powerful politician (leader of the junior party in the ruling coalition) and the image-maker is choosing to mobilise the semiotic resource of the low camera angle to make him seem more imposing. However, looking at the whole of the 3.9 second cut, it seems more likely that this was an attempt to foreground the hand-shaking between Ota and the crowd, putting the camera below the level of the outstretched hands to include them in the image along with Ota.[7] Nevertheless, we are left with the fact that the image, whatever the motivation behind this particular form, was chosen for use in the final broadcast version of the story. That it was not rejected because of its potential semiotic content, that is the implication of a relationship of power/subordination between the powerful portrayed (politician) and subjected viewer (voter), can be seen either as an indication of insensitivity to, or lack of understanding of, this potential meaning of the image; or as a collective acknowledgement that this image, with all its semiotic implications, is appropriate in this context.

However, the story from which the image is extracted consists of 28 cuts, 21 of which portray Mr Ota on screen for 192 of the total 232 second duration of the story. Such prominence given to a single individual, along with the fact that we are told he is leader of a political party, would seem to make the relatively weak visual communication of one image shot from a low angle almost superfluous. During the course of the story he is portrayed from a high or very high angle six times and from a low or very low angle three times. If we attribute to these cuts their conventional semiotic meaning, we should conclude that Ota is portrayed overall as being in a rather less powerful position with respect to the viewer. As a politician, a 'public servant', we could indeed argue that this is an accurate reflection of his actual position; however, the mere duration of his exposure (conventionally implying 'importance') seems to argue in the other direction. It can be seen that the various portrayals shown in the story, if given their traditional semiotic interpretations, do not add up to a consistent statement about the individual portrayed, and consequently it is difficult to conclude incontrovertibly that the images 'tell' us anything about him.

Figure 3.10 shows an image from a BBC package on the video game industry. The package contains four very similar cuts used to illustrate the increase in games that use new types of controllers such as the ones held by the couple pictured. The emphasis in all the shots seems to be the action of the subjects' hands; however, the camera operator has also been careful to include the subjects' faces, allowing us to see their expressions of concentration and enjoyment as they play the games.

Figure 3.10 Low angle shot showing game-players' hands

The typical position of human hands is below the level of the face, so a shot that wants to focus on hands and also capture facial expression as economically as possible is best constructed from a low angle. It might be argued that this 'economical' portrayal is in fact a lazy shorthand for what should have been an edited sequence of three or four cuts; indeed, we might be wise to look 'behind' the image here to the background of decreasing resources (in this case the time, machinery and personnel involved in video-editing) against which the process of image creation took place.

In summary, the specific features of images may at times be under the influence of the physical features of whatever is being portrayed, and while image-makers are involved in deciding whether a particular object will be portrayed or not, their choice of *how* to portray the object may be externally constrained.

The nature of 'news': Access and overview

A definitional quality of the kind of 'general news' that the BBC and NHK present is that it is of general interest to a great number of people who on occasion are affected directly, becoming active participants. It is reasonable to expect that portrayals of news events may therefore sometimes necessitate portrayals of large numbers of people. I would argue that the primary motivation behind the use of high-angle shots, rather than to express any relationship of power or subjection, is simply that a higher vantage point gives a broader view of an area, thus enabling such
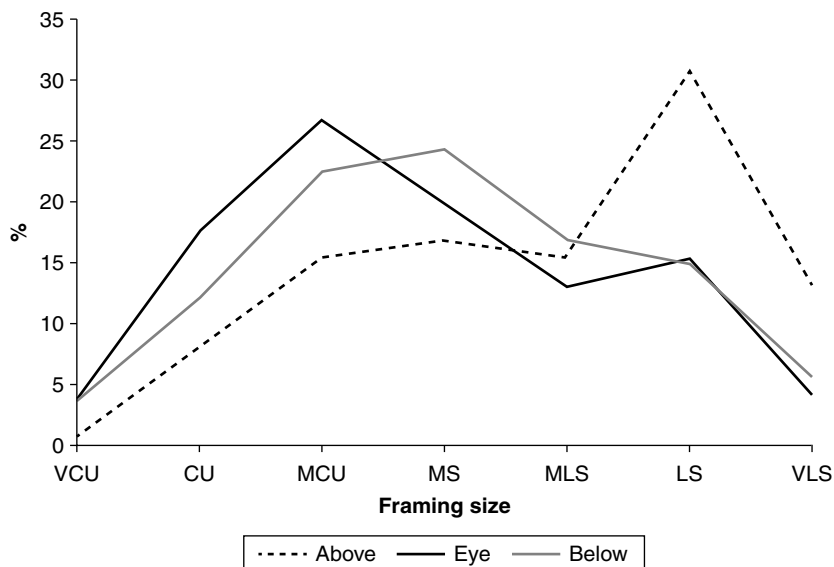
Figure 3.11   High-angle shots and framing sizes

portrayals. High shots provide either *access* to a scene otherwise difficult to 'picture', or a contextual *overview*.

This reading seems to be confirmed by the distribution of vertical angles across various framing sizes, illustrated in Figure 3.11: notice the large proportion (31 per cent) of long shots which are taken from above eye level.[8] This tendency is visible in both broadcasters, with the BBC data clearly illustrating the apparent link between increasing camera angle and increasing width of shot.

As can be seen in the images shown in Figure 3.12 to Figure 3.15, an obvious theme of these images is 'crowds' and 'groups'; from the aerial shot of a large crowd of attendees at a protest meeting in Okinawa (Figure 3.12) to a much smaller group gathered outside a UK courtroom to make a press statement (Figure 3.15). I would argue that the portrayal chosen by the image-maker in the majority of scenes of this nature has very little to do with the desire to show the portrayed actors as being somehow powerless or in a position of subordination and everything to do with getting a good 'overview' of a scene which plays out on the flat, providing an adequate and economical visual description of the physical space within which the portrayed events or actions are taking place.
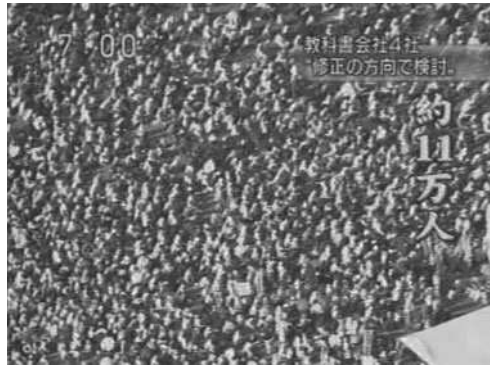
Figure 3.12   NHK high angle: Crowd at Okinawa protest

Figure 3.13   BBC high angle: Conference crowd

Looking at the shots in the 'high' and 'very high' categories, whether they tend to be wider or tighter, we can see a fairly clear tendency. Of the 114 shots coded as 'high' or 'very high', 33 are in the three categories at the tighter end of the framing scale,[9] while 81 are in the three categories at the wider end of the scale. As shots get 'higher', they also get 'wider'. Counts for these shots are perhaps rather too low to allow categorical statements on the matter. However, the data do offer some support for the following argument: the very high-angle shot, which is more often than not (19 of 32 shots) a long or very long shot, is used primarily as a

Figure 3.14   NHK high angle: Earthquake rescue

Figure 3.15   BBC high angle: Group outside court

way of conveniently capturing and depicting the scale of events occurring on a fairly wide stage rather than as a semiotic resource expressing, or putting forward, the image-maker's view of the power relationship which should obtain between the portrayed and the image-maker or audience.

This can perhaps be seen as an attempt on the part of the image-maker to avoid dissonance between image and narration; conversely television reporters are routinely encouraged to 'write to picture' (BBC Academy

2014). Any dissonance between words and images can have a negative effect on audience understanding (Grimes 1991). For example, let us imagine a news report of a political rally which, accurately or not, the commentary tells us 10,000 people attended. If the image-maker proposes a selection of images from the rally, shot from in front of the crowd and thus showing just the front 'layer' of participants, this might lead us, as viewers, to question the accuracy of the reported figures. If 10,000 people did actually attend why not show them? Why show just 150? The most persuasive – and least dissonant – shot the image-maker could bring back would be the one that showed, in an instant, every one of the 10,000 reported attendees. Such an image cannot be taken from eye level unless the event takes place in an amphitheatre or other space specifically designed to create an eyeline between a given point and a large number of viewers/objects. The simplest strategy in the absence of the above is for the image-maker to seek some raised vantage point from which such a view, or one that at least approaches it, can be obtained. Some distinction must therefore be made between high-angle wide shots, which can be considered semiotically innocuous in the sense that they are, I would argue, not the result of an intention to depict power relations but to depict scale, and high-angle shots at tighter framing sizes, which may well have a different intent. There are very few of this latter type of image in the corpus; one such, coded as 'very high-angle' and 'medium close-up', was created for use in an anonymous interview and showed a view from over the subject's shoulder of their hands in their lap. The intention here was to hide the speaker's identity whilst providing enough visuals to carry the recorded interview; the camera operator's solution in this instance was to produce a sequence of increasingly idiosyncratic images, the variations of which replaced the variations in facial expression viewers expect in an interview.

The nature of the news image is, therefore, as well as being under the influence of both the physical environment and the physical features of the portrayed object, also affected by the nature of news communication itself.

Low angles: Authority figures?

This leaves us with a few images which should probably be dealt with separately. There are a number of images, especially from the BBC sample, where the conventional reading makes sense, or at least there seems to be a convergence of pictorial form and content.

Figure 3.16   Police officer pictured from low angle

Figure 3.16 seems to be an archetypical instance which illustrates the conventional reading: pictured is a uniformed police officer patrolling the high street of a town somewhere in the UK. This is an image from a package covering UK crime figures, made up of 24 cuts, 12 of which portray police officers. Interestingly, there are two other cuts in this package (both of highly modulated generic library material, suggesting the potential for repeated use) that show police officers from below eye level. Of all the stories in the sample considered, this one is closest to using images in a way that approaches what conventional readings would lead us to expect. There seems to be no motivation for the low-angle depiction other than the camera operator's creative decision to do so. I would argue that it is only from the free exercise of this decision-making faculty – not motivated by the surrounding environment or material circumstances – that meaning emerges and that a primarily semiotic reading becomes useful.

By way of contrast we also have images – again seemingly created without any particular circumstantial motivation – such as Figure 3.17. This shows morning commuters crossing a London bridge and is used as part of a package covering the UK government's plans to cut welfare spending. Has the camera operator here deliberately created an image of 'empowered commuters', or have they just decided to make use of the resources available in the immediate environment (in this case by resting the camera on the ground) to create a composition suitably pleasing to the eye (and, perhaps more importantly, the video editor)?

Figure 3.17   Commuters portrayed from low angle

Summary

In very few of the very high- or low-angle images found in the corpus does an interpretation based solely on the supposedly 'sub- ordinating' or 'empowering' nature of these shots seem appropriate, given what we know of the circumstances of production. The images which make use of these 'semiotic resources' would be, in the major- ity of cases, difficult to account for in terms of any intention on the part of the image-maker to communicate the meaning which can be inferred.

For the purposes of this study the evidence we have to draw on is lim- ited to the texts themselves; we do not have access to what *may* have been going through the mind of the image-maker or how a viewer *might* read the image. The only way forward has been to survey the images as used, identify consistencies and suggest explanations – drawn from the *material* rather than the *mental* circumstances of their creation – for the patterns of use identified. Variations in vertical camera angle can be seen to be more connected to the image-makers' desire to provide a succinct depiction of a given object or relationship of a certain size or scope, whether a politician on a 'meet and greet' or a crowd of demon- strators. If the flow of images of television news is to be viewed as a form of communication, then it must also be admitted that this stream of information is heavily motivated by ideational considerations and a need for parsimony of realisation. Any interpersonal meanings, any

assessments or evaluations of relationship between the portrayed and the viewer seem to be very secondary.

Conclusion

The meaningful categories suggested by theory as worthy of consideration actually encompass only a very small proportion of the images encountered. Of the 1,081 images in the sample, less than ten could realistically be interpreted as being expressions of the kinds of meanings posited. This raises a fundamental question about the fit between the research object and approaches suggested by theory. Is this ultimately an approach which views pictorial aspects of news images as largely devoid of meaning?

Of course there may also be a problem with the choice of research subject: At what level is the idea of a televisual discourse valid? If we begin to take apart television news at the level of the individual cut, it becomes difficult to see any consistent message; within the space of a single story, or even within a few seconds, it is possible to see what might be considered to be semiotically contradictory representations. The obvious next question, in that case, is what *is* the appropriate object of analysis? Perhaps, rather than the single, it is the sequence (a visual phrase?) or the individual story, maybe the programme as a whole, or perhaps the selection of stories that deal with a particular subject area, or indeed maybe the output of a single channel or broadcaster.

On the other hand (and putting to one side the problems identified above), we might perhaps be justified in reaching a generally positive assessment of the news image creator's ability to produce images which approach an objective description of the world; the proportion of images which might reasonably be seen as 'comment', that is, expressing some sort of evaluation of the relationship between portrayed social actors and viewers, is minimal. The majority of images are, in terms of the pictorial semiotic resources manifest as camera angles, hardly worthy of further comment.[10] We could also view as successful the process of 'semiotic inoculation' that is part of becoming a journalist, during which trainees are made aware of the expressive potential of certain types of images and are thus able to avoid creating them, or at least are sensitised to the circumstances in which the particular images or shots might or might not be acceptable within the framework of objectivity.

This purposeful avoidance of 'comment' might lead one to the conclusion that television news camera operators are not communicators at all, merely extracting sequences from the world and saying, for example,

'Look, a house! Look, a window!' and so on; however, this interpretation is difficult to tally with the everyday experience of watching television. Of course, communication may be unintentional, and miscommunication in mass communication is certainly to be expected (Hall 2000) if it is not perhaps the norm (Eco 1980: 105). We must never forget that most of the time images are created according primarily to something akin to the 'principle of least effort'. In light of this, if as individual viewers we may read texts as we see fit, as analysts we have a responsibility to not over-interpret the television news image – while working towards identifying a suitable analytical level which can be used to both appreciate and critique the undoubted communicative role of the news image.

Notes

1. I use this term in the generic way it is used in television production to refer to any means of instantaneously transferring visuals and audio from one location to another whether this be by means of microwaves, fibre-optic cables, satellite or, more common in recent years, satellite telephony.
2. At the same time images were also coded for a number of other features such as the presence and type of camera movement, framing size, presence and type of modulation. While these data are not used extensively in this study I refer to a relationship between 'long shots' and high camera angles in a later section of this study.
3. Total counts in these tables vary as it was not always possible to code all images for all features.
4. Of course, not knowing the details of the shoot we cannot *know* whether there was a *conscious decision* to prefer a ground-level view to an available alternative or whether this position was the only one accessible.
5. Referring to digital manipulation of colour, brightness, focus and so on, making images less 'realistic'.
6. Of the 26 BBC shots coded 'very high' angle, 14 were taken from the parliament cameras.
7. One of the camera operators interviewed in Tuchman (1973: 8) criticises what appears from the description to be a similar low-angle shot of US politician Adlai Stevenson, as the camera operator has emphasised the hand-shaking at the expense of a clear view of the individual's face.
8. Counts for 'high' and 'very high', and 'low' and 'very low' camera angles have been combined for clarity.
9. All the images referred to in this study were coded not just for camera-angle but for a number of other pictorial features, one of which was 'framing size'. The 'tighter' framing sizes are the VCU (very close-up), the CU (close-up) and MCU (medium close-up); the 'wider' shots were MLS (medium long shot), LS (long shot), VLS (very long shot). Definitions can be found in Koga-Browes (2013).

10. This statement makes the assumption, which we might want to question, that the standard (eye-level, full-face) portrayal of social actors is the 'best' way for television news to portray them.

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4
Overweight and Obesity in TV News

Catriona Bonfiglioli

Introduction: Overweight and obesity

Overweight and obesity are widespread, with about two-thirds of British, American and Australian people overweight or obese (IASO 2013). Overweight and obesity are associated with health risks, including heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and cancer and health care costs (Colagiuri et al. 2010). These biomedical and economic views of weight as a disease to be cured and a cost to be contained are challenged as ideological positions built on assumptions that weight is a problem, obesity is an epidemic and fat people are diseased (Campos 2004; Gard and Wright 2005), and obesity measures such as the Body Mass Index (BMI) are objective ways to categorize people of size. However, the BMI, which uses the ratio of height to weight to categorise people as underweight, healthy weight, overweight, obese or morbidly obese, has been challenged for various reasons. These include that it medicalises healthy large people as diseased, fails to focus on risky abdominal fat and may categorise muscular bodies as obese (Evans and Colls 2009). Other discussions centre on whether nutrition is more important than exercise, whether particular foods or drinks should be held responsible, who or what is responsible and what responses are appropriate. The news media influence community policies (Maibach 2007: 360). They are recognised as an important source of health information (Wade and Schramm 1969; Johnson 1998), a driver of consumer demand (Appadurai 1986), a powerful influence over health behaviours and a critical arena for the struggle for semantic control (Gitlin 1980; Ryan 1991). Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated links between news and health behaviours, including vaccination (Mason and Donnelly 2000; Speers

and Lewis 2004), breast cancer screening (Chapman et al. 2005), hormone replacement therapy (Lawton et al. 2003; Haas et al. 2004) and suicide (Hawton et al. 1999; Pirkis et al. 2006). The media have been identified as a key component of the 'obesogenic' environment, as Swinburn et al. (1999: 567) note: 'At the macroenvironmental level, the mass media are an important sector influencing the sociocultural aspects of food and physical activity. They directly and indirectly influence society's attitudes, beliefs, and values.' The media are crucial to social and cultural approaches to prevention: 'Such prevention strategies will require a co-ordinated effort between the medical community, health administrators, teachers, parents, food producers and processors, retailers and caterers, advertisers and the media, recreation and sport planners, urban architects, city planners, politicians and legislators' (Lobstein et al. 2004: 7).

As Sun notes, 'Media advertising, popular texts, and academic health discourse are all part of the successful discursive construction of individuals as "solely responsible for acquiring skills needed for personal well-being", a belief that has become so pervasive and ingrained that it largely falls outside our reflective radar' (2014: e6–e7). Researchers investigate the nexus between weight and media, impacts of news media, advertising and fiction on people and their health behaviours and mediated size stigma. McClure et al. (2011) find that in fictional television people of size are under-represented and more frequently shown in stereotypical and stigmatising ways. Research examining television news about overweight and obesity is limited, but a growing body of studies is finding that overweight is positioned as an 'epidemic', a source of disease and largely the result of poor individual choices and moral failings. People of size are presented in stigmatising images and may be distressed by television portrayals. Yi et al. (2012) found that 'obesity was usually presented as epidemic and health crisis in Chinese television news' (2012: 331). Similarly, Inthorn and Boyce (2010) point out that 'television narratives focus on the individual and their responsibility to take control of their bodies', neglecting environmental drivers of obesity (2010: 95), and Kim and Willis (2007) noted that for the media the solution and responsibility lie predominantly with individuals (2007: 367). '[N]egative portrayals of obese persons in particular were contributing to an increase in negative attitudes' (McClure et al. 2011: 366). Obesity is high on the news agenda (IFIC 2005; Bonfiglioli 2014), which means that influential words and images are reaching the public and shaping its understandings of these issues. Television, film and news programmes have been identified as a

source of obesity stigma (Puhl and Heuer 2009), blame (Lawrence 2004; Bonfiglioli 2007b; Kim and Willis 2007; De Brún et al. 2012) and accusations of individual responsibility (Lawrence 2004; Bonfiglioli et al. 2007; Saguy 2013). Puhl and Heuer (2010) note that individual responsibility framing dominates media coverage and '[e]ntertainment media also communicate anti-fat messages and reinforce perceptions that body weight is within personal control' (p. 1021). An analysis of Australian television news found that two-thirds of items were dominated by the message that individuals are personally responsible for their weight (Bonfiglioli et al. 2007: 444). 'As claims about an unhealthy food and activity environment have increased, the role of personal responsibility for one's health has been strongly articulated in response' (Lawrence 2004: 69).

This chapter focuses on individual responsibility, technologies of the self and concepts of sin, using empirical media data to draw conclusions about how the media challenge or reinforce dominant discourses about obesity. Evidence from analyses of Australian television news media are presented and discussed with reference to relevant television research. Drawing on social construction (Berger and Luckmann 1967), agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw 1972) and framing theories (Entman 1991), the chapter uses frame analysis (Entman 1991; Entman 1993) to detect ideological positioning of weight as a major health issue by investigating reported causes, attributions of responsibility and promotion of solutions. News angle analysis involves analysing headlines and lead paragraphs of news articles to determine what aspect of an issue or topic attracts news media attention (Espinel et al. 2013). Van Dijk (1988) has highlighted the importance of the headline and lead paragraph, which he calls the 'summary', in anchoring the meaning of a newspaper article. In the present study, this view has been extended to the analysis of news angles in obesity-related television news so as to illuminate story choice patterns, identify neglected angles in weight representation and thus investigate what contribution television news makes to competing discourses of weight. Semiotic analysis reveals patterns of objectification (van Leeuwen 2008; Pausé 2013) in news images. The ways in which these elements sustain or amplify ideologies and discourses in the struggles to define the issue of weight are discussed in the light of debates about framing weight as a medical problem or a human rights issue (Kwan 2008), whether obesity is a legitimate cause of health fears and how framings of responsibility may divert public discourse away from systemic approaches to improving health.

Framework

Media words and images may not hold a mirror up to society but they help to constitute a constructed reality, as 'in the process of describing an event, news defines and shapes that event ...' (Tuchman 1978: 184). The different social constructions of social problems offered by the media invite different social responses (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Burr 1995); for example, constructing alcoholics as responsible for their behaviour invites punishment, but constructing them as addicted might encourage treatment (Burr 1995: 5). Framing and agenda-setting theory seek to explain how the media shape what people think about by helping to set the 'agenda' for public debates and policy decisions (Cohen 1963; McCombs and Shaw 1972; McCombs and Valenzuela 2007) and explain the way media frames influence how the public think about issues and events (Entman 1993). For example, a study of news coverage of a proposed heroin prescribing trial found that opponents of the trial framed the heroin user as an immoral 'other' in need of punishment (Elliott and Chapman 2000), while proponents highlighted drug use as a health problem requiring treatment.

Framing is central to the way news media discourses construct social reality (Scheufele 1999). Framing theory argues that people use 'frameworks of understanding' to make sense of events (Goffman 1974: 10; Scheufele 1999). Media frames are 'persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organise discourse, whether verbal or visual' (Gitlin, 1980: 7). Through particular news frames some aspects of a perceived reality are made salient in ways which promote 'a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation' (Entman 1993: 52). As the news media have pervaded social life, they have become 'critical arenas' for struggles over semantic control (Gitlin 1980: 292; Ryan 1991). The 'real battle [...] over whose interpretation, whose framing of reality, gets the floor' is fought here (Ryan 1991: 53).

In terms of the visual representation of social actors, van Leeuwen's approach to analysing 'social interaction' by documenting gaze provides a valuable tool for analysing the use of pictures of people of size (van Leeuwen 2008: 141, Table 8.1). Van Leeuwen categorizes interaction as direct when the represented person 'looks at' the viewer, or indirect when the gaze of the viewer and the viewed do not meet. Excluding a person's face is an act of objectification (van Leeuwen 2008),

which offers them up as objects for the viewers' use and contributes to 'othering' (Hall 2003; van Leeuwen 2008).

The so-called problem of obesity intersects with a number of powerful discourses and ideologies, including public health, neo-liberalism (especially neo-liberal concepts of choice, 'lifestyle', and individual responsibility), gender, class, feminism, the thin ideal, technologies of the self and, last but not least, fat pride and fat rights.

Foucault explains how dominant powers (the teacher) and self-control (practised by the unquestioning disciple) work together to impose (self-)governmentality in which individuals absorb and conform to norms by disciplining their own behaviour (Foucault 1988: pp. 17–22). For Warin (2011) active self-formation and self-understanding depend on mediated external authority figures with the media serving as the teacher. Foucault's concepts of self governance link directly to public policies of normalizing self-care (Howell and Ingham 2001) and, as Couldry (2008) argues, media can serve as propaganda channels for neo-liberal values such as freedom of choice and self-care, thus reinforcing the project of removing government and industry from disease prevention (Warin 2011). Similarly, Townend (2009) identifies the media as proposing a behavioural model by presenting people of size as sinful and deviant in contrast to what is normative. News stories 'actively define both what is deviant and what is normative' (Tuchman 1978: 184), thus instructing audiences in proper self-control.

Overweight and obesity reported as problems in television news

The news media have increasingly reported overweight and obesity as problems, with dramatic rises in news coverage internationally (IFIC 2005; Hilton et al. 2012) and in Australia (Bonfiglioli 2014). Research investigating the role of the news media has focused on television, newspapers and online news. Recent analyses of newspaper coverage of obesity conducted at the NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), show news media interest in obesity increased dramatically from the year 2000 and the phrase 'obesity crisis' has featured more and more since 2002 (Bonfiglioli 2007; Bonfiglioli 2014), when Australian newspapers started to frame obesity as a major and urgent problem (Bonfiglioli et al. 2007). Quantity of coverage of the topic by five major Australian newspapers more than tripled between 2000 and 2006. In 2000, there were 132 articles which mentioned overweight or obesity in the headline or first paragraph; in

2003 there were 296. Coverage peaked in 2006 with 439, but 2012 still produced double the quantity of news compared with 2000 (Bonfiglioli 2014). This increased quantity of coverage means that obesity is likely to have been perceived as a crucial topic in the public mind (McCombs and Valenzuela 2007).

In Australian government-funded research (ARCDP1096251), a UTS-led project used a data set of health-related television news and current affairs developed by the University of Sydney's Australian Health News Research Collaboration (Chapman and MacKenzie 2007) to generate a sample of 205 news items about overweight and obesity. These news items were broadcast by five Australian free-to-air channels in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 (ABC, SBS, Seven, Nine, Ten) with 57 items broadcast in 2008, 54 in 2009, 52 in 2010 and 42 in 2011. A content analysis of the items examined news angles, causes, solutions, framing of responsibility for overweight and obesity, gender, age and sources. The following section presents the news angles analysis conducted in order to establish what makes overweight and obesity newsworthy.

From 2008 to 2011, the most frequently used news angle was solutions to overweight and obesity (56/205 = 27.3 per cent), followed by the size of the problem (26/205 = 12.7 per cent), causes of overweight and obesity (24/205 = 12 per cent) and health effects (16/205 = 8 per cent) (table 4.1). Solutions angles included systemic approaches, such as 'American Companies Paying Employees to Eat Healthy' (Ten, 2 January 2008) and 'Proposal for Tax on Sweet Foods as a Means to Fight Obesity' (SBS, 13 March 2009). However, the focus on individuals continued with, for example, 'Michelle Obama Launches Anti-Obesity Campaign' in which Mrs Obama reportedly 'encourages children to eat better and exercise more' (ABC, 10 February 2010). Items leading on the size of the 'problem' of obesity included the SBS report (3 January 2008) 'Rising Occurrence of Obesity Especially in America', and 'epidemic' angles such as Nine network's item (22 September 2009) headlined 'CSIRO Kids Diet' which alludes to how 'Childhood obesity is an epidemic sweeping Australia and most of the western world'. Some linked the size of the problem to risk: such as the Ten network (9 April 2010) item headlined: 'Obesity Now Resulting in More Deaths than Smoking in Australia'. The 24 items which led on causes included medical triggers such as the 'greedy' gene: 'Scientists Identify "Greedy" Gene in Obese Children', which reports on a gene linked to knowing when you are full (Nine, 29 July 2008). Others focused on parental, industry, and individual behaviours, such as Ten network's item 'Children Bribed by Parents to Overeat' (9 March 2008).

Table 4.1 Television news angles: Categories of news angles with examples, television source, date, and frequency

Type of news angle	Example of news angle	Number	Per cent
Size of the problem	Obesity now kills more people than smoking (Ten, 9 April 2010)	26	12.7
Causes	School canteens found to be serving unhealthy food rather than leading the fight against obesity (Nine, 17 August 2009)	24	12
Solutions	Pacemaker-like device tells brain that we are full (Seven, 6 February 2008)	56	27
Failed solutions	Childhood obesity prevention programmes are not working and the benefits are outweighed by the costs (ABC, 26 October 2010)	6	3
Health effects of overweight/obesity	Obesity causes diabetes (ABC, 15 August 2010)	16	8
Denial	Teenagers just won't be told. Not heeding health messages to eat well and get regular exercise (ABC, 9 February 2011)	3	1.5
Regulation	Call for ban of junk food advertising on children's websites (Ten, 17 April 2008)	13	6
Discrimination	Proposal to fine overweight patients to rein in health care costs (SBS, 2 April 2011)	2	1
Backlash – questioning the importance of obesity	A child's weight is not a reliable indicator of overall health (ABC, 13 October 2011)	4	2
Other	N/A	55	27
Total		205	100

Note: News angles found in 205 television news items broadcast by five Australian television stations between 2008 and 2011.

Health risk angles (n=16) linked obesity to liver disease – 'Obesity Causing More Liver Disease than Alcohol' (SBS, 4 January 2008), heart disease – 'Extremely Obese Man Dies from Heart Failure' (SBS, 9 October 2008), cancer – 'Diet and Obesity Contributing Cause of

Cancer' (Seven, 21 June 2009), infertility – 'Overweight and Obesity Affecting Men's Chances of Fathering Children' (ABC, 25 August 2009) and diabetes – 'Link Between Diabetes and Obesity' (ABC, 15 August 2010). News stories focusing on regulation (n=13) offer evidence that the systemic approaches needed to support individuals can be newsworthy. Examples of this include: 'Call for Ban of Junk Food on Children's Websites' (Ten, 17 April 2008), 'QLD Fast Food Chains to Display Nutritional Information About Food' (Ten, 5 December 2011). Significant items reported stigmatising regulatory approaches such as 'Japan Introduces Penalties for Being Overweight' (Ten, 10 June 2008) and anti-regulation stories such as 'Vegemite Could be Victim of Health Initiatives' (Nine, 8 January 2009), a story which warns that food guidelines might label the iconic Australian spread Vegemite as unhealthy.

Failed solutions angles were rare (n=6), but important because they provided a counter narrative to assumptions that weight loss is simple and easy, for example: 'Healthy Food Too Expensive for Many' (ABC, 18 February 2008). Only three news items had 'denial' news angles, including 'Australians More Overweight Than We Admit' (Ten, 14 September 2011; ABC, 14 September 2011). Discrimination against obese people was rarely considered to be news with just two items: 'Obesity Linked to Postcode' (Nine, 19 August 2010) which associates poverty with obesity, and 'Fat Tax Proposed for in Arizona' (SBS, 2 April 2011). News items leading on challenges to the idea that obesity is an important and widespread health risk were also rare (n=4); for example, three reported an academic saying that the childhood obesity 'epidemic' may be a myth ('Childhood Obesity Epidemic a Myth?': Nine, 31 May 2008; Ten, 31 May 2008; ABC, 31 May 2008).

The appearance of regulation as a news angle is significant because regulation focuses on systemic changes rather than individual behaviour. Regulation was the fifth most common news angle, although with only 6.3 per cent (13/205) of the items. Regulation rose from 3.5 per cent in 2008 to 14.8 per cent in 2009 but then fell to only 1.9 per cent in 2010 and 4.7 per cent in 2011. Societal level interventions such as creating parks, putting schools within walking distance of homes (SBS World News Australia, 28 July 2009), governments providing more exercise facilities, making fruit and vegetables more affordable (SBS World News Australia, 9 February 2011) and improving public transport (Ten News, 10 November 2009) are newsworthy enough to make the television news but not common enough to dominate the sample in any

year. This supports the argument that the dominant discourse frames obesity as an individual responsibility. Given that obesity is presented as a health problem, it was surprising to see relatively few items (16/205) focused on the health impacts: just three of 57 items in 2008 (5.3 per cent), four of 54 items in 2009 (7.4 per cent), six of 52 in 2010 (11.5 per cent) and three of 42 in 2011 (7 per cent).

Several news angles identified in the ARC project's analyses of newspaper coverage were found to be rare or missing from the TV coverage. Angles rarely found in TV news included: failed solutions; for example, the ABC TV report (26 October 2010) about unsuccessful childhood obesity prevention programmes (6/205 = 2.9 per cent), backlash against obesity being a problem of epidemic proportions (4/205 = 2 per cent), denial of obesity (3/205 = 1.5 per cent) and discrimination against people of size (2/205 = 1 per cent). Discrimination and stigma have been a major issue for people of size for decades, but only two news items of the 205 analysed had news angles focusing on the problem of obesity-related discrimination. This supports the argument that obesity is being reported for the non-obese, for whom fat stigma is not a problem. However, aspects of obesity including the 'size of the problem', 'causes' and 'solutions' may satisfy a greater number of news values than discrimination, thus increasing the chance they will be the selected news angle, and fat rights movements may be less well developed or less media-savvy in Australia than in the USA or the UK. Research demonstrates the widespread denial by overweight people that they have a weight problem (Donath 2000; Jeffery et al. 2005; Pfizer Australia 2005; Bennett et al. 2006; Coulson et al. 2006), but only three news items led on this angle. Other angles found in newspapers but not in this television sample included: something (i.e. chocolate) being ruled out as a cause of obesity, people of size denied access to treatment for their overweight, the environmental impact of obesity and obesity as a plague. About one-quarter of the sample had other types of news angles (55/295 = 26.8 per cent). The fact that not one news item led on the angle that people of size have remarkably limited access to specialist clinics or on the 'indefensibly' long waiting lists for bariatric surgery in public hospitals (Leung and Funder 2013: 29) may support the hypothesis that editorial teams generally do not report obesity from the point of view of obese people. Another explanation for the lack of news interest in the paucity of public obesity clinics might be low levels of activism by obese people to draw attention to how they are being denied access to medical services.

Framing and blaming

To analyse how overweight and obesity are being framed in television news we coded each item for overt attributions of responsibility for causing obesity. Of the 205 news items broadcast by five Australian television channels between 2008 and 2011, 140 made no overt attribution of responsibility (68 per cent). In the remaining 65 items, a total of 77 attributions of responsibility were detected, as set out in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2   Responsibility framing categories and frequency

Framing category	Example of category	Number	Per cent
Individual	When you are irresponsible about eating you get fat (Nine, 23 March 2010)	30	39
Parents	Under the proposal child protection agencies would be called in when parents repeatedly failed to control their child's weight. (Nine, 2 February 2009)	10	13
Government	Governments need to show leadership (SBS, 17 June 2009)	5	6.5
Society	We have to stop living in a society that encourages people to become overweight and obese (SBS, 26 June 2011)	3	3.8
Industry	With a quarter of our children either overweight or obese the finger is being pointed at junk food advertising (Nine, 5 December 2010).	16	20.8
Schools	Instead of leading the fight against child obesity, many school canteens have given up on healthy menus, in favour of chocolate bars and meat pies (Nine, 17 August 2009)	1	1.3
Other	British researchers have identified a so-called greedy gene, and children who carry it find it harder to tell when they are full (Nine, 29 July 2008)	12	15.6
Total		77	100

Responsibility for causing obesity was most frequently attributed to individuals (30 out of 77 attributions) with direct references to self-inflicted weight, disease and death: 'Australians have officially super-sized themselves', Nine reporting an item headlined 'Australia Becomes the "Fattest" Country' (19 June 2008) and 'Australians are eating them-selves to death' ('Obesity Now Resulting in More Deaths Than Smoking in Australia': Ten, 9 April 2010). The neo-liberal term 'lifestyle' is used to blame individuals in 'High Rates of Overweight and Obesity Linked to Lower Income Areas in Sydney' thus: 'Every day doctors and nurses see the result of bad lifestyle decisions' (Nine, 28 January 2008). The term 'couch potato' is used to blame individuals; for example, the refer-ence to 'the growing number of couch potatoes' in the item headlined 'Health Report Shows Australian Children Not Eating Appropriately' (ABC, 17 June 2009).

Industry is held responsible in 16 of the 77 attributions, with parents blaming food manufacturers for increasing children's 'pester power' in their demands for high-fat, high-sugar snacks ('Targeting Children to Prevent Obesity/Junk Food Ads'; Ten, 8 October 2008) and 'fast food giants' seen as 'preying' on vulnerable people in the report 'Fast Food Chains More Prevalent in "Overweight" Areas' (Ten, 8 July 2009). The 'finger' is also 'pointed at junk food advertising' in Nine's item 'Fast Food Marketing Campaign Targets Young Children' (Nine, 5 December 2010).

Parents were held responsible in ten of the 77 attributions, with reports that parents' fears and habits may affect their children ('Link Between Overweight Mothers and Obese Children – Study': Nine, 20 October 2008), that childhood obesity might be considered child abuse ('Childhood Obesity = Child Abuse?': Nine, 2 February 2009), and that parents control their children's eating and activity: as one mother told Nine news 'If mummy's eating junk food, they're going to eat junk food' ('Changes to Healthy Eating Food Guidelines': Nine, 14 December 2011).

Government was rarely held responsible for causing obesity (n=5), with the main focus on making sure healthy food policies were delivered in schools, for example in a Ten news item headlined 'School Canteens Health Policies' the Healthy Kids Association 'blames the Education Department for allowing these products to sneak back into canteens despite its fresh food policy' (Ten, 18 May 2011). Only three attributions focused on society, with two using 'us' language, for example, '*We* face a medical and moral imperative to rescue our children's health' ('Michelle Obama Launches Anti-Obesity Campaign': ABC, 10 February 2010; my italics), one highlighting society's influence: '*We* have to stop living in a

society that encourages people to become overweight and obese' ('Diabetes Costs to Increase': SBS, 26 June 2011; my italics). Only one item directly blamed schools, identifying them as failing in their leadership role by giving up on healthy menus ('Unhealthy Food Being Served at School Canteens': Nine, 17 August 2009).

Explanations for the high frequency of items not ascribing blame could include that television news items are often very short, leaving little time to include an overt accusation that a particular entity is to blame for obesity, that attribution of blame to the obese individual is taken for granted and thus need not be mentioned, or that editorial teams may be actively refraining from blaming individuals, government or industry so as to avoid provoking government or industry or stigmatising people of size. The fact that almost two-fifths of the attributions cast blame on individuals, with a further 13 per cent blaming parents (together 52 per cent), seems to support the argument that the dominant discourse is one of individual responsibility. Government is rarely blamed (only 6.5 per cent of attributions), which indicates the success of the powerful anti-nanny-state discourses circulating in health discussions; for example, systemic obesity solutions are met by 'noisy debates over the "nanny state's" right to tell Americans what they should eat' (Greenhalgh 2012: 472).

Frames suggesting solutions

The University of Sydney analysis of 50 obesity-related television news and current affairs items detected 256 proposed solutions (Bonfiglioli et al. 2007). One in five of these focused on having a healthier or special diet. Two-thirds of the diet-focused solutions made no mention of the need for physical activity. Only 6 per cent of solutions advised reduction in calorific drinks, 5.5 per cent focused on eating less overall and 1.5 per cent advised smaller portion sizes (Bonfiglioli et al. 2007). Just 15 per cent of solutions focused on increasing exercise and more than half of these were linked to diet changes. Addressing inactivity such as television watching made up less than 2 per cent of the solutions (Bonfiglioli et al. 2007). Less than 10 per cent focused on medical and surgical solutions. Few solutions focused on addressing the obesogenic environment: less than 6 per cent called for curbs on marketing high-fat, high-sugar foods to children; 4 per cent focused on education; 2 per cent on government action; 2 per cent on better food at school; and urban design, social responses, food labelling, fitness testing and making living environments healthier made up less than 1 per cent of solutions each.

Analysis of television coverage of physical activity has found the health risks of inactivity were relatively neglected while responsibility attributions were mostly to individuals and parents (Bonfiglioli et al. 2011).

Images of overweight and obesity in television

In 2007, growing concerns about the depiction of obese people with their heads cropped out of the picture crystallised into several publications: Charlotte Cooper's online essay (Cooper 2007), a NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity paper discussing television news (Bonfiglioli et al. 2007), a public health newsletter article (Bonfiglioli 2007a) and Stern's online essay (Stern 2007). 'Headless fatties' have become a cliché of news reporting (Brooker undated). The above authors raised concerns that such depictions of overweight and obesity served to demonise, depersonalise, objectify and thus stigmatise people of size. In our 2007 study we noted that neck-down depictions of very obese people were used routinely as 'wallpaper' in television news and current affairs items about weight (Bonfiglioli et al. 2007). Professional reasons for this practice are discussed below. This routine use of very obese bodies also raised the concern that the 'problems' of overweight and obesity were being framed as belonging only to morbidly obese people, thus allowing people who were mildly obese or merely overweight to distance themselves from the 'problem' of obesity and absolve themselves of the need to respond to the warnings in the media. Semiotically, these visual beheadings of people of size instantly deny those depicted the opportunity to 'meet' the gaze of the television viewer, thus presenting them as objects and not as people like 'us' (van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001; Hall 2003; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Recent research has investigated the extent to which 'eye contact' is possible between overweight and/or obese people in 25 items of Australian news media and in an episode of the reality show *The Biggest Loser Australia* (Bonfiglioli et al. 2010).

In a project funded by a UTS Early Career Researcher Grant, Mills and Bonfiglioli identified 273 shots of people (the unit of analysis was the depiction of a person, a 'shot') in news items. Of these, only 44 shots showed people without their heads. However, people of size were more likely to be shown without their head than others. The majority of shots (155) were of healthy weight people and of these only four were headless (2.6 per cent). Among the 24 shots of overweight people, one was headless (4 per cent). By contrast 33 of the 67 (49 per cent) shots of obese people excluded the head and six of the 27 (22 per cent) shots of

morbidly obese people showed no head.[1] In the 786 shots of people in one episode of *The Biggest Loser* only two showed people without their heads. The results confirmed our hypothesis that overweight and obesity were most often represented by obese people rather than the merely overweight, but the people of size used to illustrate the problem were more likely to be obese than morbidly obese.

Journalists have pointed out that obscuring the heads is done for legal reasons. For example, as Newman (Chapter 9, this volume) explains in her interview, photographers and news organisations also routinely visually decapitate smokers and children: this is done to respect the privacy of the individual and avoid the problem of obtaining permission to film. 'If you're filming people without their permission like walking down the street, you can't show their faces. So you might just focus on their bottoms to show they're fat. So actually there is a legal reason' (Newman). Similarly Piazza (Chapter 6, this volume) notes that revelling travellers are subjected to 'visual fragmentation' in photos which exclude their heads: 'Such technique depersonalises and objectifies the body of the visualised subject.'

However justifiable, online discussions make it clear that such a practice is perceived by people of size as stigmatising and humiliating (Cooper 2007). The contribution to stigma, discrimination, denial and weight gain of problematic media representations may be partly addressed by choosing non-stigmatising images such as those available at the UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity gallery (www.yaleruddcenter.org/press/image_gallery.aspx).

The negative portrayals of large people have been shown to drive higher food intake among people of size (Schvey et al. 2011) while stereotyped news images increase negative attitudes towards obese people (McClure et al. 2011). Deep-seated cultural norms of blaming people of size for their weight help to drive widespread and damaging weight stigma and discrimination which starts early in life, is found even among health professionals and may lead to further weight gain (Puhl and Heuer 2010; Brewis 2014). By 'othering' people of size and using obese and morbidly obese bodies to stand for the wider problem of overweight, these visual framings may allow overweight viewers to distance themselves from these images by saying: 'That's not me'. Common sense understandings of weight may not be politically driven at all, but I would argue that the wider public's concepts of what *size* overweight and obesity actually are vary dramatically from medical understandings of these categories (see, for example, Jeffery et al. 2005, who demonstrate that parents routinely fail to recognise obesity in their children)

and have been shaped by the routine use of obese and morbidly obese bodies to illustrate television items about weight (Bonfiglioli et al. 2010). The identified health risks and costs to the community of obesity can be pinned on the visibly obese and ignored by the wider community, who wrongly assess themselves to be of 'normal' size because they don't look like those obese people on television.

Discussion

News media content reflects and reinforces the dominant discourse of individual responsibility and blame for obesity. Routine use of 'faceless fatties' (Bonfiglioli 2007a; Cooper 2007; McClure et al. 2011) prevents 'eye contact' with viewers and thus dehumanises people of size as 'other' (van Leeuwen 2008; Pearl et al. 2012; Puhl et al. 2013), encouraging viewers to view very large people as a source of disease and health care costs. Framing obesity as largely the responsibility of individuals and parents undermines public support for community and structural interventions and may contribute to discrimination and stigma, while framing obesity as mainly a problem of over-eating neglects the role of sedentary behaviours and calorific drinks. Townend (2009) finds that Australian newspaper articles and politicians position obese people as sinners who are in control of and therefore responsible for their size and for losing weight. Such moralising erroneously ignores the many drivers of obesity which are beyond individual control (such as the impact of poverty on food options), diverts attention from structural and preventive interventions, dispirits people of size and may cause them harm (Townend 2009; Brewis 2014). News which frames obesity as a financial and social burden on society and the relative lack of coverage of environmental drivers may fuel discrimination, while the weight-loss 'success' stories (Bonfiglioli et al. 2007) make it hard for people to understand why obese people don't simply eat less and move more.

Routinely illustrating the problem of weight with obese or morbidly obese bodies, thereby tending to exclude merely overweight bodies, allows overweight and mildly obese viewers to compare their body favourably with what we 'know' from television and newspapers to be 'obese'. These depictions are arguably contributing to the epidemic of denial (Donath 2000; Jeffery et al. 2005; Pfizer Australia 2005; Bennett et al. 2006; Coulson et al. 2006). The public is well aware that obesity is a problem but many don't see it as their own – routinely misclassifying their own weight and their children's weight, and saying they are not obese or even overweight (Donath 2000; Wake et al. 2002).

Conclusions

Although the complex web of drivers of obesity which are beyond individual control (such as food deserts, urban planning, car dependency, working conditions, food and drink advertising and formulation) are increasingly understood by public health professionals (Dixon and Broom 2007), analyses of news media coverage find that individuals are widely held to be personally responsible (Lawrence 2004; Bonfiglioli et al. 2007; Atanasova et al. 2012; De Brún et al. 2012). There are ideological barriers to thinking of overweight as a problem caused by systemic drivers requiring interventions at a societal level. Neo-liberal values of personal responsibility underpin framing overweight and obesity as an individual problem, so much so that it is 'common sense' that the solution is for individuals to eat less and move more. Neo-liberal discourses of freedom and choice are coined from the same die as the normalizing of self-care (Howell and Ingham 2001) and are designed to foster individuals' 'active participation in self-governance [...] keeping the state at bay' (Warin 2011: 34). Recent obesity coverage shows how 'crisis' branding can increase the coverage of a chronic health problem, but this coverage still neglects what Iyengar (1991) calls 'thematic' aspects of obesity – the chronic, long-term, hard-to-change systemic causes and solutions to the problem of unhealthy weight. Reporting appears to have failed to curb the epidemic of denial, perhaps because people who are overweight or mildly obese simply do not 'see' themselves in the news.

While the Australian television data presented here suggest television news blames industry in one-fifth of the 77 attributions of responsibility, government is only found responsible in 3 per cent of the attributions (e.g. by failing to regulate food, beverage and advertising industries). Even when there is greater coverage of structural or environmental causes of obesity, when it comes to solutions the focus returns to the individual (Lawrence 2004). With two-thirds of Western populations either overweight or obese, we can tell that solutions which have focused mostly on educating people to 'eat less, move more' do not work. Despite this, many structural interventions – for example, soda taxes, curbs on supersized soft drinks, effective health-enhancing food labelling such as 'traffic light' labels, advertising restrictions (Phongsavan et al. 2012) – are fiercely opposed by the food and drink industry, which uses tactics reminiscent of the tobacco industry's many well-funded attacks on tobacco control to fight such changes (Oreskes 2010; Chaloupka 2011).

This focus on media should not be taken as an invitation to chastise the news media. Media content is generated by a complex dance between sources/newsmakers and journalists (Carlson 2009). Public health practitioners, policymakers, industry and employers are all involved in the generation of these discourses, and have a responsibility to engage with media (Smith and Bonfiglioli 2014) to contribute to an evidence-based public discussion of the powerful obesogenic forces beyond individual control, the challenges of sustained weight loss, the damaging discrimination, the paucity of medical support and the responsibility of governments, industry and employers to do more to support people trying to live healthier lives.

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Note

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5
Television, Collective Memory and the Commemoration Cure

Nuria Lorenzo-Dus

Introduction

This chapter examines commemoration in television factual programming (news and documentaries) with a view to teasing out its discursive realisations and demonstrating through four interrelated case studies the potential cross-cultural valence of such discourse realisations. Commemoration is a widely used term which broadly refers to 'the practices and artefacts [...] that social groups mobilise to represent the past to them and others' (Conway 2010: 444). In its social group dimension, commemoration is closely linked to a central notion in the interdisciplinary field of Memory Studies, namely that of collective memory. This term was introduced by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1925/1992, 1950/1980) in the 1920s.[1] For Halbwachs all individual memory is necessarily constructed within social institutions and structures, that is, memory depends upon the 'cadre' within which specific social groups are situated.

The term 'collective memory' has been subsequently applied – and critiqued – across disciplines as varied as music (Sheffi 2004), politics (Rahman 2010) and discourse analysis (Tilega 2008), to name but a few. Importantly, and as pointed out by Gavriely-Nuri (2014: 47), the rich scholarship into collective memory spawned by Halbwachs' initial work has progressively 'lost awareness of the concept's metaphorical character', coming to 'perceive the concept as expressing a concrete reality'. This reification of collective memory is itself a '*discursive device*, a device adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim [...] It creates the illusion of an ostensibly consolidated and unified "collective", adhering to a coherent repertoire of memories' (2014: 47, original emphasis). Yet, recollecting the past – as individuals

or as groups – is far from a simple act of retrieving uniform, consolidated information. It is rather an agentive, negotiated process, whereby we 'place a part of the past in the service of conceptions and needs of the present' (Schwartz 1982: 374, see Halbwachs' (1925/1992) 'presentist' approach to collective memory). In doing so, multiple, ongoing recollections emerge, as a result of complex relations with the various social, cultural and individual practices invoked in remembering (Brown and Reavey 2014). If collective memory is dependent upon the cadre within which it is forged, its examination within the institutional context of television – the aim of this chapter – needs to be mindful of the particular set of features that characterise that context at a particular point in time. In order to do so, however, we must firstly justify selecting television as the institutional structure under examination.

Television, collective memory and commemoration

There are three principal reasons for focusing on television, and specifically on television news and documentaries, when interrogating contemporary discourse practices of collective memory.

First, there is the sheer salience of media memory across many societies. We are said – in the West at least – to have been experiencing for the past century consecutive memory booms, particularly as regards commemoration of triumphs and tragedies of the 20th century. The historian James Winter (2006) refers to the existence of two 'memory booms': the first one from the 1890s to the 1920s, and the second one from the 1960s/1970s to the present day. The first revolved around the memorialisation of the victims of the First World War and, according to Winter, played a chief part in the construction of national identities. The second, which started with remembrances of the Second World War and the Holocaust and was further enabled by the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe, was characterised by constant revisiting of 20th-century wars and catastrophes. This second memory boom was also afforded by the possibility, through satellite television, of broadcasting marked anniversary and memorial events live and simultaneously across distant geographical locations. Oral testimony by witnesses, survivors and other social actors connected to the events being memorialised became a main feature of television's collective memory, specifically commemoration discourses during the second memory boom – a feature that has endured.

Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2010) claim the existence of a third memory boom, which challenges – rather than replaces – the ongoing second

memory boom. Unlike the latter, this third memory boom is not formed upon a sense of obligation to remember the past. Instead, it is 'characterised by the immediate, perhaps hasty, marking and memorialising […] of ongoing warfare and those [wars] with a "long tail" (as with Iraq)' (2010: 131). The third memory boom is enabled to a considerable extent by the connectivity of digital media, and has further increased the number of mediated commemorative practices to which we are exposed. In some cases, such as commemoration of the 9/11 attacks, this has led to a sense of memory fatigue. So, in Western societies at least, we are said to be 'obsessed with memory' (Huyssen 2000), and this mounting 'memorial mania' (Doss 2010) or 'fervour of commemoration' (Misztal 2003) is at the heart of increasingly crowded 'commemorative calendars', to the point that plans to commemorate are sometimes made as events are still ongoing (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010).

A second, related reason for focusing on commemoration on television concerns extant knowledge. Scholarship into collective memory and (media) commemoration has proliferated in the social sciences as a consequence of the recent memory booms.[2] Yet, the role of television as a medium in and through which particular ideologies of remembering/forgetting are both reflected and constructed remains comparatively under-explored.[3] This is surprising given not only the medium's key role in the emergence of the second memory boom, as noted above, but also its influence in the construction of cultural memories (MacDonald 2006). Memory scholars have increasingly pointed to the media's ability to provide representations of the past that can act as influential sources of knowledge and attitudes towards it (Kansteiner 2002; Edy 2006). Much of this applies to the television medium and its ability to mix and match the past and present and to draw upon 'media templates' (Kitzinger 2000) that integrate images, music, video, phrases, peoples, places and events and, in doing so, effectively offer guided interpretations of unfolding events and their subsequent memorialisation.[4]

The third reason to examine discourse practices of collective memory on television is the very nature of remembering. Remembering is not only socially constituted/constituting but, above all, communicatively accomplished (Middleton and Edwards 1990; Wertsch 2002; Middleton and Brown 2005; Reavey and Brown 2006). That being the case, discourse analysis is uniquely positioned to yield nuanced characterisations of how memories are formulated within social interaction and the structure of negotiated accounts of past events. Yet within work that focuses on commemoration on television, that which approaches commemoration/remembering as discourse practices is particularly scarce.

Methodology

Data

The reference corpus consists of approximately 50 hours of video-recorded footage from television news and documentaries regarding commemoration of traumatic events across time and geographical/cultural space. This corpus has been gathered over ten years within the auspices of two large, interdisciplinary and international research projects as well as part of my own research interests.[5] The analytic corpus on which this study is based is schematically presented in Table 5.1.

Although the commemorations selected for analysis vary in terms of their actual triggering event (a public transport accident, a genocide, a national terrorist attack and a cross-Atlantic war), they are all instances of events producing what is known as 'cultural traumas'. Cultural trauma research (Alexander 2004) is premised on the belief that events are not traumatic per se. Instead, they are assigned a traumatic meaning when they significantly shake a group's collective identity. Yet, the potential for events to become cultural traumas is heightened by factors such as their sudden, radical, shocking, repulsive or exogenously imposed nature. This makes revolutions, mass murders, genocides, wars (especially lost wars) and terrorist acts likely triggers of cultural trauma (Sztompka 2000).

The four data sets used in this study also vary in terms of time and space – two crucial factors in (collective) memory research. With regard to the former, the data sets capture early (first-year anniversary), mid-term (fifth – tenth-year anniversary) and distant (25th-year anniversary) commemorations. These may play a part in the discourse strategies through which ideologies of remembering and forgetting are realised. As for space, the data sets encompass a variety of institutional (different television channels across four countries) and geographical (the UK, Rwanda, the US, Argentina, the Falklands Islands, Spain) places, and these, too, are likely to shape discursive realisations.

Data set variation results from a conscious decision made in relation to, especially, the second aim of this chapter, namely to begin to explore the cross-cultural valence of discourse realisations of commemoration on factual television. An objective within this aim is to ascertain whether the general claim, noted in the Introduction, that the West is obsessed with memory and commemoration also extends to non-Western/non-English-speaking television news media.

Table 5.1 Commemoration discourse on television – An analytic corpus

Event being commemorated	Media context of commemoration	Data sets
2005 London bombings	Television news (live coverage of official commemorations across the country) and documentaries, all broadcast between 7 and 11 July 2006 (1st anniversary).	Commemorative Event [CE] corpus: Six hours of footage sampled from five television channels in the UK: BBC1, ITV1, Channel 4, Five, Sky News.
		Also collected and used for comparative purposes as relevant: Bombing Event [BE] corpus: footage of breaking news of the 2005 London bombings (six hours from same channels and programme types as CE).
End of the Falklands War (1982)	Television news (live coverage of official commemorations) and documentaries, all broadcast between 14 and 18 June 2007 (25th anniversary).	Four hours of footage sampled from the BBC and Canal 9 (Argentinian television).
End of the Rwanda genocide (1994)	Television news, live coverage of official commemoration, broadcast on 7 April 2004 (10th anniversary).	Two hours of footage sampled from CNN news.
Major underground train accident in Spain (2006)	Television news and news affairs show, broadcast between April 28 and 3 May 2013 (7th anniversary).[6]	Two hours of footage sampled from state-owned (La Primera) and private (La Sexta) Spanish television channels.

Procedure and framework

The video files that comprise the analytic corpus for this study were first transcribed and then coded with the assistance of the qualitative research software NVivo10. Transcription entailed noting verbal, sonic, textual and visual features of the video files (see Appendix 1 for the transcription key used). The added value that multimodal transcription

brings to the study of television discourse is widely acknowledged (see Lorenzo-Dus [2009] for a detailed discussion). In the context of memory research, the part played by modes of communication other than the spoken or written word has only recently been noted (Bietti et al. 2014). As Brown and Reavey (2014: 328) argue, one of the main accomplishments of the field of memory studies, albeit a late one, is the recognition of 'the enormous significance of the forms and modalities through which remembering is conducted'. Remembering is something that speakers perform interactionally within real-world activities (Brown et al. 2001) and their performances are physically embodied (Middleton and Brown 2005). That being the case, being able to record features of the multimodal nature of collective remembering is crucial. Cienki et al.'s (2014: 366) work on multimodal alignment during collaborative remembering, for instance, reveals that co-speech gesture, postural sway and eye gaze perform different interactional dynamics, and that 'a substantial part of the joint activity of collective remembering in small groups takes place outside the verbal domain'. In the case of television-enabled remembering and commemorating, and in addition to human (non-)verbal communication, noting camera work, choice of background music and other technical and stylistic strategies of the television medium thus becomes essential.

It derives from the procedures just described that the analysis of my data sets is informed by multimodality – a critical semiotic approach to the study of discourse (see Kress 2010, amongst many others). Within media discourse – and specifically television – a critical approach means 'acknowledging the artificial quality of the categories concerned' rather than engaging in 'intolerant fault-finding' (Fowler 1981: 25) and working within a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Scannell 1998). It means to understand and explain commemorative news (and documentaries) by conducting a thorough analysis of their multimodal properties. As Montgomery (2007: 21) puts it, '[c]riticism of the news is best conducted on adequate description of its discourse in which the full range of its communicative practice is captured'.

The discourse of commemoration on television

Four often co-occurring discourse trends emerged from the analysis of the corpus; some were supported across the data sets; others exhibited different degrees of variation. In the remainder of this chapter, these are individually presented and discussed for clarity of presentation.

The presentness of collective memory and commemoration

Commemorative factual programming is firmly anchored in the present, that is, in the commemorative events that trigger collective remembering. This was a trend across three of the four data sets: the London bombings, the Falklands War and the Rwanda genocide. As for the underground train accident data set, the denouncement ethos of the news affairs show upon which subsequent news reports were largely based accounted for an emphasis on the past (the actual accident and the deficiencies of the subsequent political inquiry) over the present (the commemorative acts being held).[7]

Focusing on the present was particularly explicit in relation to the data set that covered the most recent anniversary: the first annual commemoration of the 2005 London bombings. A contrastive analysis of the themes invoked in news features of the first anniversary of the bombings (the [CE] corpus) vis-à-vis those invoked in the breaking news of the bombings (the [BE] corpus) revealed that 66 per cent of all [CE] themes were not [BE] themes, that is to say, they were new, emergent themes. As for themes already invoked in the [BE] corpus, these were either maintained (4 per cent) or reconfigured (30 per cent), that is, adapted to the requirements of the commemorative news feature. Reconfiguration meant that [BE] themes were either emphasised (9 per cent) or de-emphasised (91 per cent).

Lorenzo-Dus and Bryan (2011b) argue that such de-emphasising of aspects of an event upon recollecting it constitutes a moderate version of one of Connerton's (2008) seven forms of forgetting, namely 'forgetting as annulment'. This describes those situated remembering practices whereby a surfeit of information is believed to be more adequately dealt with by discarding its less crucial elements. For any context of collective remembering but especially for those that, as in the case of the data sets, are performed within media institutions, this begs two related questions: (i) what criteria are adopted in deciding what counts as less crucial information? and (ii) who makes the decisions regarding (i)?

The answer to (ii) lies primarily within what Cotter (2010: 15–29) refers to as the contextual (local and professional) and structural (news gathering and assembling) order constraints of journalism. These are in turn influenced by – and influence – interactional constraints, that is, how practitioners and a community of readers/listeners/viewers relate to one another. More important than who – as it is impossible to identify one single individual within these communities of practitioners – are the actual criteria by which decisions may be made. In the

context of commemorative news stories of events that are still felt to be very 'fresh' in audiences' and professionals' consciousness given their recentness and cultural trauma potential, the priority appears to be the journalistic need to construct discursively the news values (Bednarek and Caple 2012) of immediacy and novelty through commemoration. Indeed, the sheer proportion of emergent themes within the [CE] corpus (66 per cent of all) corroborates this. Thus, for instance, the theme of 'emotion' was not just reused in the [CE] data but adapted (reconfigured), and specifically emphasised, from feelings towards the witnessed horror ([BE] data) to feelings towards the reasons for the horror, living with its aftermath and so forth ([CE1] data).

Aestheticising memory and commemoration

While firmly situated within factual programming, which is broadly characterised by a 'discourse of sobriety' (Nichols 2001)[8], the news and documentary texts in my analytic corpus made use of a number of multimodal strategies that aestheticised both the activity of commemorating and the event being collectively remembered.

Shared aestheticisation discourse strategies across the four data sets included the use of poignant music when showing footage of the culturally traumatic event and/or use of black and white (or sepia) footage. This visual ageing of the culturally traumatic event was used regardless of its chronological distance from the commemorating present, hence obviating the existence of colour television images for the coverage of the breaking news of all the events being remembered.

Two aestheticising strategies were identified as specific to the London bombings and the Rwanda genocide commemorative materials: visual sanitization and use of an 'unpolished look'. Let us consider each of these in turn.

Visually sanitising the past

Television news coverage of the London bombings was marked by the integration of citizen mobile media, principally mobile phone images, to the extent that 7 July 2005 has been dubbed 'the day citizen journalism became a force in British media' (Hudson and Rowlands 2007: 365). Many of these images were taken from close proximity to the bombed bus and Tube carriages. 'Recontextualisations' (Linnell 1998)

of these mobile media files into news reports were often visually sanitised. The mobile media files in the [CE] and the [BE] datasets showed very few casualties (Lorenzo-Dus and Bryan 2011a for a full analysis). Similarly, for the Falklands dataset, the news reports on British television included contemporary and archive verbal commentary about casualties and the issue of death in general, but hardly any visual references to injury or death were provided. Moreover, the British television coverage contained frequent references to the structural damage (more than to the personal/emotional damage) caused by the Falklands War, but even more so to weaponry.[9] This was in marked contrast with the Argentinian news reports, which showed cemeteries and provided explicit verbal descriptions of war casualties as part of emotional testimonies to camera by war veterans and casualties' relatives.

Both data sets support the findings of previous research into mass-mediated witnessing and commemoration on US and British news of cultural traumas, specifically as regards the minimisation and at times avoidance of the embodiment of suffering, both injury and violent death (Mogensen 2008).

Performing 'authenticity' through an 'unpolished' look

Grainy footage of either the traumatic event or its commemoration was also found in the video files from the US and UK commemorative news reports. For example, CNN's coverage of the official commemorations of the tenth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide interspersed live and pre-recorded interviews with Rwandan officials and genocide survivors, amongst other social actors linked to the culturally traumatic event, as shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 comes from CNN's *5–6 News* show. It is part of an extended interview with the former Rwandan ambassador in the US at the time of the genocide. During most of the interview, the television screen was split into two windows, as can be seen in Figure 5.1. The left-hand window provided technically poor images of an interminable succession of coffins being lowered into the ground within the official commemoration ceremony in Rwanda. The right-hand window offered high-quality, polished footage of the studio interview of the former Rwanda ambassador.

The content of the interview was not directly related to the burial ceremony – the former ambassador talked about the situation in Rwanda ten years on from the end of the genocide. The ceremony images were not 'new' either but a continuation of those shown in the course of a

Figure 5.1   Visually combined (polished and unpolished) remembering

live telephone report from an on-location reporter a few minutes earlier. Their low information content may explain their being placed on the left-hand side of the television screen – the left being the visual space where 'old' information is believed to be typically placed in news discourse (Kress 2010). Their newsworthiness therefore emerged from their asserting a classic construct in news discourse (and other forms of factual programming): 'the assertive stance to reality' (Plantiga 1997) and its premise that news 'naturally' records the socio-historical world and, in so doing, connects those watching to those in the socio-historical world (present-time Rwanda) and in the CNN television studio. The strategic combination of images with low (grainy picture resolution and poor lighting) and high (polished studio pictures) technical quality highlighted the untampered with – or at least minimally edited – nature of the event being depicted, which is in turn associated with the idea of naturalness and, hence, authenticity.

This strategic combination of images within a single screen contributed to constructing the news values of immediacy (as images depict 'zero-time' events, that is, simultaneously occurring events) and proximity (as multiple physical locations, including from distant geographical locations, are assembled together for the viewer). It also highlighted the ability of news to bring communities of practitioners and news consumers together – their affective proximity, of 'closeness', which is a key

value in contemporary news (Lorenzo-Dus 2009). Closeness was here constructed by combining the 'unpolished' visual rendition of events – 'a rough, unpretentious look' (Caldwell 1995) – and the technically high-quality visual look that is nowadays easily achievable even when filming outside a news studio.

As a discursive construct, the newsworthiness of this 'unpolished', 'unpretentious' look was also the subject of considerable debate by journalists and news pundits within the London bombings data set (Lorenzo-Dus and Bryan 2011a). Much of this debate centred on the recontextualisation in news reports of low-quality images from citizen mobile media. This debate essentially revolved around weighing their poor sonic and visual quality vis-à-vis the 'realness' and affective 'closeness' that such quality was precisely and uniquely able to convey. Evaluative comments in the commemorative news reports were packaged between citizen mobile media providing unique footage, yet poor quality and hence an inability to convey the horror of the event.

Telling rights and the pluralisation of memory work

As discussed earlier, one of the defining traits of the current memory boom, whether we label it as the second or third, is the rise of testimony as a valued form of remembering. This of course fits television's role as a personal mass medium, with its use of 'for-anyone-as-someone structures', whereby each viewer has to feel that what s/he is seeing and hearing is addressed to him/her directly and individually, even though it is clearly intended for anyone who happens to be tuned in (Scannell 2000). Across my four data sets, oral testimony was widely used. Telling rights (Blum-Kulka 1993) were expectedly allocated to those who had either personally witnessed or otherwise had a personal connection with the traumatic events that were being commemorated. These made for an eclectic group of social actors, including underground train accident and bomb blast survivors and non-injured eyewitnesses, and various kinds of 'ordinary heroes' (emergency service workers, soldiers, war veterans, citizens who helped those in distress, etc.).

Perhaps less expectedly, although consonant with a wider move towards signature journalism, news professionals were also attributed central telling rights within the commemorative event. This was on the basis of not only, in some cases, having witnessed the events and reminiscing about their experiences at the time but also their serving as social conscience prods – as storytellers committed to the moral act of remembering. Within the Spanish train accident data set, for

instance, the presenter of the news show *El Intermedio* urged citizens to bring the accident back from oblivion through a careful script, on- and off-screen, and an active social media presence. This was orchestrated principally through Twitter and sought to mobilise viewers to join street demonstrations to rescue those affected by the accident from their #olvidados (#forgotten) identity, as the illustrative tweets in (1), sent by *El Intermedio* (1a) and its presenter and director Jordi Évole (1b), show.

Extract 1

(1a)　　11:34pm, 28 April 2013

　　　　Salvados official Twitter account

　　　　La próxima concentración de @avm3j será el día 3 en la Plaza de la Virgen de Valencia #el3todosalaplaza #olvidados ow.ly/krL6I

　　　　[The next protest demonstration of @avm3j will be on the 3rd (of May) at the Virgin Square in Valencia #alltothesquareonthe3rd #forgotten ow.ly/krL6I]

(1b)　　11:32pm, 28 April 2013

　　　　Jordi Évole official Twitter account

　　　　Entre estas dos imágenes solo ha pasado 1 mes. Gracias a todos. @avm3j habéis dejado de ser #olvidados. pic.twitter.com/bTc8zH7AA

　　　　[Only 1 month has passed between these two images. Thank you all.@avm3j you're no longer #forgotten. pic.twitter.com/bTc8zH7AA]

Évole took on the role of 'memory entrepreneur' (Jelin 2003). This is a term that designates enterprising social agents whose energy is directed towards ensuring (wider) collective remembering of a cause in which they appear to believe strongly. In the case of signature journalists, this cause may not be entirely subservient to the event being commemorated but can also logically entail constructing their professional identity in institutionally and/or socially desirable ways. Thus, for instance, Évole's #olvidados work – and the news affairs show that propelled it to trending topic at the time – resulted in the memory of the accident being reconstructed, including reopening of the official inquiry. It also drew international recognition of his standing within

the journalistic profession and popular citizen responses to Évole's call for commemoration, as illustrated in (2):

Extract 2

(2a)   10:26, 29 April 2013

[personal account]

@JordiEvole con un programa de tv vas a conseguir más que todo el sistema judicial junto. Enhorabuena!!!

[@JordiEvole you're going to achieve with one tv show more than all the judicial system combined. Congratulations!!!]

(2b)   16:49, 29 April 2013

[personal account]

@JordiEvole gracias por enseñarnos como no olvidar # olvidados nos necesitan.

[@JordiEvole thank you for showing us how not to forget #forgotten need us.]

Television's commemoration cure

The fourth cross-data set trend identified in the corpus concerned an emphasis on justifying the need to commemorate on television and, within this, the salience of a discourse of therapy. I refer to this as 'television's commemoration cure' in clear reference to the concept of talk as therapy or 'talking cure'. This is a concept widely used in psychoanalysis but, importantly for us, subjected to fine-grained analytic procedures within discourse analysis that identify, amongst others, the workings of painful self-disclosure and supportive talk across contexts beyond psychoanalysis, from workplace (Cameron 2000) to talk shows (Shattuc 1997).

   Research into (non-)scholarly evaluations of remembering versus forgetting has shown a tendency to position these terms as, respectively, good and bad – as being able to remember versus failing to remember (Benjamin 2011). Such ideological positioning has been recently challenged by stating individuals' and collectives' desires not to bring traumatic pasts into a discursive present. This was not the case in the corpus for this study – which was expected, as it would run contrary to the very production of the news and documentary programmes under examination. However, what was perhaps less expected was the recurrent and explicit verbalisation of the need to

commemorate – a finding that ties in with the increasing performance of journalists, and the media institutions they represent, as memory entrepreneur roles. Within such verbalisations, two justifications were provided. First, the need to keep others' memories alive, at times alongside the assisting role of commemorating in order to prevent similar events happening in the future. Secondly, and much more frequently, commemorating was justified as a way of coping with trauma. Such construction of commemoration as cure or therapy emerged across the four data sets but in particular in relation to the Falklands War (Argentinian subset) and the London bombings [CE] materials.

At this point it is useful to refer back to the discussion of themes that were either emphasised (9 per cent of all reconfigured themes) or newly emerged (66 per cent of all themes) in the [CE] corpus when compared with the [BE] coverage. Four themes were emphasised as they entered commemorative news, namely: use of iconic images of the blasts, the idea of terrorists as 'home grown', the response by the emergency services after the attacks and the notion of trauma. Trauma had already featured prominently in the [BE] corpus and it experienced the clearest – and the only statistically significant increase in the [CE] data set. In addition, three of the four themes that made the 66 per cent of emergent themes in the [CE] data set were concerned with the effects of the attacks and, specifically, with coping with such effects, notably with trauma. Coping with trauma was explicitly constructed as overcoming traumatic effects through individuals' own agency and, importantly, a news-enabled commemoration cure. Extract 3 provides an illustrative example of how this was achieved.

It is part of an extended news report broadcast on Sky News on 7 July 2006. Before it, in voice-over, the reporter has explained that a young female (Miriam) was killed during the 7 July 2005 London bus bombing. The reporter has also explained that Sky News had managed to arrange a meeting between Miriam's sister (Esther) and Marty and Mary-Lou, the siblings of another young female (Roseanne) who died in the terrorist attacks that took place in the US on 11 September 2001. During this meeting, the reporter is sitting amongst Esther, Marty and Mary-Lou, who appear engaged in casual conversation. The physical setting, a room overlooking the Thames and the London skyline, is itself conducive to recollecting the past as it provides a visual reminder of the iconic location – the city – of the tragedy, which a television studio wall would not achieve.

Extract 3

LS: all sitting;	01	Reporter	as the years go by do you
CU: Marty	02		expect to be able to begin
scratches brow/	03		to come to terms with
holds head in his	04		what happened?
hands.	05	Marty	when someone's taken away (.)
	06		they're just going to work (.)
	07		they have no (.) they have
	08		no p- (.) they have no part in
	09		politics or war- they went to
	10		work and they're killed for no
	11		reason especially in the name
	12		of a- of- of a [God (.) you know
CU: Esther	13	Esther	[terrorism is- [I is
	14	Marty	[I'm-
CU: Reporter	15	Esther	aimed against non-combatants
	16		[that's one of the definitions
	17	Marty	[right]
MCU: Reporter	18	Esther	of terrorism and that's why
nods in agreement.	19		this seems so wrong (.)
MCU: Esther and	20	Marty	it doesn't get better because
Mary-Lou	21		every holiday (.) every
	22		[birthday (.) um (.) the
	23	Mary-Lou	[they should be there]
CU: Marty	24	Marty	summer time (.) just
	25		everything (2.0) (voice
	26		becomes croaky) it never
	27		leav- it never leaves ya
MLS: all	28	Reporter	Esther (.) to hear this (1.5)
CU: Marty wiping	29		hhh. (.) it's not encouraging
tears away from	30		to you but it must be
his eyes	31		comforting (1.5) that you're
	32		not alone in this

MCU: Esther and	33	Esther	no (.) I've never felt alone in
Mary-Lou. CU:	34		that sense (1.5) I know I'm
reporter, leaning	35		not the only one suffering not
forward, intent	36		just for the terror attacks in
concentration.	37		London but all over the world
CU: Mary-Lou	38		[. . .] no (.) it doesn't give
nods.	39		me comfort (.) it just makes
	40		me wish that it would stop
Image dissolves.	41		(1.5) 'cos enough is enough

In his use of pausing, breath intakes and a lower voice pitch and volume the reporter's paralanguage conveys sensitivity when asking questions that may be emotionally challenging. This accompanies probing of the sibling's feelings in lines 01–04 and 28–32 where he uses terms that convey emotional reassurance ('you're not alone in this', lines 31–32) and euphemisms ('what happened', line 04, to refer to death). His body language, too, signals a gentle approach to asking victims of trauma to recall: nodding sympathetically during their turns at talk (lines 18–19). Camera close-ups maximise not only emotional self-disclosure on the siblings' part but the reporter's affective stance towards them (lines 34–37).

The siblings, for their part, respond differently to the reporter's commemoration cure work. Marty is shown, in close-up, wiping tears away from his eyes (lines 29–31), and at various points his body language signals emotional release (lines 02–05) and his speech contains numerous disfluencies (lines 14–25). Yet Esther's extended turn at talk (lines 33–41) explicitly challenges the reporter's attempts at likening her and the two siblings on the basis of their sharing the same traumatic experience. Bringing people together around a shared experience is of course part of the catharsis that therapy talk can arguably bring about. In her turn, Esther is therefore rejecting the reporter's talking cure regarding the commemoration of terrorist attacks. Most explicitly, she insists that she has 'never felt alone' (line 33) and denies the alleged benefits of performing the commemoration cure: sharing Marty's pain at recollection 'no (.) doesn't give me comfort' (lines 38–39).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to explore the discursive features of collective memory and commemoration on television news and

documentary – an aim motivated by a surge in remembering and memo-rialising the past in contemporary public discourse. At a macro-level, its findings show that television's collective memory is characterised by a focus on the act of memorialising (and hence on the present) over the cultural trauma that triggered the past being remembered. When the data were mined further, the analyses revealed four further issues.

The first serves as a note of caution. It is erroneous to envisage hege-monic discursive strategies in the act of commemoration. For instance, the sanitisation of cultural trauma characteristic of commemoration news in the UK and the US data under analysis was largely absent from the Argentinian and Spanish data sets examined. This indicates both the need to recognise different media ecologies from which the data were generated and the limitations of extrapolating the significance of media practices in, generally, English-speaking Western contexts to other cultural settings.

The second finding points to a pluralisation of telling rights. Numer-ous social and news actors are granted the right to tell their version of the cultural traumas they – or others close to them – experienced in per-sonal terms. This supports the rise of personal testimony as a staple of commemoration and returns us to the Halbwachian conception of col-lective memory as socially constructed (here within the enclave of news discourse) yet individually performed. However, it is important not to interpret this pluralisation of testimony as symptomatic of a democrati-sation of telling rights. The establishment of the figure of the journalist as a key memory entrepreneur reminds us of television's tight control over memory work.

This control is manifest, too, in the third key finding, namely the 'commemoration cure' and, within this, the role of the journalist as its discursive broker. How and why the talking cure has entered commemorative news requires further research. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to suggest that in part at least commemorative news has emerged as a multimodal space within factual programming in which to continue to provide 'a talking cure' as a consequence of the relative decline of talk shows (the previous enclaves par excel-lence of television's therapy machine) and the evolution of reality shows towards impolitainment (Lorenzo-Dus 2009). In a media ecol-ogy marked by convergence, this has not taken place in a vacuum, but it has centrally involved shifts across other media – notably online news and other social media in and through which mediated commemoration thrives currently. In other words, synergising recent developments towards personalisation/closeness in news discourse (Montgomery 2007, Lorenzo-Dus 2009) and current commemoration

mania, television news has developed its own 'commemoration cure' as a derivate of newsworthy therapy talk.

Finally we come to the aestheticisation of cultural traumas and their collective remembering. The aestheticisation of both the past and its recollection identified in this study lends further empirical support to current theorising of cultural trauma memorialisation. Wuld Kansteiner provocatively opens an editorial of the interdisciplinary journal *Memory Studies* thus:

> As teachers, scholars, and heritage professionals, we are in the business of aestheticising violence. We might be writing yet another essay about the Holocaust, putting together an exhibit about World War I, helping produce a film about Dafur, or organizing live twitter coverage of President Obama's visit to Yad Vashem. On all these occasions, we are engaging with violent pasts that we find disturbing, fascinating, and intellectually challenging. [...] We want to help build collective fantasies of belonging that will not be implicated in the kind of mass crimes that our ancestors and contemporaries have committed on a regular basis. To that end, we render violence bearable, intriguing, and repellent – by aestheticizing it. (2014: 403)[10]

At the same time, though, this study reveals that while aestheticising culturally traumatic events and the acts of remembering/commemorating them may be widely shared across societies and their media industries, the actual discursive strategies mobilised to do so cannot simply be assumed to have global purchase. Moreover, it is important to recognise that as different media create and exploit opportunities for new forms of memory work (Hoskins 2011), their impact therein both reflects their particular objectives and can have negative consequences. For instance, the commemoration cure may be intended as cathartic for viewers but, as Kantola (2014: 94) warns, we cannot treat or cure cultural trauma in the same way that we treat or cure clinical trauma: 'it would be strange to think that society could be taken to see a therapist who specialises in dealing with collective problems that are similar to clinical traumas' (Kansteiner and Weilnböck, 2010). More poignantly still, television news and other forms of factual programming undoubtedly play a significant part in collective memory work, but the findings of this study suggest that this is often playfully keyed, pandering to demands for emotional release and entertainment. Aestheticisation of the past and of the act of remembering, and the transformation of both into a commemoration cure, may thus detract from some of the more serious

intentions behind such discursive memory work. It may even, as in the case of Esther (Extract 3), lead to explicit rejection of such work.

Appendix 1

Transcription conventions

CU/MS/LS	Camera close-up/medium shot/long shot
laughs	Paralinguistic /non-verbal features of communication
<u>word</u>	Marked stress
<slow>	Markedly slow speech
>quick<	Markedly fast speech
?	Rising intonation
[	Simultaneously starting talk
=	Latching between the end of one turn and the beginning of the next turn
(.)	Short pause (a second or under)
(1.5)	Longer pause, in seconds
mm, er . . .	Filled pauses, hesitations
an::d	Prolongation of prior syllable
wor-	Syllable or word cut off abruptly

Notes

1. Halbwachs was a disciple of Durkheim, who did not use the term collective memory himself but wrote extensively about 'collective effervescence' (peaks of socially orchestrated human activity) in the context of religious traditions. To preserve such traditions, and hence preserve their memories, individuals make use of totems. Commemorative events are one type of totem.
2. See, for example, Sturken (1997), Hoskins (2004), Meyers et al. (2009), Jarvis (2010), Zandberg (2010), Castelló (2014), Murakami (2014).
3. Exceptions include: Meyers et al. (2009) on news coverage of the Holocaust; Pardo and Lorenzo-Dus (2010) on the Falklands; Blondheim and Liebes (2002) on the commemoration of 9/11; as well as Hoerl (2009) on massacres; Lorenzo-Dus and Bryan (2011a) on 7/7; and Castelló (2014) on Catalan TV documentaries about the Spanish Civil War and its consequences.
4. It is worth noting that research into media effects has also consistently shown the influence of media texts on audiences to be less direct than expected and that, as Kliger-Vilenchik et al. (2014: 485) argue, 'Most of the works that underscore the media's role do not link public representations of the past with individual perceptions', even though it is individuals who recollect, albeit that within social frameworks (Halbwachs 1952/1992).
5. Project 1: 'Conflicts of Memory' – a three year project funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council to investigate the links between media (television) and personal recollections of the 2005 London bombings and their commemorative events (Project Team: Prof. Hoskins, Prof. Brown,

Prof. Lorenzo-Dus, Dr Allen, Dr Bryan). Project 2: 'Commemorating the 25th anniversary of the end of the Falklands War on Television: A Cross-Cultural Approach' – a two year project involving researchers at the CONICET (Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Swansea University (Project leads: Prof. Pardo and Prof. Lorenzo-Dus).

6. The reason for selecting this year is the absence of any prior commemorative event captured by national television in Spain. Relatives of the victims had formed an association to challenge the official inquiry conducted shortly after the event on grounds of illicit procedures having been applied. A news affairs show (*El Intermedio*) broadcast a programme on the accident and its commemoration after seven years of silence on 28 April 2013. The show was a success (inter)nationally and resulted in further news commemorations of the event (amongst coverage of the victims' associations' plea and regional government handling of the inquiry).

7. For a detailed analysis of the way in which the tragic event was represented across media (television, print and social networks) see Lorenzo-Dus (2016).

8. This is not to deny the (increasing) use of stylistic devices, often adopting a 'cinematic style' (O'Donnell and Castelló 2011), in documentaries and news.

9. This supports Hoskins and O'Loughlin's (2010) finding of a weaponisation of warfare in the second memory boom.

10. Kansteiner (2014: 403) does not explicitly include media professionals in his 'we' group but the sustained place that negativity has held in news values across time surely merits their inclusion and, as far as my datasets are concerned, can be stretched to cover representations of violent presents (through breaking news) and pasts (through commemoration).

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6
The Representation of Travellers in Television Documentaries

Dispelling Stigma while Dealing with Infotainment Demands

Roberta Piazza

Introduction

As Pietikäinen (2003: 589) points out, '[j]ournalism is paradoxical. Ideally, news should present a truthful, balanced, impartial and neutral account of the events [...] but a good news report has an angle, a striking headline and lead, and an appealing story as a result of dozens of decisions and choices'. Although this comment refers to news reports specifically, it has been applied to factual documentaries that, I believe, operate along very similar lines. This chapter investigates how the discourse of documentaries can encourage a particular view of the issue in hand among viewers, in this specific case of 'travellers' as the collective term used to describe Britain's mobile communities that are of Irish or Scottish rather than Roma gypsy descent. The discussion concentrates on factual films' 'representation' of travellers as a non-transparent 'mediating' process 'whereby an event [...] filtered through interpretive frameworks [...] acquires ideological significance' (Poole 2002: 23). Throughout its history, the genre of documentary has displayed a variety of forms, some 'extremely self-conscious and aesthetically ambitious', some others showing a commitment to 'reportorial or observational naturalisms' (Corner 2005: 49). The documentary films in this study belong to the latter type and discuss the community of travellers, notoriously disadvantaged and often perceived as disturbing and threatening by the settled parts of society.

Two documentaries are analysed that were produced by BBC1 (*The Travellers*) and Channel 5 (*The Truth about Travellers*) and broadcast

on 19 July 2011 and 28 April 2013, respectively. Two more episodes (*The Travellers* broadcast on 28 July 2011 and *The Truth about Travellers* broadcast on 5 May 2013) are also referred to at various points in the discussion. In spite of their different broadcast times, these texts were selected for thematic as well as structural reasons. Both address the topic of transient communities and in both a narrating voice aims to enhance that 'narrative satisfaction' connected with 'a broader aesthetics of time and duration' that Corner (2005: 55) views as the property of most television formats. It is the narrator's omniscient voice-over (VO) on which the attention of this chapter centres, to show how the narrative of the different programmes constructs a particular view of the travellers' communities. Cook (1997) expands Jakobson's (1990) communication model of the 'addresser' and the 'addressee' by the addition of 'image-ness', which she defines as a 'rhetorical strategy' as well as 'visual reality' (p. 102). She argues that the '[i]mages we have of each other are always part of the baggage that we bring to dialogue. Sometimes we are at the mercy of the image our addressee has of us or chooses to invoke' (p. 104).

Television greatly contributes to constructing such images that are an inevitable part of our life, for example the image of travellers that the two films propose. As it identifies the ideological stance of the two film-makers through the mental images their programmes construct, this discussion offers a reconsideration of the nature of hetero-diegetic VO both in its tangible format as the reporter's narrative over images and as the much-criticised 'voice of God' (Nichols 2001), in the case of the talk of an unidentified and disembodied narrator who never appears in the non-fiction film. The analysis shows the various ways in which the narrative of the documentaries unfolds, and attention is also paid to the ways in which the reporters in each documentary construct their credibility in such a way that creates opportunities for them to voice their views both directly and indirectly about the transient people they discuss.

Background of the study: The nature of informative documentaries

There seems to be sufficient consensus among scholars about the nature and function of documentaries. Rather than a copy, they are a reproduction or even a 'creative treatment of actuality' and texts that 'marshal evidence but then use it to construct their own perspective or argument about the world, their own poetic or rhetorical response to the world' (Nichols 2001: 38). Nichols points out the techniques documentaries

use to persuade viewers: the presence of an informing logic that pro-vides coherence by proposing a problem-solving approach to the issue in hand, as well as the adoption of a narrative structure that ends with a final recommendation (2001: 26–27). Underneath it all, however, there is the general expectation that documentaries provide authentic evidence and satisfy the viewers' thirst for knowledge.

Bruzzi (2000) pushes the definition of documentaries further and, in their inability to offer an undistorted representation of reality, she sees the 'perpetual negotiation between the real event and its representa-tion' (p. 9). Documentaries therefore neither reflect reality nor belie or overturn it (pp. 4–6).

Various types and formats of non-fiction actuality films exist and Nichols's (2001) genealogy of six types (poetic, expository, observa-tional, participatory, reflexive and performative) is intended to trace the history of the genre as he allocates these types to different moments in its history. In spite of this chronological approach, however, Nichols allows categories to mix and merge. The documentaries in this study, for instance, show how film-makers can move from an expository type (containing a verbal commentary and a logical development as in *The Travellers*) to an observational type (as again in *The Travellers* that, as a fly on the wall, describes the subjects and their way of life) to a partici-patory documentary in which the film-maker closely interacts with the subjects, as in *The Truth about Travellers* in which the reporter himself is at times part of the exploration of travellers' life.

By organising events along a linear chronological trajectory, docu-mentary narratives propose an interpretative line for viewers to follow and thus show the inability of the genre to realise an objective product along the realist Bazine-inspired *cinéma-vérité* model. A narrative struc-ture also triggers a cause-effect pattern that encourages viewers to draw conclusions or permits inference processes leading to a specific claim (Bruzzi 2000: 45).

Besides the chronological development inherent to the narrative format of the film, the narrator's voice is a manifest indication of the direction viewers are to follow when watching a documentary. Germaine to the expository type of non-fiction films that Nichols (1983: 48) associates with early factual cinema, the VO commenting on the events moulds the viewers' interpretation of the documentary topic. According to Nichols, it functions as an inherently directive and didac-tic tool that assumes the viewers' inability to think for themselves. Smith (2013) discusses how in New Zealand's *Rescue 1* programme the VO mediates between the technicalities of medical discourse and a

lifeworld talk that thus becomes accessible to the viewers. The often disembodied hetero-diegetic and omniscient voice of a narrator has been chastised as an unimaginative and incompetent technique and the documentaries' unnecessary evil by Nichols himself (1983), Drew (1983) and Kozloff (1988) among others. However, in spite of the 'insinuations of patriarchy, dominance, omniscience that term harbours' (Bruzzi 2000: 42), such an off-screen authoritative voice is nowadays the unmarked feature of documentaries that becomes noticeable only when the narrator behind the voice is identifiable as a celebrity, David Attenborough's in his natural history documentaries being the typical example (Lorenzo-Dus 2009: 31).

Clearly the condemnation of the VO reflects a purist view of non-fiction films as mimetically reproducing reality (a recent experiment along these lines is BBC4's journey down the Kennet and Avon Canal in which no narrative or VO accompanies the uninterrupted two-hour birdsong as a 'deliberately unhurried [...] antidote to the digital age', Plunkett (2015)); in this light the voice of God appears as an intrusive element breaking the spell of perfect objectivity in that it unveils the artificiality of the cinematic product. A different view of documentaries, which doesn't pursue the impossible aspiration to total objectivity, therefore, may overturn such a negative perception of the narrating VO. In her analysis of *Sunless*, for instance, Bruzzi (2000) shows how the VO, far from dictating how viewers should interpret the issue in hand, can be transgressive of its masculine archetype and act as a critical element by resorting to ironical detachment. Youdelman (1982 in Bruzzi 2000: 46) justifies the antipathy towards narration-led documentaries that instead of using proper 'oral history interview techniques' (hence the above accusation of incompetence for the use of VO), suppress the voices of the people in the film and offer a top-down view of the issue. However, instead of vilifying those narrative documentaries, Youdelman praises in them the film-maker's responsibility and honest transparency in presenting factual information through VO.

This is the view endorsed in this study, which reveals how the use of a seemingly didactic format as the voice of God does not necessarily rule out the possibility of providing a perspective that invites a critical attitude on the viewers' part.

The documentary actors: Irish and Scottish travellers

For a study whose focus is the responsibility that television non-fiction films have in promoting awareness about social issues,[1] or, vice versa, in

contributing to a perpetuation of stereotypes and bias among viewers, the topic of transient communities seems pertinent. Travellers (at times also referred to by the term 'gypsies') are nomadic people who live in caravans, although at times they accept to be housed. They are generally on the move and even if they are stationary for part of the year, they travel during the summer months. Society makes little space for them in both a physical and a symbolic way. According to a 2011 *Guardian* survey in the UK there are 549 gypsy and traveller council caravan sites (http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/jun/29/gypsy-sites-england-local-authority#data) that host up to 20,000 people, and 18,000 gypsy caravans in Britain (*Panorama: Dale Farm – The Big Eviction*, BBC1, 27 October 2011). These figures, which would mean an average of 40 people per site, suggest the shortage of travellers' permanent serviced rent-based sites for a mobile population of gypsies and travellers that according to the 2011 census is of 54,895 people living in England. Travellers are thus forced on the road by a system that only allows them short stays in temporary encampments and often have no alternative than to occupy illegally public spaces at the outskirts of towns or in green areas in urban developments.

Like many other marginal groups, travellers are generally considered with suspicion by settled members of society (Kabachnik 2009). Accusations that travellers lack any sense of civic responsibility were a recurring theme in conversations with residents in a previous study (Piazza 2014);[2] travellers are usually chastised for remaining isolated while still relying on permanent society's services. Travellers have a special interpretation of place (Piazza 2014); it is therefore not unrealistic to think that travellers are perceived as disturbing people because they represent a model of life different from settled society in which such values as stability, possession of goods, continuous and possibly stable occupation, individualism and so on have priority.

Travellers are often constrained in a conflictual space between settled residents and authorities, although they have the support of a number of people, as in the case of the renowned Dale Farm eviction, which was contested by such celebrities as Vanessa Redgrave, and charitable organisations such as Friends, Family and Travellers, whose goal is to 'end racism and discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers, whatever their ethnicity, culture or background, whether settled or mobile, and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life' (http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/).

In the current era of multiculturalism, academic scholarship has recently theorised diversity and super-diversity as the norm of coexistence between various groups (Vertovec 2007, 2010; Blommaert

and Rampton 2011). Within such a theoretical framework the academic non-sedentarist approaches (Sheller and Urry 2006) proposing a 'mobile and deterritorialized' notion of identity have prevailed. These days, the study of travellers seems to be approached from a broader perspective that assumes as much as possible an 'emic' or 'from within the group' (Kottak 2006) understanding of these communities.

The approach to the data

The documentaries investigated in this study are generally informative non-fiction films aiming at presenting traditions and beliefs of travellers and gypsies: *The Truth about Travellers*, Channel 5 (henceforth *TTaT*) and *The Travellers*, BBC1 Scotland (henceforth *TT*) broadcast in 2013 and 2011, respectively.

As this chapter centres on the VO's role in constructing a discourse on travellers, the hetero-diegetic aspect of the narrative is analysed in detail to establish what type of representation of the subjects is being proposed. A Wordsmith Tools 4 was used to interrogate the text of the sole narrating voice and to draw a word list of the most frequent lemmas. The subsequent step was the investigation of the collocations of some of the core lemmas in order to trace any lexical-grammatical encoding of ideological positioning. Following that, the analysis opened up to the identification of other features of VO's discourse with particular attention to the construction of credibility on the part of the film-maker. The aim was to identify whether as his authority is being established, he allows himself leeway to express his ideological stance vis-à-vis travellers.

In the documentaries observed, the VO is the reporter's narrative over the images in *TTaT* and the voice of God coming from an invisible narrator for *TT*.

As mentioned earlier, narrative modality has been criticised for controlling the development of the film and imposing a monolithic pre-digested vision of the story to the viewers. In light of such academic antipathy to the VO, of the two formats the voice of God is believed to be the one that is more susceptible to critique in that it doesn't allow for further narrative construction, as for instance through interviews in which the reporter exposes him/herself in interaction with witnesses and presents the evidential sources for the argument s/he is constructing. The documentaries are of comparable length: *TT* is 59.47 minutes, *TTaT* 44.08. Within the programmes the VO is realised by 1,819 words in *TT*, where it is a hetero-diegetic narrative voice , and by 1,147 in *TTaT*

where the VO alternates with interviews. The discussion therefore takes into due consideration these differences in the documentary format.

Travellers in the documentaries' voice-over

TT and *TTaT* claim to be pseudo-ethnographic studies of nomadic communities in Scotland and Ireland respectively in that each reporter spent months living with the people who allowed him to film them (from *TT* VO: 'Travellers rarely talk to anyone outside their own community. However, two traveller families agreed to be filmed over a period of nine months'). In *TT* the clearly narrative structure revolves around the journey of two families of truly transient Scottish travellers during the summer period and hones in on an 'inciting incident' (Curran Bernard 2011: 55) that sets the core action of the story: the antagonism towards them from the residents' community and the impact this has on the travellers. In this programme VO is the voice of God as the reporter is never visible on camera and his presence can only be inferred from the interviewees' gaze (Figure 6.1). *TTaT*, on the contrary, about homed and hence less mobile Irish travellers, is centred on journalist McKean, Irish himself, who introduces viewers to the traditions and ways of life of an Irish community in Tuam, County Galway, in the Republic of Ireland, from tinkering to tarmacking, journalism, literacy practices and, in the episode observed in this study, attitudes to marriage. McKean's VO in this case alternates with his interviews.

Figure 6.1   Interviewees' gaze in *TT*

Even with a small corpus such as the one used in this study, keyword lists produced by the Wordsmith tool can be revealing. In *TT* besides the lemma *traveller/s*, the most immediately relevant lexical words of some frequency are the protagonists' proper names, *Donald* and *Sammy* (14th and 17th most frequent, respectively), together with *children* (24th). This suggests the VO's intimacy with the documentary subjects, who are nominated as people rather than anonymous group members (van Leeuwen 2008: 23–54). In *TTaT*, a similar kind of ethnographic pro- gramme, VO provides a more varied choice of key terms, many in the semantic area of the documentary topic, that is, traditions and wed- dings among travellers: *community* (the 12th most frequent word), *family* (16th), *culture* (29th), *traditions* (30th), *marriage* (37th), down to the eval- uative *extravagant* (48th). *Traveller* is the seventh most frequent word.

The lemma *traveller* may not be thought of as immediately telling because of its obvious centrality in both documentaries. Nevertheless, a look at the use of this term and its collocations provides a lead into the film-maker's attitude. From a query of *traveller/s* and the concordances of this word some differences emerge: in *TT* in only seven out of 25 cases *traveller* is a premodifier, while in the remainder of the cases it is head. It may be more suggestive of a sympathetic attitude to the travellers; in all but four cases where the word appears as circumstance ('more cooperation between travellers and the settled community'), travellers are endowed with a degree of agency that derives from their being the actors of material processes ('the travellers have headed north/are bat- tening down their tents/keep dogs as pets/provided a service/ /have been doing this'), as well as verbal ('the travellers claim') and mental processes ('a lot of travellers like boxing/are enjoying').

TTaT, by contrast, presents a totally different use of the lemma *trav- eller/s*: of the 28 occurrences, 22 are premodifiers: for example, 'The Church plays a very strong role in traveller culture'. Moreover, of the six occurrences of *traveller/s* as heads, three are cases of travellers as cir- cumstance ('Unlike settled weddings, sending out invitations is not the norm for travellers') and in one of the three cases in which the travellers are subject, they are described as passive recipients of others' actions ('travellers have been the subjects of some harsh media coverage and general misconcepts'); in another case travellers appear as goal ('In my time working as a journalist, I have come across travellers on many occa- sions'). While collocates are not very revealing, in *TT* the most frequent collocates of *traveller/s* are *have* and *are* in association with *travellers* as agents; on the contrary, in *TTaT* the collocates are nouns, for example *community* and *culture*, and the copula *is*.

Although clearly not conclusive, the above findings provide a preliminary insight into the discourse of the two documentaries, while a closer look at the two films helps identify further the film-makers' different ideological stance.

As noted earlier, *TT* is a narration-led documentary that follows two families of travellers living at Clinterty on the outskirts of Aberdeen during their holiday season travel and ends up with the arrest of one of the travellers following an episode of conflict with the settled community. The narrative structure expressed in the present tense is evident from the beginning: 'Today they're pitching up in Prestonpans, just south of Edinburgh. Once the camp is established, Sammy goes in search of one important thing that's missing – water'.

The disembodied omniscient narrator generally expresses comments on what is directly observable by the viewer. Over images of the grandparents Colin and Clementina McDonald happily enjoying the company of some of the grandchildren, the VO comments 'Family is all-important to them. They have seven children and 25 grandchildren, who they love to spend time with.' In *TTaT* by contrast, reporter McKean occupies a major space in the narrative and is at times a character himself: for instance, when he irritates bride-to-be Stacey with his filming; when he knots Stacey's little brother's tie before the wedding starts; when he hands over champagne to the wedding guests; and when, while credits run at the end of the 5 May 2013 episode, he jokes with a female traveller expert about choosing a bride in the travellers' community (McKean: Could I choose my wife or would you choose it for me? Woman: You'll have to get a bit of help in choosing her, you wouldn't be clever enough to choose the right one). While this feature of *TTaT* may appear to satisfy the 'reflexive stance' that Ruby (2005: 35) wishes for documentaries, in this case, it seems to me, the film-maker's centre-stage prominence is closer to a 'turgid pseudo-Freudian sense of a Fellini' (Ruby 2005: 36) self-consciousness rather than a healthy reflexivity that 'destroys illusion and causes [viewers to] break their suspension of disbelief' (Ruby 2005: 35). McKean's VO is an alternative to his interviews and his questions – transactional but also operating on the interpersonal level – are nearly as relevant as the interviewees' answers. In *TT*, on the contrary, the viewers can only infer by the subjects' gaze the very few questions put to the travellers by the reporter. Also like *TT*, *TTaT* boasts an *emic* approach to investigation from inside the travelling community. McKean is a guest of the Tuam Road traveller site in Galway and is staying with the Sweeney family ('The Tuam Road site in Galway is home to seven traveller families, and I'm staying with

the Sweeney family, with mother, father and all four boys living in their trailer').

The pattern in both documentaries is typical of factual programmes in which reporters presume to teach the audience having spent a substantial amount of time investigating the topic they are discussing (Bruzzi 2000: 44): the VO produces a series of statements subsequently confirmed by the subjects in the film as in Excerpts 1 and 2 below.

Excerpt 1 (*TT*)

VO: Sammy Stewart, his wife Christine and their six children live here on this council-run site during the winter months.	Medium close of Sammy in an armchair with a little boy on his lap. Close-up on little girl and boy eating, baby Jeremiah in his cot while Christine does chores. Dog in corner. Intimate family life scene.
VO: Now the better weather has arrived, they're packing up, eager to get on the road.	
Sammy: Freedom! (HE LAUGHS) It's like... What do you call it? Craving for a fag. At a certain time of the year, it just hits you. You want to be on the road again.	Close-up of Sammy outside his caravan smiling happily and laughing at his own joke. Interspersed are images of the family preparing to set off.

Excerpt 2 (*TTaT*)

VO: The Church plays a very strong role in traveller culture, and with this, such things as sex before marriage or even dating a boy, it's simply not an option for a single girl.	Long shot of massive country church then camera pans on façade and spire and focuses on the white statuette of the Virgin and child over the front door.
Michael McDonagh, Navan Travellers Workshop: Relationships and sex before marriage is literally out, it doesn't exist.	Medium close-up of McDonagh in a historic travellers' caravan
Young traveller women walk on a very thin line,	Image from high angle of young female travellers walking in the nave of a church for a wedding and taking a seat.
and if you fall off that line it's almost impossible to get back up onto it. And not only does it affect you, but it could affect your unborn sisters.	Camera back on McDonagh as before.

The pattern consisting of VO's utterances immediately supported by images or comments by the travellers or traveller-related people guarantees the film-makers a high degree of credibility. As authors or principals (Goffman 1981), they present their reliable representation of the world to the viewers. The pattern therefore appears to be based on the old Platonic distinction, revived in the Anglo-American school of narratology (Rimmon-Kenan 2002), between telling and showing. Relating in different ways to images and words (Lewis 2001) telling and showing 'may be viewed as two ideal models which embody different logics of discourse' (Shenhav 2008: 226) and different simulations/impressions of authenticity. A VO's telling is therefore defined and authenticated by showing (images) or showing/telling (travellers or others speaking to camera), and it is through such a pattern that the film-maker ensures the viewers of the validity of his/her product.

The way VO presents the source, basis and evidence of information about travellers while indicating the evidence the documentary-maker 'has for making factual claims' (Anderson 1986: 273 in Bednarek 2007: 636) is also inherently revealing of his/her 'attitudes towards knowledge' (Chafe 1986: 262 in ibid.: 637). Otherwise termed 'epistemological positioning', such an attitude can lead to identifying his/her ideological stance. Following Bednarek, the analysis distinguishes between various forms of access to knowledge:

1. mental perception of knowledge;
2. general knowledge or knowledge assumed as shared;
3. proven knowledge;
4. unspecified knowledge.

As discussed earlier, the most frequent pattern in the documentaries is that of VO's statement whose degree of veracity and subject knowledge is immediately proved or confirmed by an expert or participant or by the subjects either by their own words or actions. In Excerpt 3 below, for instance, VO's comment about the male joy of hunting successfully and providing for one's family in a natural way is confirmed by the images (in the excerpts the italics highlight salient elements): see Figure 6.2.

Excerpt 3 (*TT*)

VO: The men return home, *pleased* with their catch of three hares.

However, in the two documentaries other formats can be found. In *TT*, for instance, many are the cases in which VO uses his mental perception

Figure 6.2 Hare-hunting in *TT*

of knowledge, as in Excerpts 4 and 5 below, where the mental process is revealing of the film-maker's assumption about the travellers' good intentions:

Excerpt 4 (*TT*)

VO: Today they're pitching up in Prestonpans, just south of Edinburgh. They are camping on what they *believe* is common ground, next to Cockenzie Power Station.

Excerpt 5 (*TT*)

VO: They are catching a ferry at Kennacraig on West Loch Tarbert, over to the island of Islay. The travellers have been coming to the islands for years. *They are looking forward to it. […] The change of scene feels like a holiday.* The camping gets them closer to the land.

In other cases, VO shows knowledge seemingly reliable, as in Excerpt 6, which strikes us with its statistical flavour while it doesn't reveal where the information comes from:

Excerpt 6 (*TT*)

VO: There are around *23,000* travellers living in Scotland today. Most now live in houses. Officially, *only 2,000* regularly travel on the road like Sammy and Donald. However, *many* think this is an underestimate, especially over the summer months.

In cases of shared knowledge, the film-maker relies on common beliefs, as for instance the information about whelks (Excerpt 7) or the desire to pass on traditions of one's culture (Excerpt 8):

> Excerpt 7 (*TT*)
>
> VO: In Scotland, whelks are mostly used as fishing bait, but in France and Spain, they are considered a delicacy, served in seafood restaurants.
>
> Excerpt 8 (*TT*)
>
> VO: By taking the children camping, *he is passing on* an important part of his traveller culture.

The VO in *TTaT* is different, whether it is the case of film-maker McKean's disembodied voice over the images or his voice over his own appearance. *TTaT* uses a much wider range of evidence by expert voices: a local traveller, Patsy Sweeney; a Tuam resident; the Tuam bishop; Martin Ward, ex-mayor of Tuam; Michael McDonagh, Navan Travellers Workshop; besides a number of male and female travellers as in Excerpt 9 below.

> Excerpt 9 (*TTaT*)
>
> VO: In a worst-case scenario, if a girl has sex before marriage and gets a bad reputation, she could end up never getting married, or worse still, find herself expelled from the community.
>
> Michael McDonagh: It would run extremely deep if you had a young woman who was promiscuous. No, she'd affect us more than herself, it'd affect her family as well.

Other formats also characterise this VO: mental perception ('In my time working as a journalist, I have come across travellers on many occasions. They've always *struck me* as strong-minded people who take their roots and traditions quite seriously, but are some of the most marginalised and secretive sections of society'); unspecified evidence ('There are *strong cultural differences* between the settled and traveller communities'); or information presented as shared knowledge as in Excerpt 10 below, in which McKean's condemnation of some aspects of travellers' community is expectedly in accord with the popular view.

Excerpt 10 (*TTaT*)

VO: Over the past few years, travellers in Ireland have been the sub-ject of some harsh media coverage and general misconceptions. *Fair enough, there's no denying there's a negative element within the traveller community*, but surely they can't all be the same?

In the three excerpts above, McKean is 'negative othering' (Riggins 1997) the travellers. Like the travel writer in Riggins, he is acting to them as a 'coloniser', speaking from an outsider's egocentric perspective that finds travellers' respect for their traditions striking and hence news-worthy and later justifies people's racialisation of the group with the negativity that he attributes to travelling people. The fact that McKean allows for a quota of good travellers within the community does not diminish the racist charge of his statement.

McKean's credibility is further established by the film-maker adver-tising the difficulty of this reporting in a form of self-accreditation, as in Excerpt 11, where he makes an egocentric 'claim to heroic' (Riggins 1997: 23) journalism:

Excerpt 11 (*TTaT*)

VO: Traveller weddings are a big family affair, and generally *are not open to outsiders*. [...] (over images of McKean in his red car driving to the wedding location) With the traveller community being scep-tical of the media due to the negative press they've received, *getting permission to film something like this proved very difficult*. However, 18-year-old Stacey Ward agreed to let us come along for her wedding in Tuam.

The way in which VO relays information from a variety of sources both in terms of reported speech and thought (Simpson 1993 and 2004) conveys the author's stance. In the episode of *TT* broadcast on 26 July 2011, for instance, the disembodied VO clearly reports Sammy's thoughts (which he probably expressed when talking to the police who banned his family from camping in the Montrose area). It can be noticed how after an introductory utterance with a canonical framing verb 'believes', the difficulty of separating the VO from the traveller's voice suggests the film-maker's identification with the travellers' cause (Excerpt 12).

Excerpt 12 (*TT*)

VO: Sammy *is upset* by their treatment in Montrose. He *believes* that travellers have traditionally camped on this ground and they're doing no harm. He *would like* the council to work with travellers to create a better relationship.

Another technique in *TTaT* (in the 5 May episode) releases McKean of his responsibility for condemning travellers while it heightens his credibility by reference to validated sources. It is known how journalists trying to make sense of world events, deliver reports that are accessible and interesting 'to a deadline and with the resources available, [...] rel[y] heavily on *ready-made materials*' (Pietikäinen 2003: 589, emphasis added). While such textual practice is truer for news reports, the borrowing from other programmes is visible in the documentaries studied here. In the episode broadcast on 5 May 2013, *TTaT* uses techniques of speech attribution that encourage a particular travellers' view. As a preface to the story of boxing as a popular sport activity in that community, and a sub-story on a young woman who, defying conventions, trains as a boxing professional, McKean draws the link between traditional bare-knuckle boxing and violence among travellers. Notice how his access to sources in this case is unspecified ('Seen by many').

Excerpt 13 (*TTaT*)

VO: Once a widely accepted tradition in the traveller community, bare-knuckle boxing has become synonymous with the negative connotations that surround their culture. *Seen by many as a catalyst for bigger disputes*, this problem was highlighted following riots in Mullingar between traveller families.

At this point the veracity of the information relies on two ready-made sequences from news reporting on brutal clashes among travellers (Excerpt 14). In such a 'remediation' (Prior et al. 2006; Prior and Hengst 2010) technique in which the documentary gives room to another genre of television communication, the film-maker's previous averral (Sinclair 1988; Hunston 2000) takes a back seat while the attribution to others (presenter and journalists in news programmes) diminishes the responsibility of condemning violent feuds among the travelling community.

Excerpt 14 (*TTaT*)

News Presenter: Tensions are high at a housing estate in Mullingar in County Westmeath at the moment. A fight broke out today between feuding families in the Dalton Park estate. Several people were arrested, and several were treated in hospital.

Journalist: The court was shown video footage of the riot involving feuding traveller families in the Dalton Park housing estate in Mullingar. Those involved carried baseball bats, machetes, swords, golf clubs and shovels. The defendants and their supporters celebrated as they left court today, after Judge Anthony Kennedy handed down jail terms ranging from one to four years, but suspended the sentences for all 64 accused.

While similar access to information characterises both *TTaT* and *TT* documentaries, the two film-makers' attitude to travellers is very different. In one case, having established his credentials as a legitimate reporter and having shown he has achieved an atmosphere of solidarity and camaraderie with the travellers, in *TTaT* McKean engages in stereotypical representations that compare well with such programmes as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* in which mobile people are exoticised (Lutz and Collins 1993) and hence othered as extravagant ramshackle creatures suitable for a circus. A big part of *TTaT* is devoted to Stacey's wedding preparation, indulging in the extremely flashy rituals of carriages, flamboyant dresses and public commotion among travellers. To be fair, the programme also reflects on the reality of divorce among travellers, and interviews a divorced woman together with others who challenge the travellers' customs by refusing to marry young; yet the primary emphasis on travellers' wedding traditions is very much in line with programmes that, in order to entertain, accentuate the exotic oddness of travellers. Exoticisation and commodification are also realised by sole images and McKean's use of visual fragmentation (especially Keppeler 1986 but also Roy 2005, among many others) of travelling revellers with shots of headless women in carnivalesque outfits, and others in knickers with long dangling trails (Figure 6.3).

Such a technique depersonalises and objectifies the body of the visualised subject, who is denied its 'unified conscious physical being' (Mills 1995: 171). Meantime, the film-maker's critical distance is betrayed by the VO's 'the order of the day', a phrase most commonly used in parliament or in formal meetings, indicating the list of matters to be discussed on a particular occasion. Although not unusual, the use of the idiom in

Figure 6.3 Headless women in *TTaT*

an informal context works as a register switch by McKean and highlights his critical detachment.

Excerpt 15 (*TTaT*)

VO: In recent years, weddings in the traveller community have become quite elaborate, with no expense being spared.	Long shot of a massive horse-driven carriage moving towards viewers carrying bride and groom, the horses decorated with blue plumes/crests.
	Following shot of white equally decorated vintage car and then close shot on one of the carriage horses.
Extravagant dresses, stretch limos and a horse and carriage might be *the order of the day*, but certain traveller traditions still play an important part when it comes to marriage.	Long shot on vintage car now parked, elaborately dressed bridesmaids in blue outfits (like the horse plumes), no heads visible. Long shot on white stretch limo. A series of women move awkwardly in long and heavy dresses, their legs only visible.
(…)	

There is no space to comment extensively on the other documentary broadcast on 5 May 2013; however, it is worth noting that as the choice of wedding customs is heavily connoted in the first documentary, so is the topic of travellers' unemployment in the second, in which the emphasis is on the community's dependence on welfare. A number of

elements construct a damning inside picture of the community as a burden on settled society's hard-working members: the travellers' statements ('The dole will do me for now, like, we're all dole spongers, the whole of us'), the expert's explanation (Michael McDonagh, Navan Travellers Workshop, 'Travellers have a dependency on social welfare, that they don't want to take a job and give up social welfare because the job is not permanent but social welfare is permanent'), in addition to the VO's comment ('With legitimate avenues of employment limited to the traveller community, this may explain why many of them are reliant on social welfare. In a recent survey, almost 75 per cent of travellers were unemployed').

The VO's statements accompanying or prefacing the images and the speakers' contributions are central to this analysis of the film-maker's ideological positioning; however, it is also from 'absent information' (Fairclough 1995: 106–109) or the VO's abstention from commenting directly on a topic or letting the viewers infer the implied meaning, that one can draw conclusions about the author's stance. In *TT*, for instance, the VO does not comment and only introduces neutrally the search-for-water theme. This signals a new turn in the narrative in which Sammy will be the undisputed lead. Following that as a fly on the wall, we watch what Sammy goes through, and it is his comments on the residents' reaction to his request that we witness, not the VO's words (Excerpts 16 and 17 below).

Excerpt 16 (*TT*)

VO: Once the camp is established, Sammy goes in search of one important thing that's missing – water.

(Having asked if he can use the water tap at an MOT garage, Sammy is told there isn't one)

Sammy: He was quite nice enough, *but he said there's no water tap. And everybody knows there's always a water tap in a garage.* They need to have a water tap in the garage when they're putting cars through MOTs. It's an MOT garage. It says it there, on the sign.

Excerpt 17 (*TT*)

(Later Sammy finds water, but the man he talks to suspects he is eyeing some scrap metal)

Sammy: A nice enough guy. He gave us water, but it just showed you the small things that he . . . just because you're a traveller, *he jumped to that conclusion straight away. When you don't feel treated equal it's not very nice at all.*

In both cases, the VO is absent, leaving to Sammy the task of commenting on the discrimination he receives from settled people. Similarly, in another moment, the VO explains in a totally neutral way that travellers collect scrap ('Today Sammy and Donald are taking the boys to look for scrap'), but it is Sammy's comment again that brings to the fore the unjust bias against them: 'When you think about it, the travellers get the blame for making a mess. Look at this, a big business place, and look at the mess they've left' (Figure 6.4 below).

In other cases, the positive stance towards travellers is expressed more explicitly through a participant's comment as in Excerpt 18 below, where the VO's missing comment triggers the 'presupposed information' (Fairclough 1995: 106–109) that travellers are victims of unfair misjudgement by biased and obtuse residents.

Excerpt 18 (*TT*)

VO: It's rare for Sammy and Donald to mix with the settled community, but they have gone to meet the local farmer to ask for permission to hunt on his land. […]

Local farmer: A lot of people, anyway, with travellers, they say, we want to chase them out of the way because they're this and that, but I've never found that. *They are decent enough people. Maybe a little decenter than some of the ones that are chasing them!*

Figure 6.4   Recyclable rubbish in *TT*

TT portrays the two travellers' families in a number of positive ways: stressing their bucolic fusion with nature ('They have travelled all their lives . . . They know every bit of Scotland like the back of their hands, from the Borders to the Outer Isles') and love for freedom in open spaces ('It's now May and the travellers have headed north to Dyce on the outskirts of Aberdeen. It's a peaceful spot by the river with plenty of space for the children to play. Even baby Jeremiah is out enjoying the fresh air'); praising the quality time spent with the children ('On Islay, Sammy is taking the children to look for whelks . . . Christine has a bath ready for the children when they get back'); valuing their capacity to work and be active ('Like a lot of travellers, Sammy and Donald pick up work as they go – travellers used to follow seasonal work, daffodils, berries and potatoes. Nowadays it's more likely to be landscaping, roofing or tarmacking'); or commending them on their aspiration to lead a peaceful life in harmony with the outside society ('Clementina would like to see more cooperation between travellers and the settled community'). Following such a positive description, three-quarters of the way into the film the narrative reaches its culminating moment, which anticipates the dramatic clash with the residents' community.

Following the ominous warning of hundreds of nails being scattered around the travellers' tents, the VO continues to describe a deteriorating situation. 'But there's more trouble coming their way. A group of local teenagers has visited this site. The travellers claim that the youths shouted racist abuse. *But* now Donald has been arrested.' Noticeable is the use of the adversative conjunction 'but'. This allows the implicature that, in spite of what the travellers said or claim to have said to the police, it was the settled youngsters whose words were trusted and not the travellers'. The eerily sad soundtrack emphasises the disgraceful situation, picked up in the next episode (26 July 2011) that starts with Donald still arrested and his tools confiscated owing to the charge of improper use of a saw to scare away the teenagers ('Donald has been charged with a breach of the peace and possession of an offensive weapon – a chainsaw').

The conclusion of the narrative reinforces the ill treatment that society reserves for travellers. Once again, strategically the VO is neutral, except for the adverb 'finally' that reveals the film-maker's degree of empathy with racist attack victim Donald, who is allowed to deliver a long spiel about society's injustice that includes the voicing of settled people's racialisation of travellers (Excerpt 19).

Excerpt 19 (*TT*)

VO: It is now late afternoon, and Donald has *finally* been released from custody.

Donald: I've been locked up in the cells. No food, no nothing. Alone in a cell. Then I had to wait two hours for a bail condition paper before I even got out of it. And in the cell, vomits, everything over it, you had no privacy for the toilet, because you've got glass windows on the toilets. You can't even go in and use the toilet, but there's linesmen standing, watching you inside the toilet. I had to suffer that, because we're getting the racist abuse, abuse. 'Black gypsy minks tinks, you black bastards.' 'You'll be burned out tonight.' Does any human being have to take that? Is it because I chased them? I'm the bad one, I'm guilty? I'm going to have a previous in my record over that. And they're still laughing and smoking drugs and drinking. So, there's no justice. No justice whatsoever. Certain communities should realise what they've got. They've created monsters, 'cos they've taught them no manners. Maybe if they come and stay with travellers for a while, they might learn how to have manners. We would teach them manners, because they are ignorant.

In *TT* the author's empathetic stance is confirmed in the other episode of the series, broadcast on 26 July 2011, which takes off from Donald's arrest and concludes with Donald's sentence ('Donald was given a nine-month suspended sentence for breach of peace'), while blatantly drawing the viewers' attention to the police's unfair treatment ('The next day the police returned [to the travellers' caravans], their 14th formal visit in 48 hours') and pointing out how the travellers' hopes are never met by the establishment ('Sammy and Christine are still waiting for mains water to be connected to their caravan').

   In *TT*, therefore, the omniscient disembodied VO provides a commentary that albeit didactic, as it directs the viewers' comprehension and proposes a political interpretation of the narrative, aims to enhance and clarify the meaning conveyed by the images. Although *TT* makes use of a voice of God or 'direct-address style' (Nichols 2005: 17) which 'harbours' a whole range of 'insinuations of patriarchy, dominance, omniscience' (Bruzzi 2000: 42), a close scrutiny reveals that the filmmaker is sympathetic to the travellers in a number of ways from, on a micro level, the way travellers are made agents of many of the clauses, to the way in which, on a broader level, having indulged in a description of the bucolic life of the two travelling families, the narrative concludes with an episode of racist rejection when they approach an urban centre.

Finally, the VO creates textual opportunities for the travellers to voice their disappointment with society's unjust treatment of whoever doesn't conform to the dominant way of living.

By contrast to what happens in *TT*, in *TTaT* McKean's VO seems to develop along infotainment programme lines. As was pointed out earlier, in this documentary the film-maker constructs his credibility in a way that leaves no doubt about his access to the authoritative sources. His representation is provided both from 'inside' directly by the travellers' words and 'outside' (Grillo 1985) in the statements by legitimate witnesses and experts of the mobile community, for example the ex-mayor or the bishop of Tuam. The picture is made more complete by McKean's involvement of residents, as in the case of those who pay their homage to Stacey on her wedding day; for instance the teacher who has an interest in the ceremony: 'I came to see one of my pupils who is a ring bearer. I'm looking forward to seeing it [the wedding].' It is also true that through his interviews, McKean unveils how the traveller community is undergoing many changes, as two young women, Geraldine and Theresa, explain (Excerpt 20 below):

Excerpt 20 (*TTaT*)

McKean: Are men kind of the bosses in a man's world in the traveller community?

Geraldine: If you'd asked me that 20 years ago, I'd say 'Ah, yeah, it's a man's world.' But not so much now.

Theresa: The notion out there that men is – domineering – not all cases, not, not all cases.

However, McKean's recognisable and 'embodied' VO, albeit informative, doesn't miss any opportunity to strike the entertainment chord as in Excerpt 21 below, which emphasises the stereotypical features of travellers' culture, not all reversing but in fact confirming settled viewers' beliefs about them:

Excerpt 21 (*TTaT*)

VO: The phenomenon of large, extravagant dresses is quite recent and unique to the traveller community. Stepping away from older traditions, *the over-the-top style is essential to their dream for a fairy-tale wedding*.

As a result of the VO's controlling presence associated with the space occupied by the interviews and the phatic exchanges in which McKean

dominates as character, *TTaT* responds to the audience's 'invocation of, and promise to gratify, a desire to know' (Nichols 1981: 205) with an 'overwhelmingly didactic' address realised both by its domination of the visuals (Nichols 1983: 48) and of audience response.

Conclusion

Documentary film-makers and journalists who engage with the complex task of representing people may 'contribute unwittingly to [their] marginalisation and denigration' (Riggins 1997: 25). In both the documentaries discussed, travellers are presented as 'others', as different from settled residents. Admittedly, both authors could have pointed out similarities between transient and sedentary individuals, from orientation to family, to openness to change and discovery of new places and much more; instead they chose to insist on the extraordinary nature of travellers. Within that common perspective, however, differences were identified in the treatment of this community by the two VOs, with the invisible one in *TT* showing a greater empathy with transient people and McKean's *TTaT* instead positioning himself as a narrator who acts from an external observer's perspective (Riggins 1997) and focuses on the entertaining and even shocking aspects of travelling culture. As Lichtenstein suggests in her interview in this volume (Chapter 13), such a difference may be explained in terms of the networks that show the documentaries: *TT* was broadcast by public BBC Scotland 'with an inheritance of Reithian values to educate, inform and entertain', while *TTaT* was shown on commercial Channel 5, which tends to combine information with entertainment. As documentaries are generally contracted before their production, it is plausible to think that the individual film-maker may have taken into account the thrust of the channel that would broadcast his product, together of course with his personal stance towards the subject of the film.

To conclude, if a close investigation of texts can identify ideological positioning in television discourse, it is hoped that '[a] better understanding of the ways in which discourses operate might contribute to more efficient self-monitoring on the part of journalists, who constantly are asked to write [or film] about groups to which they do not belong' (Riggins 1997: 26).

Notes

1. Due to space constraints, I cannot refer to the studies on didactic documentaries proper that investigate such health issues as AIDS/HIV, mental

illness and so on (Anderson and Austin 2012; Ghosh 2012; Hart 2013 Stadler 2003 among others).
2. This is an ongoing project with a Brighton community of Irish travellers in association with the local Council I have been carrying out since 2012. The present study contributes to my reflection on the identity and representation of this community.

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7
MasterChef

Cooking Competition across Cultures

Louann Haarman

Introduction

MasterChef is a competitive cooking show, currently broadcast in over 50 countries in a format that combines features of career-oriented programmes with conventional game show procedures. The remarkable success of the franchise and its subsequent spin-offs has sparked a growing body of work on 'the *MasterChef* phenomenon', most of it dealing specifically with *MasterChef Australia* (e.g. Lewis 2011; Bednarek 2013). The popularity of the programme has much to do with the format. As Chalaby (2011: 294) has noted in a discussion of the TV format trade as a global industry, reality, talent and factual entertainment formats are 'designed to create *dramatic arcs* and produce *story lines*' where 'the narrative arc is based on the *journey* that the contestant makes which, in the most dramatic cases, transforms their lives' (emphasis in original).[1] While global phenomena, however, these programmes would appear to be ultimately dependent on the audience's identification and affirmation of aspects of the national culture and identity. Turner (2005), in a study on cultural identity, soap narrative and reality TV, shows how the Australian *Big Brother* gradually transformed the discourse of the original British version with its 'expectations of conflict and sexual adventure' and emphasis on extroversion. Turner attributes this 'indigenization' in part to production choices in the editing stages to focus on narrative strategies typical of Australian soap opera ('upbeat, sunny, community oriented'), and to emphasise the soap opera's 'suburbanality' in the Australian-ness of the house, with its pool, barbecue, vegetable garden and chicken coop. By the end of the first season,

> the values underpinning the discussion of behaviors both in the
> house and outside became progressively more traditional, more

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oriented toward helping the group of housemates function for the good of all its members. Rather than becoming increasingly individualistic as relationships in the house splintered under the pressure of competition [...] the group of housemates turned itself into a family. (2005: 420)

Aslama and Pantti (2007) found similar results in an analysis of the Finnish *Extreme Escapades*, concluding that the programme 'reproduces national identity in multiple taken-for-granted, invisible, or unnoticed details' [...] Formats may escape national boundaries, but the need for national belonging remains'[2] (2007: 64–65).

Turner (2005: 415) suggests that the way to examine 'the local' in 'the global' might best be through 'mapping processes of appropriation and adaptation rather than through the proposition of any thoroughgoing specificity or uniqueness'. This chapter addresses such (different) 'local' realisations of the *MasterChef* global franchise through a discussion of British, American and Australian episodes of the programme; it discerns where those differences and similarities lie and how the participants are displayed in the different cultural contexts.

Preliminary information regarding format and procedure

MasterChef (hereafter *MC*) is an edited programme assembled from many hours of live recording during the course of the competition. A profile of some essential features of the different country editions is set out in Table 7.1. The data refer to the 2014 season.[3] As may be seen, the original MasterChef series was British, and its current revised format remains unique with respect to the other franchised versions considered here, which have opted – to varying degrees – for a more aggressively competitive procedure and the awarding of significant monetary and other prizes.

Data and methodology

The corpus on which this chapter is based refers principally to episodes in the 2013 and 2014 seasons. The qualitative and comparative methodology is based on videos and transcripts of the episodes. Attention is focused on differences in format and editorial practices, as well as on the construction of the participants' roles and social identities as they emerge in the programme. The analysis thus first reviews consistent production choices in the various countries which determine a

Table 7.1   Essential features of UK, Australian and US editions

	UK	Australia	US
First edition	1990–2001/2005	2009	2010
Producer	Shine (from 2005)	Shine (from 2012)	Shine (from 2012)
Running time per episode	30–90 minutes	30–120 minutes	42 minutes
No. of episodes	23	65	25
No. of days a week	5	6	1 (two episodes)
No. of weeks	8	13	13
No. of contestants at beginning	60 (only six at a time)	22 (contestants reside in a common house during their participation in *MC*)	20
Judges	John Torode Gregg Wallace	Gary Mehigan George Colombaris Matt Preston	Gordon Ramsay Graham Elliott Joe Bastianich
Prize	(possible work contacts)	A$250,000 + cookbook + Alfa Romeo Giulietta + training by professionals	$250,000 + cookbook

characteristic and recognisable 'look' of the show in two key segments, namely (a) the Introduction to the first episode of the season, which sets the tone and 'frames' the series (in Goffman's 1974 sense of providing a particular focus on the perception of an event), and (b) the elimination phase, during which contestants are sent away from the programme. The display and positioning of contestants as evidenced in the mode and content of their remarks during selected phases of the competition, as well as the judges' comments, are also discussed with reference to contextual aspects and format variations among the national versions.

The introductory sequences

The analysis of the framing operation of the introductory sequences is carried out following Entman's (1991: 7) characterisation of news frames as 'constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images [which] render one basic interpretation more readily discernible, comprehensible and memorable than others'. The critical role of the introductory segment in establishing the series 'brand' and capturing the target audience is emphasised by Bednarek (2014) in her study of television title sequences. Bednarek cites a television professional who adds that in these sequences 'the key thing is to try and get some sense of storyline as well as the key characters across,

and to try and establish the difference of the show as well' (Mistry 2006: 93). In the case of the *MasterChef* introductions, editing choices made in the planning and elaboration of the opening segments, drawing both on local broadcasting practices and on cultural mores and icons, converge to create three distinctly identifiable products.

MC UK

The entire one minute and 36 second 2014 introductory sequence takes place in the *MC* kitchen. The narrator speaks over visuals of judges Gregg Wallace and John Torode apparently exchanging comments on food while contestants cook.

> Narrator: *MasterChef* is back. Hundreds auditioned, now the best 60 amateur cooks are through. Each week 12 new contestants battling for just four places in Friday's quarter final. Only the strongest will make it to the final challenges.
>
> Gregg: (*smiling, shaking John's hand*) Happy anniversary. Ten years, three wives, but only one co-chef!
>
> John: (*with a knowing smile*) Cooking doesn't get tougher than this.

The six contestants are seen arriving in the building, taking off coats, filing into the kitchen, going to their posts and standing silently looking at the judges, as Gregg welcomes them to the start of 'a brand new competition. Any one of you could go all the way, that is, if you can cook.' John instructs them to cook the first dish: 'One hour, let's cook.'

The segment is very low-key. The horizontal row of the six contestants walking purposefully into the building and the accompanying music suggest the exceptional character of the occasion, but the interior setting, the otherwise non-invasive music and the narrator's calm words engaging the audience directly, combine to evoke an air of familiarity, shared knowledge and 'tradition': *MC is back*, a *brand new competition*; the *MC* UK signature line spoken by John, *cooking doesn't get tougher than this*; the reference to the *10th anniversary*; Gregg's humorous quip about his three wives. These features feed the idea of the audience as in-group.

MC AUS

In contrast with the UK opening, the Australian introduction is quite long (in 2013 nine minutes) and divided into three distinct parts. The visuals begin in homes and home kitchens, with men and women

cooking or taking food to family, highlighting the intimate charac-
ter of giving food to loved ones and simultaneously displaying the
contestants as true-to-life and just like 'us'. The judges are seen arriv-
ing in these homes amid much surprise and delight with their good
news. Entering the domestic space of the contestants, they establish a
more personal relationship, and they too display themselves as 'ordi-
nary' people, though emissaries of special news: 'Your life is about to
change dramatically', says George.

> Narrator: (*over bird's-eye visuals of the Australian landscape – vast flat-
> lands and prairies dotted with cattle, sea views with fishing boats*) The
> journey of a lifetime is about to begin.

> (*over clips previewing the series, with contestants cooking, cheering, plating
> up, despairing, crying, and judges evaluating and comforting*) But the jour-
> ney won't be easy. Some will push themselves to breaking point. And
> only one will emerge victorious as the world's most loved cooking
> competition returns.

The second part of the introduction presents images of each contes-
tant, captioned with name, over the *MC* signature tune, showing them
in non-verbal interaction with other contestants. There is an air of
companionship and playfulness, their facial expressions suggesting a
camaraderie most probably encouraged by the fact that contestants live
in a common house for the duration of their stay in the programme.
The final shot of this segment is of a contestant pulling out a chair at
the head of the table and, gazing directly at camera and smiling, offering
it to the audience to be seated.

   The very long third part of the introduction includes personalised
clips of three contestants filmed in their homes, then segues to all 22
contestants traversing a park and arriving on foot at the Melbourne
Cricket Grounds to meet the judges, who, seeing them from afar, urge
them to run ('What's with the walking?!' Gary shouts). Energy and fit-
ness are appropriate before the stadium's 'hallowed turf' representing
legendary Australian sports victories, underlining the national culture
and identity. Gary advises them:

> Gary: You are the lucky ones; you are the talented ones, the chosen
> ones. And the reason you're standing here is because the three of us
> believe in your dream.

In comparison with the UK introduction several noticeable differences
emerge. Apart from the length, which tends to confirm the intention to

frame the series unequivocally, the Australian version has a rapid succession of shots, showing the judges for the most part not in the *MC* kitchen but in the contestants' homes or, with contestants, in exteriors highlighting the Australian landscape and other cultural landmarks. This production choice underlines again the naturally dynamic energy not only of the young and rugged country, but of the contestants themselves, noisily interacting and laughing in a group as they cross the park and run, cheering, to the stadium, where they are told that the judges believe in their dreams. The success of the Australian *MC* has been attributed to the 'non-conflictual, comforting and supportive nature' (Kalina 2009 in Lewis 2011) that permeates the series.

The comparison with the UK introduction is striking: interior versus exterior; quiet and calm versus boisterous excitement; static versus dynamic; conditional promise (*. . . if you can cook*) versus promise (*your life is about to change*).

MC US

The US version is similar in some respects to the Australian. Six minutes in length (2013), the first visuals focus on the *search* for the contestants (versus *finding*, as in *MC* AUS): a helicopter flying over a metropolis, the judges canvassing the streets with megaphones, announcing the search for contestants even from the prow of a ferry boat. The exteriors are prevalently urban, showing crowds of people cheering, applauding, shouting 'MasterChef! MasterChef!' as they swarm around the judges. Eventually the judges descend from a helicopter atop a skyscraper as the visuals segue to clips from forthcoming episodes in which the contestants are being positively evaluated for their dishes:

Graham: It's *perfectly seasoned*, really good.
Gordon: That is *one of the best dishes I've ever tasted*.

The tendency to hyperbole in fact pervades the entire verbal text:

they came out *in the thousands* from *all corners of America*
the *best* amateur home cooks in America

the *biggest* names in the culinary world
MC is *perfection* on every plate
the *biggest* cooking competition show in America

Judges Gordon and Graham are presented individually in formal chef garb (Joe, a restaurateur, in a dark suit) in a stylised, dark, studio setting,

beside the gleaming accoutrements of each, offering their personal definitions of a *MC*. Unlike the Australian judges, they are displayed as highly professional, with an aura of fame which tends to distance them from the contestants. The narrator warns:

> Narrator: Those who make it will have to endure some of the *most intense and extreme challenges MC has ever seen* that *will push everybody to their breaking point*.

Note the echo of AUS's less dramatic:

> Narrator: The journey won't be easy. *Some will push themselves* to breaking point.

The second part of the introduction focuses on the contestants streaming into the *MC* warehouse for auditions, in what appears to be a slightly run-down urban area of Los Angeles. Four people give statements about their dream, skill, passion, as they walk towards the venue. Krissie's words mirror those of many contestants:

> Krissie: Winning *MC* is definitely gonna make a better life for myself and my son and make my culinary dream a reality. I hope that the judges see in me what I see in myself.

In the final part of the introduction the judges make a spectacular entrance in the warehouse to deafening cheers. Their words are obviously scripted and pure show-business;[4] the contestants are then challenged by the judges:

> Gordon: Do you have what it takes?
> Graham: Do you have the skill?
> Joe: Do you have the guts?
> Gordon: Do you have the passion to become America's next *MC*?

The questions are met with enthusiastic cheering and applause, and the auditions begin.

   Though similar to the Australian introduction in terms of duration and elaborateness of the introductory sequences, the US version differs in a number of respects. The American contestants are not presented in the context of their homes offering food to loved ones; that is, the food/love connection is neither articulated nor suggested. The emphasis is on winning the competition, being the best, having the *skill*, *guts* and *passion* to succeed in the face of *extreme challenges*. Interestingly, the

Australian version refers to *some* who *will push themselves* to the breaking point, while it is the *MC* US itself which *will push everyone* to their breaking point. This type of framing supports a more aggressive approach to the competition, not incompatible with the absence at this stage of any visible interaction among the contestants. Friendly and cheerful personal interaction is instead a prominent feature of the Australian introductory sequence, which appears to focus more on the *MC experience* as life-changing, the realisation of a dream in personal terms, more than with strict reference to the monetary prize.

The elimination phase

The eliminations reflect the more general orientations of the country versions described above, which might be placed on a cline from reserved and understated in *MC* UK, to emotional and explosive in the US version.

MC UK: Michael

In the UK elimination phase, because no more than six contestants compete at a time, judges comment on each dish in great detail in the presence of all contestants. They then confer privately, discussing the merits and shortcomings of each dish, following which the contestants are called back and the judges' decision is pronounced. A typical elimination sequence is set out below.[5] Five contestants file in and stand silently before the judges, as in Figure 7.1 below. One must be eliminated. Gregg and John stand side by side facing them.

Gregg: Incredible week (*camera pans faces of all contestants*), fantastic competition, but unfortunately one of you has to leave us.

(5 secs)

John: The person leaving us

(*Camera pans faces of Jack and Michael, previously indicated by judges as the two weakest candidates*.)

(16 secs)

John: . . . is Michael.

(*Michael dips head, raises it and looks briefly at judges*.)

Michael: (*speaking quickly)* Thank you very much for everything (*turns to other contestants, walking out of room*) and good luck to everyone, good luck.

(*Camera dwells on expressions of other contestants: two women look concerned and sorry, two men look relieved, Michael enters green room and sits on sofa*.)

Michael: (*addressing unseen person beside camera*) Naturally really disappointed to go home because I think if I'd've executed that dish better today I might have been in with a shout.

(*Alternating clips of Michael cooking with shots of him on sofa*.)

Michael: (*addressing unseen person beside camera*) Overall I think I'll look back pleased I entered, pretty proud of myself, it's a great accomplishment, I don't regret anything really. Definitely a better cook than when I started.

(*Michael walking out of building. Shot of four remaining contestants embracing each other, smiling, commenting quietly, 45 secs*.)

The sequence is notable for the dignified reserve of judges and contestants, but also for the warm embraces between the remaining finalists. This personal contact in *MC* UK is in fact more common towards the end of the series, as above, where finalists also compete outside the *MC* kitchen in restaurants or abroad and where a sense of camaraderie is more likely to develop. Note John's observance of the reality show genre's 'suspense-filled pause' rule before the eliminated contestant is named, a walloping 16 seconds here.

Figure 7.1   MC UK: Michael's elimination (centre)

MC US: Malcolm

There being until the final stages of the programmes a greater number of contestants present at any one time in both US and AUS versions, a different procedure is followed. Often the three best and the three worst cooking efforts are singled out, and of these, a winner is proclaimed and a loser is eliminated.

Malcolm's elimination is typical for the US programme.[6] Of three contestants who have produced the worst dishes, Cathy, Malcolm and Jessie are singled out by Gordon, who conducts the procedure in a stern voice from the raised platform at the front of the kitchen while the other two judges stand slightly behind him (Figure 7.2).

Gordon: (*sternly*) At least one of you are [*sic*] going to be leaving the competition. Malcolm, step forward. (2 secs) You made so many fundamental flaws. Anything to say?

Malcolm: I can only learn from my mistakes and try to grow from them.

Gordon: For now (4 secs) you are NOT (2 secs) safe. Please step back. Cathy, step forward please. (3 secs) Are you done? [. . .] Because watching you decorate those cupcakes was like someone in kindergarten that was out for a jolly. Your cupcakes tasted like you were ready to go home. Are you ready to go home?

Cathy: (*close-up, in broken voice, tears*) No chef, I'm not. I wanna keep fighting.

Gordon: We don't think (7 secs) you're ready (2 secs) to go home either. (*Cathy puts hand to mouth, gasping*) Back to your station. (*Cathy turns and walks to her place.*) Jessie, completely missed the mark. (2 secs) [. . .] What were you doing? [. . .] People have left this competition with smaller mistakes. (3 secs) We've decided.

(*Cut to* Jessie *in MC pantry*) This competition means everything to me because this is what I want my career to be, it's what I've focused my life around.

(*Cut back to* Jessie, *eyes closed, before judges,* in voice-over [VO]) I deserve to be here, but I messed up tonight.

Gordon: One of you is staying, and one of you is going home.

(*Close-up of* Malcolm *in profile before judges, in VO*) I really tried my hardest and I don't wanna go home and (*Cut to* Malcolm *in MC pantry*) I wanna show them like I really wanna be here.

Gordon: The person going home tonight (2 secs) is (5 secs) is Malcolm. Jessie, back to your station.

(*Malcolm, head down, bends over, hands on knees. Jessie, head down, hands on eyes, turns and walks away, touching Malcolm's back. Shots of other contestants, hands to faces in emotional reaction/disappointment*)

Gordon: Malcolm (2 secs) your time is done. (*Shot of Krissie, face contorted with sadness, tears; shot of Jonny, wiping tears from face*) Please take your apron off and lay it over your station.

Malcolm: (*alternating in VO and MC pantry*) I'm proud of me, I'm proud of me even though I didn't win anything I know it's a marathon not a sprint. (*VO over scenes from his 'journey'*) So obviously I've gotta keep striding to try and grow and grow and grow. It's a big accomplishment to make it here.

(*Cut to Malcolm back in kitchen, exiting, embraces Jonny, leaves the kitchen* (10 secs))

Note Gordon's construction of the contestants as inept adolescents (*you made so many fundamental flaws*, *like someone in kindergarten out for a jolly*, *completely missed the mark*), each criticism followed by a challenging question (*anything to say? are you done? are you ready to go home? what were you doing?*), forcing a response to the severe evaluation. But given the undisputed expertise of the judge, their inadequate performance is

Figure 7.2   MC US: Malcolm's elimination

ultimately indefensible, and their response insufficient. And to under-
line the asymmetrical allocation of power, Gordon issues commands
controlling their physical movements: *Step forward*, *please step back*, *back
to your station*, *take your apron off and lay it over your station*.

   The length of the event is also protracted by the edited insertion
of remarks by Jessie and Malcolm. In Jesse's case, after Gordon's *We've
decided* there is a cut to her standing in the pantry (with shelves of fruit
and vegetables behind her) speaking to an unseen person beside the
camera, in a mode which, following Higgins et al. (2012) we will call
indirect aside (IA).[7] Then the camera cuts to her in the kitchen, stand-
ing silently before the judges, with her words in VO. In Malcolm's case,
the sequence of the editing techniques is reversed, so he is seen first in
close-up looking silently at the judges while his words are heard in VO,
followed by a cut to the pantry, speaking in IA to the unseen person
beside the camera. These techniques will be discussed in greater length
below. For our present purposes suffice it to say that their function here
is primarily dramatic, intensifying the suspense not only by postponing
Gordon's pronouncement, itself rich in pauses, but also narratively by
lingering on the individuals who are at risk.

   While the US elimination phase is procedurally and emotionally quite
different from *MC* UK, it is interesting to note that the final segments of
each are functionally and lexically similar. Both Michael and Malcolm
have a final say, and high points of their performance during the
competition are replayed over their VO or on-camera remarks.

   Michael: *Overall* I think I'll look back pleased I entered, *pretty proud of
   myself*, it's *a great accomplishment*, I *don't regret anything* really.

   Malcolm: *I'm proud of me*, I'm proud of me *even though I didn't
   win anything* I know it's a marathon not a sprint. [...] It's *a big
   accomplishment* to make it here.

MC AUS: Jay

The Australian *MC* uses two types of elimination, one similar to the
US version described above, another which consists of a challenge
involving only two or three contestants. In this latter case, the con-
tenders – alone in the kitchen – prepare their dishes and serve them,
one at a time, to the three judges in a separate 'tasting room'. After the
judges have decided, the contestants are all called back to this room and
listen as their dishes are evaluated at length and someone is eliminated
(see Figure 7.3 below). Below is the end of the segment.[8]

Figure 7.3   MC AUS: Jay's elimination

Gary: Ellie, Jay. It comes down to the two of you. And it comes down to the dish that you cooked today. Ellie, you're safe, you're still in the competition. Jay, it's time for you to leave the *MC* kitchen.

(*Ellie and Dani put hands to their faces, heads down, then immediately Dani reaches to her right and hugs him, Ellie turns to her left, puts arm around his back, he reaches to his right and they hug.*) (12 secs)

Gary: Jay, that was a really tough decision on our part, we know how much this competition means to you, we really do.

Jay: (*face contorts in sadness, tears roll down his cheeks, Dani and Ellie turn toward him and touch him, 21 secs) (voice broken*) I don't know what to say.

Gary: You've been a tough competitor all the way through and we know you WANT this thing, you know, we know that you love, love cooking. You gonna keep going even though you're not here, at *MC*?

Jay: (*tears, sniffling*) Yeah, definitely, I mean, this was just a stepping stone and how big that stepping stone was going to be just depended on how far I went. I know there's opportunities out there, it's all food from here.

[Judges Matt and George also comment positively and at length on Jay's performance during the competition.]

[…]

Jay: (*exiting kitchen and entering waiting car, VO*) As far as the *MC* experience goes, it's been phenomenal. I've done things that I would never get to do […]

As in the UK and US editions, here there are also 'concluding remarks'. Jay's terminate with the same expression of pride and sense of accomplishment noted in the words of Michael and Malcolm:

> Jay: *I'm really proud of myself for getting to where I've got to*, just need a bit of training and uhm I think I'll make it.

But while in *MC* UK and *MC* US such concluding remarks precede the contestant's immediate exit from the kitchen, never to be seen again,[9] in *MC* AUS much more time is dedicated to this phase, which terminates with the judges' consolation and encouragement. This occasionally occurs in US *MC* towards the end of the series when few contestants remain, but in the present data never in such an extended form. This is indicative of the different roles and functions attributed to the judges, whose figure and persona are key in the individual cultural contexts, as Karen Ross (Creative Director of *MasterChef* UK) and Doug Wood (Head of Research, Shine Group) point out in Chapter 14. US judges position themselves as distant and demanding, and this is repeatedly underlined by Joe and occasionally Gordon, who are verbally more severe than their UK or Australian counterparts. The two UK judges, though affable with contestants, maintain an air of polite and considerate authoritativeness. The AUS judges, instead, are constructed as caring, their expertise acknowledged and respected but never threatening. This is supported by Bednarek's (2013) detailed study of positive emotionality in *MC* AUS in which she describes a number of verbal and visual strategies used in the programme to achieve what has been termed its 'uplifting' and 'feel good' character, including the positioning of the judges in a caring attitude in the presence of expressions of negative emotionality (2013: 102–106). Moreover, in *MC* AUS the viewer is shown the eliminated contestant returning home, welcomed by family and friends, and observes as well the remaining contestants in the common house as they anxiously wait for the 'surviving' contestants to return. This aftermath to the elimination procedure not only underlines the comradeship and solidarity of the contestants, but also gives the viewer some positive closure regarding those eliminated, whose exits frequently provoke very emotional reactions, both on the part of the loser and other contestants.

The discussion and comparison of these two key segments – the framing operation of the Introduction to the series and the playing out of the elimination phase – has highlighted evident structural and stylistic choices differentiating format and procedure in the three country versions. The following section addresses the positioning of participants and the performance of self, focusing in particular on their utterances and roles in the competitions.

The display and positioning of participants

Contestants and judges, introduced in the initial framing segments of the series, are displayed and constructed with reference on the one hand to the participant roles foreseen for them in accordance with the rationale and format of the show, and, on the other, interactively through their own utterances. These two aspects are inevitably enmeshed: the participants may not speak unless the format provides a space for them to do so. This section compares the mode and content of such utterances with reference to participants' identities and the characteristics of the three national versions.

Some background

Reality shows centred on rewarding the talent of 'ordinary people' entail not only the performance of a skill, but also the performance of self. Whatever skill or competence is at the core of the programme, the contestants are required to perform that activity before an audience, a requirement which necessarily implies the relinquishing of the character of ordinariness: performance before a camera is perforce not 'ordinary' for the layperson. Contestants thus find themselves in what Bignell (2005) has called 'a mediated middle space' between ordinary and celebrity. The performance of self may be constrained or facilitated by format: participants act and interact within a set of conventions and parameters which characterise the institutional framework for that action and interaction (Thornborrow 2015). Performance on *MC* thus involves not only cooking, but the performance of self *to the extent that the participation frameworks foreseen by the programme* **and** *the given broadcasting styles and practices so permit*. It is achieved principally through contestants' talk and interaction with other participants, to which we now turn.

The modalities of talk

The various manifestations of talk in reality programmes have been amply analysed and discussed with reference to, among other things, argumentation, conflict, impoliteness and emotionality.[10] These aspects are not the focus of attention in this section, which regards rather the contexts in which talk occurs and the modalities with which it is conveyed to the viewer.

During the course of each episode contestants' remarks may occur spontaneously in the flow of cooking activities, addressed to co-contestants, to judges or presumably to members of the production

Figure 7.4   Indirect asides: US, AUS, UK

team off camera; or may be inserted at specific points during post-production editing. In the latter case (illustrated above in the description of Malcolm's elimination), the remarks are often presented in VO mode over visuals of the speaker or other individuals or activities relevant to the verbal text, and/or as an IA where the speaker addresses an unseen person located beside the camera, as may be seen in Figure 7.4.[11] Neither of these modes of talk is *addressed* to the camera, but both are *intended for* the viewing audience, and contribute to the construction of the participant on the part of the editors of the programmes.[12]

The VOs and IAs in *MC* US and AUS are generally delivered in the present tense *as though contemporaneous with* the activity of the moment, even though we see the contestant speaking in a different location,[13] and often in different attire, indicating that the utterance has been produced post hoc and subsequently inserted in the text. Henceforth in transcriptions, '(VO)' before an utterance indicates that the words are spoken by the speaker but she/he is not seen pronouncing them; '(IA)' means that the speaker is pronouncing the words on camera but his/her gaze is directed at an unseen person.

MC US

The VO and IA editing techniques are not used to the same extent in the three country versions but, particularly in *MC* US and, to a lesser extent, in *MC* AUS, they are fundamental to the realisation of the programme in several interrelated respects. The IAs provide a window onto the contestants and an important space in which they may perform qua individuals. At the same time, however, because these short IA segments are not spontaneous but solicited, edited and inserted in the programme post production, along with VOs they provide editors and producers a means to *display* aspects of the contestant's performance in such a way as to increase suspense and drama (e.g. Malcolm's elimination), or to favour the creation of narrative threads. The following

examples highlight also the *quality* of the remarks in VO and IA, focused on personal relationships in a negative or problematic context.

Natasha: (VO) I'm offended by what Luca says but honestly I think that (IA) he's weak and I honestly think he's a joke.

Jordan: (VO) Natasha is a little bit overwhelmed right now. I don't think she understands the role of being a captain.

Eddie: (VO) I want Lynn to go home. (IA) I need Lynn to go home.

Krissie: (VO) Nooo. Of all people, Bri. Seriously? I will take her on any day (IA) I will take her on head to head any day and I will cook her little vegan ass under the table.

More generally, of 82 contestant remarks in VO and IA appearing in two episodes of *MC* US,[14] 37 (45 per cent) can be classified as other-directed, evaluative and negative. The great majority of the remainder of the comments address the competition itself:

Lynn: (VO) I don't wanna disappoint our team and having that pressure (IA) it just builds and builds and builds.

Jonny: (IA) The point is to be here and to be a leader and to show what you're made of.

James: (VO) I wanna believe that our team (IA) did enough to win tonight.

They forward the narrative by revealing or underlining contestants' personal evaluations and animosities, alerting the audience to future developments and/or providing an interpretative key to events. This maintains audience. Yet notwithstanding the open expression of hostility in VOs and IAs, there are remarkably few direct confrontations between contestants, which normally occur during team challenges when they are working under extreme pressure. Apart from these explosive exchanges rich in beeped expletives, the contestants are very rarely seen engaging in social interaction of any sort, although non-verbal expressions of emotion (encouraging or consoling applause, embraces upon winning a challenge, tears at someone's elimination) indicate that some positive personal relationships do develop. However, to a very large extent *MC* US contestants are represented, and represent themselves, in brief skirmishes during team challenges, in brief occasional exchanges with judges regarding their cooking choices and procedures, and, prevalently, in VO and IAs focusing principally on aspects of the competition and on evaluations (frequently critical) of other contestants.

MC AUS

Similar in some respects to the US version, *MC* AUS differs chiefly in the quantity and quality of talk and interaction on the part of the contestants and judges. Of 65 VO and IA comments in one episode,[15] virtually all dealt specifically with the preparation of food. Moreover, there were numerous other similar remarks and exchanges between contestants delivered 'live' in the kitchen, not calculated here insofar as the task – which, unusually, was to be completed in pairs – favoured such exchanges. From a comparative point of view it can be noted that the talk produced by single contestants *and edited into the final text* regarded only the food and its preparation.

> Kelty: (IA) Daniel has made a beautiful flower of that Wagyu [beef] which is his style. (VO) We start putting our lovely tomatoes down, (IA) different tomatoes, different coloured tomatoes. (VO) Daniel dots his aioli around the plate. I look at the dish and it's elegant, it's a (IA) picture on a plate, I'm happy with it I hope the judges will be too.

The exchanges between the contestants *as they work in the kitchen* lend a much more authentic character to the competition. Below is a segment of talk by Neha and Lynton as they work, addressing their utterances to an unseen person, possibly a member of the production team.

> Neha: I'm going to do the olive macaroons and Lynton will do the beetroot ones so we are dividing and conquering.

> Lynton: Neha and I get along great, I'm really happy to be working with her today. I am taking a bit of charge I know we really have to work quickly so we can stay on top of this recipe. (*to Neha*) Push, Neha.

With respect to the US version, *MC* AUS shows overall a smaller incidence of contestants' edited remarks, a greater opportunity for spontaneous talk, and an editing technique which intersperses 'in the kitchen' visuals with the edited inserts, as in Jules's remarks during a team challenge.[16]

> Jules: (IA) This seriously is starting to feel like the most exciting challenge that we've had.
>
> (VO) We are in a tiny space.
>
> (IA) Honestly it's like a postage stamp to work on, it's chaos! I notice that someone has turned off my timer.

(*in kitchen*) Who turned my timer off? Oh my God (*opening oven door, looking at meat*)

(IA) I have no idea how long that pork's been in the oven for.

(*in kitchen, holding pan of pork*) It has to be in the oven at really high heat for 30, 40 minutes but I've got to get those times right.

(VO) I'm really worried about that crackling.

(*in kitchen, putting pork back in oven*) This is disaster.

The rapidity of the different shots – from the nondescript space for IAs, to the kitchen in VO, to the kitchen 'live' (or 'in the moment') – effectively reproduces the chaos and confusion of the moment and lends authenticity to the event (while reconstructing a plausible, but in reality totally spurious, chronology).

As in the *MC* US, team challenges are stressful events, but they differ in two respects. Here there is extended consecutive footage of contestants working and interacting in the kitchen, and – while voices may be raised in the pressure of the event, and even strong criticisms made in edited inserts – there are no expletives or violent and angry outbursts.

The absence of verbal aggression and overt hostility clearly differentiates *MC* AUS from the US version. It was noted above that the introductory framing of the series purposefully highlights a camaraderie among the contestants from the very beginning of their 'journey'. The solidarity and good will which transpires among them is especially evident during the elimination challenges, as we saw in the case of Jay, comforted not only by his co-contestants, but also by the judges. Indeed the judges – presented in the series introduction as affable, 'ordinary' people – appear quite sensitive to the contestants' feelings and encouraging during the preparation of dishes, often making helpful suggestions particularly in the early stages of the competition. That the *MC* AUS format includes a weekly master class during which the judges illustrate techniques and demonstrate the preparation of dishes is in keeping with the strong orientation of the programme towards food and cooking, which is evident also in the contestants' spontaneous and edited talk, and which appears to prevail over the more cut-throat competitive spirit that permeates the US version.

MC UK

The considerable procedural and stylistic differences between the UK and the US and *MC* AUS have been described in some detail in the

introductory sections. In the absence of any prize except the *MC* trophy, the show is entirely focused on the preparation of food and the performance of cooking. The format itself exercises a considerable control over the elements in play. The limited number of contestants per week and the formula of heats culminating in the final contest ensure on the one hand that only the most skilled and motivated remain in the competition; on the other, because the numbers are small, the procedure is able to offer the strongest contestants (and show the viewing audience) highly professional mentoring by *MC*'s contacts in the culinary sector, which may be useful to them in the future.

   Because *MC* UK is resolutely and tenaciously a *sui generis* reality cooking competition in which the *performance of cooking* is the star, it is not surprising that we find little space for the *performance of self* on the part of the contestants, whose talk and interaction are displayed at a bare minimum. Choices made in editing clearly privilege the phases of preparation, tasting, consumption and evaluation of the dishes. Moreover, UK contestants are hardly ever seen interacting with co-participants (though occasionally the camera captures non-verbal gestures of solidarity) and normally engage in brief exchanges with the judges only upon their first appearance in the kitchen, which serves as a kind of introduction to the audience. 'Dani, 29, Deputy Pub Manager' appears on the screen at the beginning of the following exchange, which constructs Gregg as interested, supportive and authoritative and Dani as a bit nervous but determined.

   Gregg: Dani, forgive me, it all looks a little bit frantic over here.

   Dani: It is a little bit, yeah.

   Gregg: What's goin' on?

   Dani: I'm just worried about the time. Keep lookin' at my watch.

   Gregg: You seem to have loads more ingredients and pans than anybody else. What are you cooking?

   Dani: I'm cooking a pan-fried sea bass with truffle mash, sautéed, and a mussel, saffron and prawn sauce.

   Gregg: What are you tryin' to show us?

   Dani: You're not gonna get through doin' a sandwich are ya? or doing a toastie so all out first, first round.

   Gregg: Good lad. Well done.

The elaborate post-production editing procedures typical of *MC* US and AUS are also lacking in *MC* UK, for here there is no attempt either to weave narrative threads or to display the contestants' thoughts or opinions regarding others or the task at hand. Thus, IAs are frequently delivered in the kitchen, to a member of the production team, in the moment, while the contestant is actively engaged in cooking:

> Jack: This is gonna be a case of crackin' on, gettin' my head down and really, and gettin' all the prep done and hopin' they'll be all right for service.

> Ping: I forgot to put the baking powder in. Right. How can I best do this, I think I'm gonna put the baking powder in there and whisk it in.

Or upon conclusion of the cooking test, seated in the green room:

> Luke: It went okay, it went okay, and I got pretty good feedback you know for an invention test it's pretty good. I just hope it's enough.

> Ping: I'm really disappointed, because it just didn't hit the mark really, so I'll probably go into the cook-off.

In comparison to the US and AUS versions, the *MC* UK contestants are displayed as reserved and silent; they speak when spoken to. The institutional framework (format and broadcasting practices) in which they perform their talent provides few opportunities for talk and interaction until the final weeks of the programme, from the quarter finals on, when contestants engage in particularly demanding cooking tests and go abroad. While interaction remains at a minimum, the camera captures them in IAs which reveal aspects of their personalities. Moreover, the extended introduction to the final contest in *MC* UK is dedicated exclusively not only to the 'journeys' of the three finalists, but also to their past and their aspirations, recuperating in this way part of the focus on individual contestants that the other versions have pursued from the initial phases through careful and frequently invasive editing practices. *MC* UK remains a programme wholly about food and its preparation.

Conclusions

This comparative review of formats and procedures of the *MasterChef* competition aimed to discern points of encounter and diversity in the

realisation of the franchise. It emerges that the original UK version distinguishes itself on several fronts, fundamental to which is the choice to engage only a small number of participants at a time working in an appropriately sized kitchen, and to carry the competition forward via heats, evaluating and eliminating contestants so that at the end of each week one participant will have qualified for the quarter finals. While this permits action and interaction in a more restricted environment and would appear to encourage a greater degree of self-expression and comradeship, in reality the production choice to limit the opportunities for such self-presentation results in an undivided focus on the food and cooking. This is seconded by the two judges, whose evaluations are elaborate and professional, by a broadcasting style which eschews an exaggerated use of edited insertions and a broadcaster which rejects the manipulative use of recorded material. As Karen Ross explains in Chapter 14, 'we make our programmes for the BBC. [. . .] [Y]ou couldn't take a shot of a contestant from the day before and put it somewhere else. You just don't do that.' The star of the cooking competition has to be the cooking. The original *MC* format cannot but represent and guarantee those stereotypical cultural values of emotional reserve, respect for privacy and procedural transparency which are associated with British culture.

The Australian and US versions have several points in common which arise from the choice to engage, from the initial stages, 20 or more contestants at a time; to offer a generous monetary prize and a book contract, to engage in a more varied and aggressive competition, and to provide considerable opportunities in the programme for the representation and performance of contestants through VO segments and IAs inserted in post-production editing. Moreover, they both take place in a large 'kitchen' with a well-furnished pantry often visible to the audience. But the programmes play out in significantly different ways.

In *MC* US the presence of celebrity chefs as judges, often severe in their criticism, and the brazen behaviour and individualism of many of the contestants combine and clash to underline the highly competitive nature of the show. The VO segments and asides, to a large extent other-directed, conflictual and negative, or evaluative and critical if regarding some aspect of the competition, have a dramatic or narrative function which places the focus on the competition as the star. This tends to reflect an emphasis on individualism, competitiveness and on winning, values highly regarded in contemporary American culture.

The caring judges in *MC* AUS, instead, are complemented by what appear to be caring contestants, fundamentally soft spoken and

respectful, showing solidarity much as in Turner's (2005) description of Australia's *Big Brother*, gradually turning into a family as the competition proceeds,[17] with production choices highlighting Australian-ness not only in their location shifts, but also in the emphasis on multiculturalism. Their VO segments and IAs are almost exclusively about food and its preparation and are generally positive, in keeping with what has been seen as the 'uplifting' quality of *MC* AUS (Lewis 2010), and the *MasterChef* 'experience' of self-development (rather than simply winning), which appears in the cameos of the contestants describing their 'journey'.

These features, which have emerged from the analysis of the framing of the introductory episode, the elimination phase and the modalities of talk and interaction, differentiate these local variants of the global franchise. The fundamental role of format together with broadcasting and editorial practices is evident, and we have seen to what extent these procedures condition the playing out of the cooking and the competition. It would appear that, as Rodrigue (2008, in Chalaby 2011) points out, a global format is merely 'a vehicle which enables an idea to cross boundaries, cultures, and so on, and to be localized in every place where it stops'. That the resulting programmes convey such enduring British, American and Australian cultural values, then, should not be surprising. And that is good food for thought.

Notes

1. There is a considerable amount of literature addressing the development, evolution, spread and role of formats locally, regionally and in global franchising. See Oren (2013), and Oren and Shahaf (2011) and Kean and Moran (2008) for an exhaustive overview.
2. See also Lewis (2009), Smith (2013) and Price (2010) in this regard.
3. Minor and major changes in format are not infrequent over the seasons; for example, the abandonment of filmed auditions in the US version in 2014 and from 2012 in the Australian version. In 2011 the UK introduced filmed auditions, but fans strongly objected and the practice was dropped.
4. Including the dramatic opening of the briefcase holding (presumably) $250,000, a packet of which Joe burns while the camera pans shocked contestants.
5. Series 10, Episode 21, the last of *MC* semi-finals.
6. Series 4, Episode 12.
7. This has also been termed 'reaction shot' (Bednarek 2013).
8. Series 3, Episode 32.
9. Until the final episode, for US and AUS, when they return as spectators for the final competition, or unless they are called back in the so-called 'Second Chance' or 'Comeback' episodes for previously eliminated contestants.

10. To name just a few: Bednarek (2008, 2013); Lorenzo-Dus (2008, 2009); Tolson (2006); Lorenzo-Dus and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2013); Thornborrow (2015).
11. The two modes are almost always found in sequence, VO + IA or the reverse, as in the examples given, and in all country versions. It may be assumed that where VO and IA segments are immediately sequential, the VO text has been taken from the session in which the IA was filmed, and subsequently superimposed on other visual text.
12. DeVolld (2011) maintains that all reality shows manipulate filmed data in post-production by, for example, 'stringing together fragments, repurposing scenes, inserting fabrications such as deadlines and editing talk'. *MC* UK, however, shows the entire season's edit to the participants before broadcasting, as Karen Ross explains in Chapter 14.
13. These locations vary in the different country versions. In the UK the location is clearly the green room, with contestants seated comfortably on sofas or armchairs; in the US, it resembles the *MC* pantry with a backdrop of shelves of fruit and vegetables, with contestants appearing in a middle shot; in AUS the contestants, also in middle shot, are in front of a rather nondescript white backdrop with images of kitchen equipment (frying pans, bowls) on it.
14. Season 4, Episodes 12 and 18.
15. Series 5, Episode 26.
16. Series 5, Episode 28.
17. This calls to mind the final scene of the *MC* AUS introduction, with contestants seated around a long table and the chair at head of table being offered to the audience: the 'family' or community is projected from the beginning. Indeed the communal residency is a fundamental feature of the format. But Doug Woods reveals in Chapter 14 how the original decision to require contestants to live together was dictated purely by production and marketing considerations.

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Part II

What's Behind the Screen?

Hilary Bruffell and Anne Caborn

Television has its origins as a public service provider. In the UK, for instance, the BBC had clear-cut objectives to both educate and inform, delivering quality programming for whom the ideal audience was (upper) middle class and Home Counties, in pronunciation if not location. With this model in mind, television entertained us but also gave us something to aspire to, delivered from the perspective that 'Aunty knows best'. 'Aunty Beeb', the sobriquet increasingly used from the 1950s and semi-affectionately, very much denoted this perspective.

Television is not a static medium. The practitioners' reflections and interviews in this section convey a more egalitarian position and interpretation of television, mainly because the television companies are now financially accountable and the ultimate performance criterion is its audience ratings. This is not just about the commercial bottom line and the twin dictates of advertising and market share, but about audience empowerment and the rise of social media that increasingly amplifies the audience voice and the immediacy of its influence. Karen Ross and Doug Wood of Shine TV, which controls the global *MasterChef* franchise, speak about this in Chapter 14, as does Clive Jones, formerly of ITN (Independent Television News) and now chairman of a major disaster relief charity, who also reflects on the interplay between disasters, such as war, famine, typhoon... and news in Chapter 11.

The role of the production company has changed from a traditional top-down model delivering programming, which entertains and educates, to a multi-faceted, multi-voiced, interactional model, which has to manage the competing voices – programme maker, commissioners, participants, audiences – and their needs – almost a form of reciprocal determinism, but with a constantly shifting focus. These dynamics and tensions are explored in some detail by Peter Hamilton, a leading figure in global documentary programme markets in Chapter 12;

and, in Chapter 17, by Jan Euden and Mick Sawyer who run their own independent production company.

Anya Sitaram, founding director of an internationally recognised production company and another of the practitioners interviewed in Part II, refers in Chapter 16 to the notion of the 'citizen journalist' as a viewer who is not only allowed to air his/her views, but also may determine direction and content of programmes in real time. Audiences, which once simply delivered applause or viewed remotely from their living rooms, are increasingly active and present. Viewers' agency among other things includes polling on the futures of programme participants and critiquing televisual output in programmes in which they star. Big Brother is no longer watching and controlling, but is watched and voted upon.

And whilst the medium's output might be dismissed as transitory or ephemeral, as Luke Chilton, an assistant producer on an ITV daily morning magazine programme, says in Chapter 10, we would be wrong to dismiss it as simply 'disposable television', but information and entertainment packaged to meet the appetites of its audiences. At the same time, award-winning documentary maker Olivia Lichtenstein talks about the 'alchemy of the cutting room' in Chapter 13 and the ability of a documentary to reveal itself in the manner of a sculpture emerging from stone, as well as the role of the programme maker as artist unencumbered by more commercial (or audience-driven) imperatives.

Programming decisions are not taken in a vacuum and we need to explore the influences to enable the construction of a more in-depth view. The goal of this section therefore is to unveil what goes on behind the screen. Jon Snow and Cathy Newman of ITN both explore how broadcaster and programme perspectives influence news and documentary treatment in Chapters 8 and 9, respectively. In Chapter 15, Martin Daubney speaks frankly about pressure to deliver the 'money shot' and seeking the balance between what makes compelling television and a duty of care to those who feature in it, or whose participation may entail revealing intimate behaviours.

The practitioners' voices enable us to better appreciate and be aware of the practicalities which go into producing a piece of television, contextualise the ultimate output within the constraints of decision-making and its influences, and contextualise our analysis and understanding through the lens of practicality.

8

What Makes the News Newsworthy

Position and Priority as Considerations in the Channel 4 News Room

An Interview with Jon Snow

Jon Snow joined ITN (Independent Television News) in 1976. He is an award-winning journalist and has travelled the world as a reporter. He became ITN's Washington Correspondent in 1984 and has been the 'face of Channel 4 News' since 1989. As well as presenting the programme, he writes Snowblog (http://blogs.channel4.com/snowblog/), his personal take on the day's events, and Snowmail (http://hello.channel4.com/webApp/snowmail), a preview of the evening programme's main stories. He speaks to Roberta Piazza about his views on television news.

Roberta Piazza (RP): How do you decide what's newsworthy?

Jon Snow (JS): You have first to analyse what news actually is. There are three sorts of news: the actual real news, something unexpected, different that has happened; then what I call 'diary news' when the prime minister is going to visit X or Y about Z, this is all planned, it's in our diary, maybe it has some news in it or maybe not. Then finally there are the news features which Channel 4 News can cover because we have a longer programme.

I am intrigued by the position that television news has and the place the multiple platforms, that are now the major providers on the web, hold within the community. The digital age has democratised the news a lot and social networks, in particular, because there are so many more voices of news than there ever were. When I started, there was Reuters and the Press Association in this country, Associated Press, Associated Press International. Now you'd never look at them, with the exception

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perhaps of Reuters if you wanted to confirm something, but not as the primary source for your coverage.

RP: Can you reflect on the choices you make when presenting the news, for instance the order of presentation, the length, the visuals and voice-overs… Is there an ideological value in the selection of these elements?

JS: There are choices that are freely made by us and choices determined by other factors. So, for instance, the order may be influenced by such events as a satellite going down, or a failure of some description. In other words, what you see may not be what we had planned. In general, however, an item that opens the programme has to be seriously newsworthy if people are going to stay with you.

For example, when a great deal was happening in Northern Ireland and Afghanistan, an item about either one had to be absolutely newsworthy, because people couldn't take any more about Northern Ireland or Afghanistan unless it was truly informative. These are practical not ideological choices. With the Malaysia plane accident [Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 disappeared en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing in March 2014], the mystery deepened by the day and people were really intrigued. You could tell from the activity on the web. They were mystified. CCTV records every move we make in our life, what time on Monday you went into John Lewis, what you bought, what time you left, whereas here was something the size of two football pitches and no one knew where it was. So there may not have been real news any day but there were enough new speculations to make the item newsworthy.

And the second item is as important because that would be the one in which we have invested most. Perhaps a complex story that we have managed to progress but which is not wholly new, as in the case of the Treasury secretary Maria Miller and whether she should resign over expenses or not [the story broke in British newspapers in 2012 but was subject to renewed press attention from April 2014]. To make it a newsworthy solid second item of interest, we must find some more information to deliver.

RP: Do you think it's worthwhile for academics to pay attention to such elements as the order of presentation, the language of a particular report, etc.?

JS: I think it's worth investigating how that's done because it's done in different ways. For ITV, for instance, you'll find that the editors decide what the running order is, what stories should be covered, etc. With

Channel 4 News it's a democratic decision. Every morning 20 or 30 of us talk about what's new, what's in our diary, what happened last night, what might happen next week and decide what to work on. And the specialists, who we're strong on, the diplomatic, political, economic editor, a number of foreign specialists, will give their views. The copy editor will make the final decision about the running order.

I think that, compared to the BBC, our bulletin is more adventurous, takes more risks and doesn't stick to an accepted agenda. For example, we exposed the president of the Liberal Democrats for inappropriate behaviour with women in his office. We ran the story; there was a big hoo-hah about it which resulted in the whip being taken away from him. We found 14 cases that we were able to stand up. When we covered the case, the president threatened to sue but we were advised by our lawyer and went ahead with our report.

We are all regulated by Ofcom [the communications regulator in the UK] but that doesn't impinge much on us, although we have a lawyer checking compliances every day. This wasn't the case 25 years ago. We don't have trouble with the regulator, but we have a lot of discussion with the regulator and that's not a bad thing. In fact Ofcom complains that there are not enough complaints, because programme-makers are too cautious.

RP: Can I give you an example of a news item from Channel 4 News that attracted my attention? It was a report about a £300 million fine to the UK for breaching the EU air quality control. Your weatherman mentioned three main causes for the pollution: the first was pollution from industrial mainland Europe, the second was the sand from the Sahara and the last was home-grown pollution. Then an environment expert from Friends of the Earth was interviewed who said that EU regulations are actually quite good, but this person was given limited space. I noticed that, in general, the report tried to put the blame on Europe and decrease the UK responsibility.

JS: It seems to me that this particular item was very un-joined up; there were many hands at work on it. Probably no strategic decision had been made as to what the story really was. There were different positions and I don't think we took a line on the story. Now, the previous week I was in Greenland and we took a strong line then. Of course balance, as far as Ofcom is concerned, can be spread over a period of days. One week you could be supporting the argument pro-climate change and the next one you could look at the issue from a different perspective. I think we've rightly come under a lot of criticism because we entertained all sorts of

climate change deniers, for instance, Nigel Lawson, a former chancellor. I must say I always argue in our meeting that these people should not be put on air because they represent no science, but I always fail.

Newspapers construct a story that may look like something that it is not. With television it's much harder to do that. Television is a pretty complicated business, very labour intensive. For instance, when you look at that report on global warming, we didn't sit down in the morning and say: 'Let's deal with this by telling viewers it's actually Europe's fault'. I know that the weather man, Liam Dutton, would have spoken to the Met Office and probably that line would have come from there. Sometimes, when you want a particular person to speak on a particular line of thought, you can't get that and your balance is affected. Yesterday we could not get William Hague out of Rwanda. We wanted to talk to him and understand the situation there, where the country's president is seen as the saviour of the country but he's killing people; he's killed his opposition leaders in an assassination in South Africa and we wanted to talk to Hague about it. Unfortunately, we couldn't get him. Not because he didn't want to do the interview, he was happy to do it, but because we couldn't get a camera out to him, as the crew that we were dealing with had no mobile phones. And that sort of thing happens all the time.

RP: I have another example I would like to discuss with you. It was an interview with three Ukrainians living in Transistria who said that it would be OK if their area became Russian, although they admitted that pensions are actually better in Transistria, gas is cheaper, so there are benefits of living there. Following that, the reporter spent most of his time in a school for Romanian speakers living in Transistria. Two children were interviewed.

JS: Yes, one of them was very articulate.

RP: Yes, one speaking in English admitted he was terrified by the presence of the Russians; he feared for his family. Then the young girl spoke in translation, followed by a policeman saying he was beaten up by the Russian police and had to run away. In short, there's a lot of space in the report devoted to this side of the story, suggesting that you took a specific line against Russian expansionist plans.

JS: I don't think we took a line. We didn't set out to prove an ideological point. This was the product of a single reporter who had gone undercover to Transistria and that was his perspective. He's a foreign reporter in our team. We said: 'Look, go to Transistria, see what you can find

out.' That's what he found out and we went with that. We didn't take a line. He certainly didn't go out looking for people who were afraid of Russians but he did find some.

RP: OK, but surely he knows well that the mission statement of your programme is: breaking news, pushing boundaries, questioning the unquestionable.

JS: Yes, but without taking a politically ideological ground. Generally speaking, the Western media think Putin is a dangerous dictator; I'm actually, personally, not so sure. I think the Russians are coming to terms with a new world and they are actually in a lot of trouble; they have a lot of gas and oil but actually their industry is pretty run down, their investments are very poor, their criminality is very high, etc. I personally don't really see them as a great threat.

RP: No, not to us, but maybe to the people who are close to them.

JS: Maybe, but that doesn't mean we'd represent those people as being afraid if they weren't. The bottom line is that you have a minority Russian population that may be interested in separation.

RP: Have you got any more comments, anything you want to share with us?

JS: The biggest advice I'd give the academics is I would go for cock-ups rather than conspiracy. Conspiracy in journalism is something quite hard to achieve. If you detect a line being taken it's probably the result of a cock-up, not the result of a conspiracy.

RP: So, if as academics we are interested in detecting the presence of conspiracy, would you recommend we looked at longer reports in which journalists take a specific line or make an ideological statement, albeit indirectly?

JS: Yes, unquestionably yes. But to be honest, when I went to Greenland that would have been me and my ideological decisions. I passionately believe in climate change and I believe in our responsibility for it, I've seen it with my own eyes; I've been to the Antarctic I've been to Spitsbergen, I've been to Greenland. It's not my primary interest but I really vigorously oppose climate change deniers who represent no science.

9

News as Political Commitment and Observations on Obesity

An Interview with Cathy Newman

Cathy Newman spent over a decade working for UK national newspapers, latterly the *Financial Times*, before joining Channel 4 News in 2006 as a lobby correspondent. She now presents Channel 4 News and is a political correspondent/commentator and investigative journalist. Topics she has covered include obesity, sexual harassment inside the Houses of Parliament and child abuse. She also writes about politics for *The Telegraph*. She was interviewed by Roberta Piazza.

Roberta Piazza (RP): How do you define being a journalist?

Cathy Newman (CN): For me it's quite simple. Being a journalist is about being a bit nosy and wanting to know the answer to all sorts of different questions; it's all about enquiring after truth, that basic human curiosity. Over nearly 20 years in journalism, this has evolved into wanting to hold the powerful to account; wanting to give people a voice who wouldn't normally have a voice; right wrongs that are perpetrated by governments around the world.

RP: It sounds very political.

CN: It is. Since in 2001 when I first went to Westminster to work for the *Financial Times*, I've really kept up with politics and lots of political contacts and political stories. So, for me, it's all quite rooted in that business of holding power to account and holding governments to account. That's my type of journalism. Obviously there are lots of different sorts of journalism, but that's what motivates me.

RP: To what extent are the choices that you make when preparing a news item – the order of presentation of an item, its length vis-à-vis

the others, the words you use, etc. influenced by what you think about a particular issue, by your ideological position?

CN: Impartiality is absolutely crucial and I'm as tough on, for example, Conservative ministers I'm interviewing as I am on Labour ministers, to the extent that a lot of Labour MPs think that I'm a Tory and a lot of Tory MPs think I'm Labour. So that for me is a triumph, because nobody knows my own political ideologies, views or beliefs. It's important in a journalist, particularly if you are a public service broadcaster, to be absolutely rigorous in that impartiality. Having said that, I think Channel 4 News has a very particular perspective on the news and that's where you're talking about the different lengths of items, etc. We've always got to be different from the other bulletins. So rather than going for the sort of central summary of a story, we will ask what people are saying on this story that we haven't heard yet.

And about news length, well the BBC would probably measure out how much time they devote to, for example, international and national news. We try to do something different and we're not so bound by rules. I would say the BBC has less freedom than we do to define our own agenda. Within that, though, we've got to be really careful about being impartial. We can't bring too much interpretation to a story. We do have perspective on a story, but that's different from being partial.

RP: You're trying to be impartial, but at the same time there is always, inevitably, a perspective.

CN: Indeed and I suppose we have a bit more attitude. So again, that's where the passion comes in. In our headline sequence, for example, we'll be slightly more punchy than a BBC headline sequence.

RP: Is this related in any way to a consideration of what people expect of your programme?

CN: We've got to be different, because why are people going to come to us when they could watch the BBC? They could just be very happy with the BBC's middle of the line approach. So we've got to be different from that. We want to engage people. For example, we were talking about Marks and Spencer's profits today and the deputy editor actually came up with a really great idea. Do you remember the M&S celebrity ads, which had all those famous women in them? We thought we'd recreate that with ordinary women saying what they thought about M&S. Now, that's a way of engaging the viewer on that story.

RP: Would you say that compared to BBC you have more freedom?

CN: BBC is very much top down. You know the programme editor will basically write the scripts, whereas we're much more autonomous. There's an advantage to that because we've got so many expert correspondents and journalists. The disadvantage is that sometimes the quality may not be uniform.

RP: One thing that strikes my students looking at differences between BBC and Channel 4 is the length of your reports; they're very long.

CN: Not as long as *Newsnight*. If we have a really big film where we've spent weeks working on the story and weeks filming it, then yes, we can easily do a ten-minute piece, which is quite long. By and large about 3½/4 minutes is the average. To me, coming from newspapers, it feels like a challenge trying to get all the information into that 3½ minutes. But on ITV it's like a minute and a half, or something like that. So really you're just talking about the main points. That is the big challenge; the big difference from newspapers. I could, easily, if there was a late breaking story, have something in a newspaper within half an hour. Whereas with us, I'm sure you know this, for every minute of film you are supposed to spend an hour editing. So, think about it, for a three-minute piece that's three hours. So how do you get that done if the story breaks late?

RP: Do you ever watch your own programmes?

CN: Less now. When I first started presenting I did; I used to watch every programme back every night to see how I was doing and what I wanted to improve. Now I don't really do that so much. But when I'm on a day off I do quite often tune in and watch. And then you're watching as a viewer, which is quite interesting.

RP: Going on to the topic of obesity, I wanted to ask you to reflect on a report you made some time ago. What makes obesity newsworthy?

CN: Well I think the instance of obesity is massively on the rise. Just the prevalence of obesity makes it a massive story. Also there are all sorts of moral and ethical dimensions, like how much does the NHS (National Health Service) have to pick up the bill for obesity? How much is it a person's fault if they're obese? How much control should parents have over their children's diets? How much should it be the school? How much should you label children obese? Does that help? As a public

service broadcaster we have a duty to investigate those issues without flinching or withholding, however difficult or challenging that may be.

RP: Do you think there's a stigma for obese people?

CN: Yes and how do you handle that? And ultimately what role do food manufacturers and advertisers play in terms of, for instance, sugar, which people say is a more dangerous drug than tobacco. Therefore, should we reduce sugar levels in food? Should there be legislation to enforce that? Should there be a tax on sugar? What role do manufacturers play? So there are many different angles to this story. I would say if there's a story about obesity, it would have to be quite different to make Channel 4 because I feel we've heard a lot about obesity, about what governments should do.

RP: Very often in news reports on obese people, the camera is on a body part such as their legs or rear view. They're not shown as whole individuals but their bodies are fragmented as women's are in pornography. Is that a type of discrimination?

CN: If you're filming people without their permission, like walking down the street, you can't show their faces. So you might just focus on their bottoms to show they're fat. So actually there is a legal reason behind that image selection. Quite often you see the classic image of the two fat people walking down the street and that will be a back view simply because we won't have had their permission to film.

RP: What is the role of the media do you think, especially television, in encouraging or discouraging thoughts about obesity and for instance about the stigma of obesity?

CN: I mean, I think you have to not sensationalise, that's really important, but also as we were saying before, there's massive public health repercussions and public expenditure repercussions.

10

Engaging a Daytime Television Audience via Popular Magazine Programming

A Question of Balance

An Interview with Luke Chilton

Luke Chilton is Assistant Producer (News) on *This Morning*, ITV's daily morning magazine programme. First broadcast in 1988, *This Morning* combines topical news and features, covering a range of subjects from politics to beauty. Previously Luke Chilton was features editor of *Real People* magazine. He was interviewed by Hilary Bruffell.

Hilary Bruffell (HB): Who is your audience?

Luke Chilton (LC): I think *This Morning* is aimed predominantly at women and mothers. Women who probably are not going to be at work, full time mums, women on maternity leave and temporarily unemployed women, so we wouldn't do a lot of things about jobs and bosses, office etiquette etc. because those topics wouldn't be relevant. We look to cover parenting issues and things that young mums would be interested in: beauty, cookery, celebrity.

This Morning is quite unique; there aren't many shows on TV with such wide variety of topics. You can have the prime minister one minute and the next minute the woman with the world's largest breasts. I don't think there are many shows on TV that have such a wide remit. I think it has quite a unique position in mainstream British TV.

HB: Will you intersperse this with hard news?

LC: We're trying to be more newsy and topical but this can be difficult at times. A political subject may be important, but people may not be particularly interested in the topic. We're not a news show, so it's

a challenge for us. We have to make it interesting and consumable. For us that's about ensuring the right guests for the show and thinking creatively about how you cover certain items. We try to make every story relatable and emotional by emphasising the human side to it and diminishing the hard fact dimension in it.

HB: Would you say that the rise in social media has changed how you define the success of a programme like yours?

LB: This is a live show, which is expensive to produce, and that's why we have a lot of interaction with the viewers, with tweets and emails. That's why people like watching live TV because *a* anything can happen and *b* they think, 'Well, I can influence this by emailing in or tweeting in and it's actually happening. I'm not just watching something that's cold and recorded a week ago.' I think you get a better relationship with audiences like that. However, you've got to be careful because it's only a certain cross-section of the audience who would use Twitter or Facebook. We look at all the tweets, emails and Facebook posts that come in but you've got to remember that's not everyone. Also you've got to remember that negative views are more likely to find their way on to Twitter.

However, we will look at what's trending on Twitter to see if a lot of people have tweeted about an item. For instance, today we had an interview about a woman who claimed to have been groped by a ghost and we invented a hashtag for that interview for example, #gropedbyaghost. So you can see if that's trending in the UK and you know if people are talking about it. But that's only a portion of our audience. You have to remember that a lot of our audience aren't super tech savvy and there are a lot of people who don't even use Twitter. So we have to look at more traditional ways of assessing the programme ratings, such as viewing figures, as well.

Assessment is still based on ratings for commercial TV, but it's a bit different for daytime TV than drama. The whole medium is evolving, so for drama you will measure on demand services such as iPlayer [BBC], ITV Player, other on demand services and Plus1 [services which allow programmes to be watched after a time delay – typically one hour – or on demand]. However, *This Morning* isn't a show that you would record and watch later because it's all about the live experience. It's not a drama, which are the most watched things on catch up [television viewing on demand]; *This Morning* is topical and newsy. It would be a bit like recording the news and watching the news a week later. It's fresh, it's immediate and there's one on every day. It's kind of disposable TV.

HB: Disposable TV?

LC: Well disposable TV sounds a bit negative but I don't think it should be interpreted that way. It doesn't mean it's trash or anything like that. I use the term because it's divided into bite-size chunks. We work out our interviews to be ten minutes long so you can dip in and out, or if you don't like an interview or something, then you can wait for the next bit of the show. That's the nature of a magazine format.

HB: So how do you decide what you do and don't include?

LC: It's very much based on what's in the news. We'll look for topical pegs. A lot of our decision-making is based upon looking at what's in the news and what people are talking about. We have a meeting and discuss what's in the papers in relation to our audience; for example, what are mums at home interested in? Well, they've got kids, they've got teenagers, so if there's a rise in self-harm in teenagers that's something they'd be interested in. Then we would think, well, how could we present this? The normal way on *This Morning* is to find the human aspect, so we'll look for a case study of someone as an example, rather than just having an expert sitting there talking about statistics. So today we talked about self-harm and we had a 17-year-old come on to talk about her experiences. Then we'll get viewers to phone in with their stories, followed by the experts advising what you should do if you find yourself in this situation. It's all about making it relatable rather than just presenting the information. We're always looking to go a bit deeper into the subject. We're interested in the emotion behind the story, whether it's sad or happy, or frightening – you're always looking for a reaction.

HB: So how do you deal with such a potentially very sensitive topic as self-harm?

LC: Well, there are rules. For example, you can't show graphic cuts and scars because it's daytime and pre-watershed [before 9 pm]. With a live TV show a caller could always say something wrong, or swear or something like that – that's the nature of live TV. You just apologise to the viewers and get on. But we want dramatic calls and dramatic stories. There's a fine line, I guess, and you have to balance what's interesting, exciting and dramatic for viewers to hear, with providing cover from counselling and helplines. We're always very responsible. That's why, when we do a story with a 17-year-old who self-harms, we have

an on-site counsellor to make sure they are up to being interviewed. We wouldn't include anyone who was currently self-harming because they're quite vulnerable.

HB: How do you make sure that you present facts and statistics in a balanced way?

LB: We always want to be balanced, and that's in the Ofcom [the UK communications regulator] code. Whenever we do any story we'll cover the wide range of opinions. With self-harm in particular, you don't want to scaremonger. The statistics were quite shocking, but we explain them. I think we can provide a degree of reassurance to the viewers by having a doctor and counsellor in place.

HB: Do you use your guests to present the opposing view?

LC: Yes. Sometimes the presenters will add/ensure the balance. The presenters will always challenge the guests, especially with a controversial guest, but we would normally have a sceptic in the studio. Politics is always difficult because there are lots more rules about that, but we would always have somebody on from each party. We'd never have just one Tory coming on and saying 'this is what we think'.

I think the audience quite like to see someone challenging the guests, I mean it's quite good television to have a bit of conflict. And this encourages the viewers' involvement through social media.

HB: You say you are guided by Ofcom, but does this determine where you draw the line?

LC: You have to abide by the Ofcom rules. For instance they have rules for supernatural stories; you can't show things like exorcisms. You have to remember that *This Morning* is pre-watershed and children could be potentially watching. Similarly there are limits to what you can show in terms of nudity and violence. If it's educational you can show nudity. For instance we did an item about penis extensions which included nudity, but that's because it was an educational item. Just because it's nudity doesn't mean it's always sexual. We were saying this is a medical procedure you can have done. However there are limits and everything we do is checked by a number of people internally, including teams of lawyers, to make sure that it's suitable for a family audience at that time of day.

HB: But how close to the line can you get? Is getting close to the line deemed good TV?

LC: Obviously we don't want to offend anyone, but we do want to make something that people want to watch, and the most exciting things are sometimes things that make you go 'ooh'. People will tune in if they think it is a bit controversial. So yes, you want to make exciting TV, but you also want to make responsible TV, and if you just had every item about sex then people wouldn't watch. So you need to get a balance about an item about sex followed by a more serious health item, and then a celebrity issue.

  You have to put things on TV that haven't ever been put on before. So when we did penis extensions for the first time about two years ago, I don't think that had been on daytime TV ever before. Times change and people are more accepting; I think in modern society people are ready for a topic like that, although it's a learning game and you never know exactly how they're going to react. We've got a responsibility to be balanced. For example Josie Cunningham is the controversial figure who's selling tickets for people to watch her giving birth and had a breast enlargement on the NHS. We had her on and the presenters challenged her: 'Do you think this is a good use of the taxpayers' money? Do you think it's right to be selling tickets to the birth of your child and do you think that's fair on your unborn child to do this?'

HB: How do you handle guests who aren't used to being on TV?

LC: Another part of our job is making sure that people are comfortable on live TV, because it can be quite a scary experience. We talk to them in advance. We go through everything on the phone first. We bring them into the studio a couple of hours beforehand so they see the studio. They sit in the Green Room and have a cup of tea. I don't think we'd ever put anyone on TV who didn't want to be there, or who wasn't ready to be on TV. Part of the presenter's job is to help guests get their point across. Ultimately that's what the show is about, making sure people express their point of view, and if they say something controversial they will be challenged, which makes good broadcasting.

HB: How much does the choice of guests determine the way the story goes?

LC: There are lots of different ways of finding the right guests. Some guests come back on a fairly regular basis, Katie Hopkins being quite a classic example. She is known for her very extreme views, but you've got to be careful about somebody becoming a pantomime villain. She knows

how to deliver her views in a TV-friendly way that is quite exciting and dramatic, and people quite like to watch something that's a bit dangerous. However, viewers are intelligent and if they thought that we were just wheeling out someone like her just to say controversial things, they would eventually stop watching. Viewers can tell if somebody is saying something they don't really mean. We're careful about how much we use any particular guest.

HB: Is controversy an indication of success of your programme?

LC: We don't set things up to be explosive; we book guests who are going to have strong opinions. For example, the piece with Peaches Geldof and Katie Hopkins wasn't predicted, scripted or planned in anyway, but it went on YouTube and had thousands and thousands of hits, so people obviously enjoyed watching that.

HB: So again is that also a sort of a marker of success?

LC: Yes, if you mean that it got picked up in several newspapers, and had all these hits on YouTube. So it was obviously popular and people were talking about it, so that's good for the show. It raises awareness of the show. *This Morning* is a strong brand anyway and most people are aware of a show called *This Morning*, but you want to keep it in people's minds so they might think 'Ooh, I haven't watched *This Morning* for a while, it looks like it's good.' You can't rest on your laurels, even when you've got an existing strong brand.

HB: Would you say audience engagement is paramount?

LC: It is important for live TV. You want to be on people's minds and you want to be talked about.

Part of that is talking about what viewers are interested in. For example a lot of our audience are a cross-over audience with soap operas. They are probably going to watch *Eastenders*, *Coronation Street* and *X Factor* and they want the gossip. Or if we do a piece about *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!*, people love it because they've watched the programme the night before and it's almost like gossiping about it with their mates the next day. They see our presenters Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby as an extension of their friends. We have a *This Morning* family; we have a regular GP and Denise Robertson, our agony aunt, whom you want to be familiar to our audiences. It's all about feeling comfortable, feeling safe, feeling nice, watching the show and thinking 'Oh this is a lovely environment and I can sit and have a coffee

and even tweet or email in and get my comment read out.' We want to make it feel like it's an extension of your family and your living room. But you have to be responsible. You have a responsibility to fill the airtime with worthy subjects. You have a unique audience who trust you.

11

It's Not a Disaster if It Doesn't Make the 9 O'Clock News

How Factual Programming Can Shape Perceptions and Responses to Major Disasters

Clive Jones

Now chairman of a major disaster relief charity in the UK, Clive Jones CBE is a television news journalist by background. Over three decades he held numerous senior television executive and board level appointments including Chief Executive of the ITV News Group. Since 2011 he has chaired the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). His reflection below was originally presented at the one-day interdisciplinary colloquium that was held at the University of Sussex in November 2013 and which first prompted the idea for this book. His presentation was further developed in discussion with Anne Caborn after the event.

The DEC is a unique 50-year-old partnership between the 13 leading UK aid agencies, the British media, particularly the major broadcasters, and the British public. Other countries have adopted this model but its success in Britain is, currently, without equal.

As of May 2014 the DEC in Britain had orchestrated 65 appeals, raising more than £1.2 billion since its launch after a major earthquake caused widespread devastation in Turkey in 1966. However, the scale of a disaster does not automatically entitle it to unilateral broadcast coverage, which is critical to major fundraising.

The DEC has a unique relationship with British broadcasters. It comes into play when aid is required to deal with major disasters. It unites the UK's leading aid and humanitarian agencies and the UK's major broadcasters to launch a single televised fundraising appeal. At that point the different agendas and initiatives of the powerful charities

involved are subsumed by a unified collective action plan – they all work together during a Period of Joint Action (PJA) to achieve a common goal under a single publicity campaign and message to the general public.

Rolling this message out across media and in particular the main television channels and news programmes is critical. Our broadcast partners help us answer the question of whether the public are likely to support an appeal by providing information about planned media coverage of a disaster. The BBC, ITN and RadioCentre [the industry body for commercial radio] create appeals for radio and television. These appeals are then broadcast by the BBC, ITV, Sky, commercial radio stations, Channel 4, Channel 5, S4C and the Community Channel.

When it comes to editing together the disaster footage that will be broadcast to communicate the DEC appeal to television audiences, different broadcasters have different approaches to source material. The BBC uses primarily BBC footage with some footage from external sources, particularly trusted agencies or freelancers. It does not use NGO (non-governmental organisation) footage in its appeal edits. ITN is willing to use NGO footage in appeals where it is confident of the source. For example, about one-third of the footage for the ITN appeal for the Syria Crisis Appeal was provided by the DEC members and their partners. Both BBC and ITN use, primarily, a news framework to select images, but the DEC has final approval. The broadcasters need to show humanitarian need and, ideally, some signs of aid delivery. The DEC needs to ensure that those affected by the disaster are portrayed with dignity, in accordance with the Red Cross Code of Conduct. But both the DEC and the broadcasters have a common interest in a strong and trustworthy call to action.

We know that certain images can be very important in an appeal context, such as images of children and images that show the extent of the human suffering, but we cannot be exploitative. A news journalist might select an image because it is the most newsworthy and not have to hold back in the same way. That said, I am a former news journalist and I know that there are sometimes terrible images of bodies, of violence, which news organisations receive but do not use. Sometimes pictures are too shocking to show. The DEC does tend to have the final say in terms of the appeal footage but we will work with broadcasters to achieve this. And our most recent research indicates that one of the main reasons the public support our appeals is because they have enormous empathy with collective action. They respond to the fact that both charities and broadcasters put aside individual agendas. I feel this sets the role

of the images, the appeal footage and its editing, in a broader emotive context.

On only one occasion did we fail to get unanimous backing from the main British broadcasters and therefore fail to publicise an appeal unilaterally across all the main channels and that was the case of the 2009 Gaza Crisis. This appeal raised £8.3 million. If you compare this total with other DEC fundraising totals, where broadcaster support was unanimous, you can easily see the dramatic impact such a partial appeal had on fundraising capacity:

- £25 million – 2013 Syria Crisis
- £18 million – 2014 Gaza Crisis
- £107 million – 2010 Haiti Earthquake
- £392 million – 2004 Tsunami Earthquake.

At the time of the 2009 appeal the BBC took the view that carrying a humanitarian appeal for those affected by the conflict in Gaza would compromise their editorial impartiality. They took a different view in 2014 but, it must be said, we also approached our 2014 Gaza appeal differently. We didn't launch our 2014 appeal until after the first Gaza ceasefire. We made a very strong humanitarian case which referenced the attack on a critical power plant, the loss of housing to bomb damage, the publication of a UN report and the ceasefire. Broadcasters also need to see that we can deliver the aid once the money is raised.

So, while the scale and magnitude of a disaster may trigger a DEC response, it does not automatically assure a concomitant and commensurate response in either the media or in the response of the British public. While the desire to help is a natural human instinct, both amongst broadcasters (who set aside competition and open up their schedules to us) and by individuals (whose willingness to put their hands in their pockets still takes my breath away), we live in a television and video (and exponentially digital) age where the ability to 'get the message across' is a critical part of the process. Essential Samaritan values need to be tapped into and for this we rely heavily on the force of television.

Broadcasters and the public know that if we respond to a disaster, this is because undoubtedly it is a major disaster. But major disasters do not automatically render themselves into broadcastable news footage. While a DEC campaign will rely on specially prepared appeal footage, the response and values given to any disaster are also reflective of

any disaster's wider coverage – across prime-time news broadcasts and popular documentary programming.

There can be a number of reasons why a disaster may not *make the news*. At one extreme, as previously alluded to, much of the accessible imagery may be too horrific to be shown, except in a limited way. At the other, the disaster itself may be predicated on terrorism, repressive political regimes and the often covert horror of torture that is not readily evidenced visually, or within an *appeal-adaptable* timescale. Much of this footage only begins to circulate over time and even some time after an event or a regime's overthrow. While digital and social media channels are changing this by offering an unauthorised and individualised representation of the events, mainstream traditional media remain critical.

Slow onset emergencies such as crop failures and food shortages that build into famines slowly, over time, understandably don't get high levels of sustained coverage until they reach a crisis point. This means that appeals are launched too late to prevent crises turning into catastrophes, for example East Africa in 2011. At the DEC we are often aware of these building situations but are neither empowered to act (scale/urgency) or able to influence the news agenda to create an anticipatory rather than consequential focus.

Tsunamis, earthquakes, floods can render their images more easily and, possibly, are more easily consumed by audiences. Swift and unequivocal natural disasters do not require deeper questioning of politics and the dynamic between developed and less-developed countries. Famine can be harder to document visually, while conflict can be difficult and dangerous.

If disasters lend themselves (or not) to be represented visually, it is the cameras that frame them. In the modern world it can be argued that there is no disaster if you can't get the cameras there. Even the DEC's own ability to produce appeal footage may be influenced by the type rather than the scale of the disaster. Syria is an example of this. The DEC could have raised more if there had not been so many security issues for DEC members working behind rebel and government lines. This prevented the vital television images being created and, more critically, broadcast as part of a mass appeal (images which might then have been used to identify aid workers and put them in harm's way).

Part of the DEC's value is its ability to work across the disaster/news axis and our ability to work with public and broadcaster values and the values of our member charities. Broader governance also comes into play. The public have to believe in our appeals and the needs they

highlight, plus we have to be clearly accountable for how the money raised is spent in the field by our agencies.

The decision to launch a major appeal is a complex one. Member agencies, among which are Oxfam, Save the Children, British Red Cross, Christian Aid and Islamic Relief, are passionate about what they do and are highly competitive organisations. Outside major appeals, they compete each day against each other and other charities to raise money from the public, institutions and corporates even during an era of austerity and a recent climate of falling living standards.

However, when the DEC launches an appeal, they stop competing and work together with it, fundraising jointly for the two or three weeks of the appeal. For passionate people committed to humanitarian causes, that is a big decision driven by a recognition that together we are stronger.

The speed of the process is extraordinary and predicated, in essence, upon two fundamental questions:

• By the DEC board – is the disaster of a scale and magnitude that warrants DEC orchestration?
• By broadcasters – does the disaster meet their evaluation?

We, as the DEC, have to convince the broadcasters whose support is unique and vital, and they have to convince themselves. We make a strong case about the need for aid and our ability to deliver it. We are the experts here and well positioned to evidence our arguments if the broadcasters have any questions or concerns. We can also make a case for public interest in the disaster based on media coverage, the responses to member agency appeals, as well as interest on social media and the web. The DEC and broadcasters have a shared interest in only running appeals when there is evidence that the public will support us.

Television and radio always launch the appeal, followed the next day by newspaper ads, YouTube and other social media. A few decades ago newspaper coverage would have played a greater role. Today we can already see how newer digital media such as Twitter and Facebook are becoming much more important to buttress and reinforce our appeals. At the same time we live in a world with faster, more immediate news reporting, reportage and access to images but less journalism, such as that traditionally generated by seasoned senior foreign correspondents who not only get the story but interpret it in a highly informed and objective way. This type of journalism traditionally helped the DEC form its opinion of a disaster. Now it might take us longer to have a view as it

requires us to sift a greater weight of news, reportage and images, which may be available to use almost immediately but without the processing – time and thought, or journalist expertise. This is not a criticism, simply an observation of the changes being brought about digitally. One obvious question is whether the DEC could be re-invented today in the modern digital environment. I believe yes. It would be harder because of continuing dominance of big (traditional format) channels but it would be still possible.

An example of the use of social media is the 2013 Philippines Typhoon appeal that was truly a watershed moment in that sense. Although the appeal and donations were driven by television adverts and traditional media coverage, effective use of social media, in particular Facebook and Twitter, helped the organisation to keep in touch with donors far more effectively than ever before. Social media became a core part of the communications and fundraising strategy, with more output and a more strategic approach than in previous appeals. It was also the first time broadcasters provided appeal slots and endorsement in sports coverage and during *X Factor*. Although Facebook and Twitter brought in around £300,000 of donations, the primary use of social media is to help people connect to the DEC once they have donated.

When we talk to Google, Microsoft and Facebook they rightly emphasise the international nature of their business. That might be the path we also need to follow in the future, linking up or helping to create appeals with similar organisations around the world, so we can mount an international response across global media. Only time will tell whether the rise of social media will alter the sway that mainstream media and television news in particular have in terms of capturing and focusing appeal attention and the public's response.

12

Commercial Imperatives and Their Impact on the Values of the Contemporary Documentary and Reality Formats

Peter Hamilton

Peter Hamilton is an executive producer and senior consultant to industry leaders, governments and non-profits in the non-fiction television sector as well as founder, editor and publisher of DocumentaryTelevision.com, a weekly e-newsletter focusing on the non-fiction TV business. He helps clients - including Discovery Communications, A+E Networks, Smithsonian Channel, NBC, BBC, Scripps Networks, Weather Channel, Singapore's Media Development Authority and Paul Allen's Vulcan Foundation - develop, produce and market television content.

His informed and authoritative overview of the TV industry, its drivers and evolution is the result of an initial interview conducted by Anne Caborn that was then developed into a narrative via email and telephone conversations. In his reflection Peter Hamilton explains the development of documentary and reality television formats in their broader historic and commercial context.

This is an incredibly interesting time for documentaries. Far from being tarnished by the popularising of non-fiction television genres, the supplanting of content by character-driven formats and by changes in broadcast media (particularly the growth and commissioning power of the cable networks), they are becoming fashionable as a creative outlet in much the same way as the novel and the stage have, in the past, attracted those who have something to say.

At the same time some uniquely powerful individuals are putting money into documentary-making, even if their patronage may come

at a price. Digital media channels and lightweight, relatively cheap-to-procure digital recording equipment make it easier to make and screen documentaries, thus putting the power to both create and publish documentaries into the hands of individuals. These individuals can also harness the internet, new formats and digital publishing channels to get their story out. As the equipment becomes more lightweight and affordable, the ability to handle non-lightweight topics actually increases in this new digital world. But traditional platforms and certainly theatre releases are increasingly restricted. Every silver lining, it seems, has a cloud. But to set all this into context we need to start with a little history.

Up until the mid-1980s documentary format television was driven by public broadcasters who had a taxpayer-funded remit to provide high quality, informative programming. In the 1980s that demand expanded because cable channels began and satellite systems were established around the world. (For a list of US cable networks with factual content see Appendix 1.)

To encourage subscribers, cable operators needed good-quality family viewing and informational/educational documentaries. The channels launched as part of this included the Discovery Channel in the US and the Learning Channel. These and many other channels acquired – in other words, bought off the shelf – or began to commission and produce original non-fiction programming. Audiences bought and bought into the new programme providers in substantial numbers.

As cable and satellite operators became more successful, they no longer needed the hook of 'here is this wonderful, high-quality documentary programme' to attract audiences in the same way as at the start, when they were trying to attract subscribers. As a result, the pressure to maintain the quality of individual documentaries and documentary series began to diminish.

If you look at the US in the 1990s and the 2000s, networks that had once been committed to producing quality content for documentaries or factual series were up against other types of unscripted entertainment featuring larger-than-life characters and dramatic situations. Audiences seeking 'family entertainment' were as likely to settle on a dramatised factual series as a documentary.

In such new non-fiction entertainment powerful characters became the driving force. A huge/strong character can be very effective in describing an environment in a unique and appealing way. For instance there seems to be a great deal of interest in swamps, in Alaska, in threatened ocean environments. Documentaries and reality television

shows began to look for characters that could inhabit these environments and interact with them, and could lead their exploration. You could argue that the reality television genre, as distinct from the documentary, could have only developed once character superseded environment as the star of the show.

Over time these documentary and reality television characters have become more central and more important. A handful of environmental situations that are exploited over and over again, use increasingly huge, almost biblical characters, who grab audiences' attention. If you met them in real life on the street, or in coffee shops, everyone's eyes would be drawn towards them. Examples include Hugh 'The Polar Bear', Rowland in *Ice Road Truckers* and Phil Robertson, the patriarch in *Duck Dynasty*. In the UK you have Paddy Doherty, a central character in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, who has since gone on to star in other shows and was the winner of *Big Brother 8* in the UK.

As these characters' importance increases, the way they interact with the environment and other characters is being left less and less to chance. Take *Duck Dynasty,* which is a scripted reality show. There's a script room in which the characters are prepared to act out each episode, but this is basically a comedy drama about a family in Louisiana who become wealthy by making duck callers for hunters. *Made in Chelsea* is another example. *Ice Road Truckers* is a reality show, but in terms of construction it functions like a 'road movie', following working-class characters as they drive across frozen lakes and rivers. *Deadliest Catch* is another. It's all about surviving against incredible dangers. The character-driven approach is also very useful commercially because audiences follow characters in a way that they do not follow environments. That is because it is easier for audiences to bond with a character, a person, than to bond with an environment, no matter how magnificent. This opens up the potential for such shows to become popular enough to be recommissioned. The networks want to build audiences and retain viewers, and the best way to do that is by renewing series. It is also economically efficient for them, because to promote a single documentary on a topic has a bigger (pro rata) promotional cost than promoting series over time. In a series each episode becomes a promotional platform for promoting tuning in to the next episode.

This is also an aspect that has played a part in shaping format. Portions of each episode are taken up reprising the previous episode and promoting the following episode. These mini forward- and backward-looking sections appear at either side of commercial breaks,

enabling viewers to join part of the way through a series (including second and subsequent series) or part of the way through a specific programme. The programme itself answers the question we often pose to family members as we join them in front of the television set: 'What's happened so far?'. The commercial advantage is that if you give channel-hopping or roving viewers sufficient context they might stick with you and add to your viewing figures, to the detriment of other programmes. Also, in terms of length and current scheduling patterns, it is easier to sell a series that can be contained in 50-minute programmes than in 90-minute programmes or one-off specials.

Audiences are attracted to characters with access to fascinating contexts and environments. I think in the UK there's a much stronger tradition of content-driven documentaries, but in the United States the ratings experience is that character outperforms content. At the same time traditional makers of these UK documentaries, such as the BBC, are finding it harder to secure funding. In 2013 Discovery ended its co-funding partnership with the BBC. I don't know what the future holds when it comes to making these legendary documentary series such as the David Attenborough series.

However, when you look at the top factual programmes in the UK, it is absolutely remarkable how content-driven programmes still feature. The top-rated factual series in 2013 was the BBC's *Africa* with 8.5 million viewers and nearly a 30 per cent share as Table 12.1 shows. The list also includes *Her Majesty's Prison: Aylesbury*, as well as programmes like Paul O'Grady's *For the Love of Dogs* and topics such as Pompeii. There's a tremendous range of formats and topics covered in the UK, whereas in

Table 12.1   Top 10 UK factual series, 2013

CHANNEL	PROGRAMME TITLE	Viewers 000s
BBC 1	AFRICA	8,519
BBC 1	COUNTRYFILE	7,705
BBC 1	THE APPRENTICE: THE FINAL	6,742
BBC 1	DOCTOR WHO LIVE: THE NEXT DOCTOR	6,368
ITV	OUR QUEEN	6,279
ITV	HER MAJESTY'S PRISON: AYLESBURY	6,132
ITV	LONG LOST FAMILY	5,877
BBC 1	PENGUINS – SPY IN THE HUDDLE	5,835
BBC 1	ANIMAL ODD COUPLES	5,588
ITV	PAUL O'GRADY: FOR THE LOVE OF DOGS	5,584

Source: BARB

the US the list of top-rated factual programmes is almost entirely comprised of reality series. Appendix 2 shows the list of programming in the UK in the year to July 2014.

Producers, agents and everybody involved in the non-fiction ecosystem in the US (to a lesser but not insignificant extent in the UK and particularly among smaller producers) are really focused on selling. There are very few successful producers that say 'here's a topic that I would like to cover because it's interesting, or worth doing and I'll find networks that are interested in it'. The model that is currently providing producers and agents with work is: 'Let's study particular networks; study the genres and formats that they prefer and then drill down to particular day segments – such as Sunday night, or a Tuesday prime time, where they are performing poorly and need to bolster their audience in a certain demographic, male or female, young people, Millennials [also referred to as Generation Y and born around the year 2000], or whatever and then let's develop a concept that fits that need.' The driver is a twist on the *idealised* pitching process (where an idea is pitched to a commissioning organisation in the hope that it finds favour – and funding) and focuses on networks with respect to their target audiences and not on stories and concepts that producers are most intrigued by. There are exceptions to this. In the US you have a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and *Nova* [a popular US science series]. But these slots are few.

However, there is an incredibly interesting irony here. Alongside the challenges on the creation and supply side, the documentary has become culturally essential. Just as people in the 19th century might have wished to have written novels like Dickens, or in the 1930s to have written like Hemingway, to have been poets like Ted Hughes in the 1960s, or independent film-makers in the 1980s, today it's incredibly fashionable and culturally essential to create documentaries. This is happening while, at the same time, the cost of production has been going down. Cameras are increasingly more efficient and lightweight, making it easier to gain access to situations, so there is this outpouring of documentaries and wealthy people are funding documentary production units. Look at Vulcan Productions, founded by Paul G. Allen, which funds science-related and other documentaries. Therefore, on the production side we have this incredibly culturally relevant outpouring of documentary expressions, but on the market/acquisition side we have a distribution bottleneck.

There is no extra space for documentaries to be launched in movie theatres, so there's no expansion in supply of exhibition space and on

television there has been a continuing cutback in the slots that are avail-
able for either 90-minute documentaries or specials that are content
driven. There's a curious contradiction in the market now and I would
say that alternative distribution platforms like Netflix and other online
channels have not picked up the slack, particularly by way of funding
(for non-fiction, as distinct from fiction, such as *House of Cards*). They
want to pay online pennies instead of network pounds.

A lot of private funders of documentaries want to focus on certain
topics, whether it's global conservation or the fragile marine environ-
ment. Unfortunately the opportunity to get network outlets for their
projects is very slim. Networks will commission individual author-
driven documentaries and specials for two reasons: one is that they will
satisfy or build an audience and secondly they somehow support the
channel's mission (vision statement) and therefore they lend themselves
to the press and promotion that creates a positive view of the channel.
They'll sacrifice ratings from time to time, as they say, to 'take one for
the mission'.

But what isn't being lost in all this is the ability to tell stories. New
generations are finding cheaper, newer ways of telling stories and allow-
ing their audiences to respond to them via the internet. In the end,
whether it is documentaries or reality series, or scripted reality, or rapidly
evolving digital formats and even things like computer games, there are
constantly evolving ways to satisfy people's hunger for big characters
and dramatic situations. As I said, it's an interesting time.

Appendix 1

US cable networks with factual content – average primetime viewing, Q1 2014 CHANNEL	Rating	Average viewers 000s
HISTORY	1.6	1,566
DISCOVERY	1.1	1,093
A&E	1.1	1,081
HGTV	1.1	1,077
TLC	1.0	954
BRAVO	1.0	939
SYFY	0.9	893
FOOD	0.9	851
ID	0.9	772
SPIKE	0.8	755
MTV	0.8	730

BET	0.7	630
MSNBC	0.6	559
VH1	0.6	529
ANIMAL PLANET	0.5	524
E!	0.5	482
OWN	0.5	433
CNN	0.4	414
NAT GEO CHANNEL	0.5	399
TRAVEL	0.4	396
WETV	0.4	359
H2	0.5	352
OXYGEN	0.4	317
CMT	0.3	301
SCIENCE	0.3	244
CNBC	0.2	205
NAT GEO WILD	0.4	200
WEATHER	0.2	200
BBC America	0.2	189
DIY	0.3	161
IFC	0.2	151
BIO	0.2	144
VELOCITY	0.2	135
FIT & HEALTH	0.2	100
OVATION	0.1	56
LOGO	0.1	49

Appendix 2

Top 50 factual programmes in UK for the year to July 2014

CHANNEL	PROGRAMME TITLE	Viewers 000s	Share	Genre
BBC 1	COUNTRYFILE	7,295	32.0	Factual
BBC 2	TOP GEAR	7,006	24.4	Leisure
BBC 1	MASTERCHEF	6,577	27.0	Leisure
CH4	BENEFITS STREET	6,482	22.8	Factual
BBC 1	ANTIQUES ROADSHOW	6,225	24.0	Leisure
BBC 1	DOLPHINS: SPY IN THE POD	5,292	20.3	Factual
BBC 1	DIY SOS: THE BIG BUILD	5,259	22.8	Leisure
BBC 1	DAVID BECKHAM INTO THE UNKNOWN	5,074	20.0	Factual
BBC 1	CELEBRITY MASTERCHEF	4,938	21.6	Leisure
BBC 1	BRITAIN'S GREAT WAR	4,646	16.3	Factual
BBC 1	FAKE OR FORTUNE?	4,580	20.0	Leisure
CH4	GOGGLEBOX	4,389	19.1	Factual

(Continued)

CHANNEL	PROGRAMME TITLE	Viewers 000s	Share	Genre
ITV	SECRET LIFE OF . . .	4,325	16.2	Factual
BBC 1	PARKING MAD	4,231	17.5	Factual
BBC 1	INSIDE OUT	4,097	17.0	Factual
BBC 1	DAVINA: BEYOND BREAKING POINT FOR SPORT	3,946	15.9	Factual
ITV	PAUL O'GRADY'S ANIMAL ORPHANS	3,835	14.1	Factual
ITV	STUDENT NURSES: BEDPANS + BANDAGES	3,806	16.8	Factual
BBC 1	HIDDEN KINGDOMS	3,801	15.3	Factual
ITV	A GREAT WELSH ADVENTURE WITH GRIFF RHYS JONES	3,787	14.3	Factual
CH5	CELEBRITY BIG BROTHER	3,712	15.1	Factual
BBC 2	MARY BERRY COOKS	3,707	14.1	Leisure
BBC 1	BANG GOES THE THEORY	3,695	15.8	Factual
CH4	ONE BORN EVERY MINUTE	3,663	12.5	Factual
BBC 1	MONKEY PLANET	3,635	14.9	Factual
CH4	BENEFITS STREET: THE LAST WORD	3,599	13.7	Factual
BBC 2	THE GREAT BRITISH SEWING BEE	3,494	13.2	Leisure
BBC 1	HOLIDAY HIT SQUAD	3,477	15.4	Leisure
ITV	HARRY'S SOUTH POLE HEROES	3,377	13.6	Factual
BBC 1	24 HOURS ON EARTH	3,358	14.8	Factual
CH4	24 HOURS IN A & E	3,352	13.6	Factual
BBC 1	THE RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW	3,339	16.1	Leisure
ITV	BILLY CONNOLLY'S BIG SEND OFF	3,311	13.6	Factual
CH4	INSIDE ROLLS-ROYCE	3,306	13.1	Factual
CH4	THE ISLAND WITH BEAR GRYLLS	3,292	13.5	Factual
ITV	MARTIN CLUNES & A LION CALLED MUGIE	3,266	13.7	Factual
BBC 2	DRAGONS' DEN	3,265	12.2	Factual
ITV	THE WALTON SEXTUPLETS AT 30	3,249	14.0	Factual

ITV	LOVE YOUR GARDEN	3,241	16.0	Leisure
CH4	THE UNDATEABLES	3,203	10.8	Factual
CH4	DAVID BLAINE: REAL OR MAGIC	3,180	9.5	Factual
CH4	LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION	3,132	12.4	Leisure
ITV	CORONATION STREET: A MOVING STORY	3,132	12.1	Factual
ITV	QUADS: OUR FIRST YEAR	3,098	14.0	Factual
BBC 1	A TRIBUTE TO ROGER LLOYD PACK	3,079	17.2	Factual
BBC 1	THE TREASURE HUNTERS	3,035	11.6	Factual
BBC 2	STARGAZING LIVE	3,001	11.9	Factual
ITV	FAREWELL TINA	2,991	14.7	Factual
BBC 2	OPERATION GRAND CANYON WITH DAN SNOW	2,962	9.3	Factual
BBC 2	DAVE ALLEN: GOD'S OWN COMEDIAN	2,953	11.4	Factual

Source: BARB, Factual and Hobbies/Lifestyle categories 31 July 2014.

13
Documentary-Making
A Commercial and Public Broadcaster Perspective

An Interview with Olivia Lichtenstein

Olivia Lichtenstein is an award winning documentary film-maker who began her career at ABC News and has also worked for the BBC. She is now an independent documentary maker. In 1994, she made the award-winning documentary *Silent Twins: Without My Shadow*, about identical twins and elective mutes who committed arson. In 2011 she was commissioned by the BBC to make *The Twins of the Twin Towers*, about twins who had lost their twin brothers and sisters in the 11 September attack on the World Trade Center in New York. She was interviewed by Roberta Piazza.

Roberta Piazza (RP): What would you say is your role as documentary-maker?

Olivia Lichtenstein (OL): I was brought up with the Reithian principle that my mission as a film-maker is to educate and inform, however not in a pious way. I try to be objective when I look at a subject, I don't have a fixed idea of what the film is going to be about. First you immerse yourself in it, interview lots of people, spend several months on the subject so that, by the time you edit your film, you've got a pretty strong sense of what you think the truth is. I wouldn't decide that ahead of time. You make films about things you are interested in, and try to communicate that experience to the viewer. And of course you want to entertain too, in the broad sense of that word – you want people to want to watch your programmes. Although I have commissioned lots of light films in the past, the films I produce tend to be more serious, like my documentaries on John Diamond's journey through cancer, on drug smuggling, women who've been raped and forced into prostitution.

An example is my documentary *Mules*, about Nigerian women smuggling drugs inside their bodies to earn money to buy medicine for their sick children. They'd come to this country and end up in prison for ten years and be unable to see their children. When I made that film in the early '90s, I discovered that most of the women in prison in Britain for drug smuggling were from Nigeria. Clearly there was a problem. Surprisingly, when the film was shown in Nigeria, the traffic stopped. Of course, it moved somewhere else, but at least the film instructed women that that wasn't a profitable way forward for them and that it had terrible consequences. That, of course, is not what my objective always is; it was a sort of happy by-product of highlighting the issue.

RP: Can you reflect on the choices you make in your documentaries in terms of topic, for instance?

OL: I'm mostly interested in human behaviour especially in people who have transgressed conventional norms, and many of my films have been about people who have stepped over the line and crossed a boundary. I studied Russian at Sussex University, and one of my favourite books was *Crime and Punishment*. When Raskolnikov kills the old woman, he crosses a particular boundary and goes from acceptable to unacceptable behaviour. I'm interested in the effects of people's choices. In the case of *The Twins of the Twin Towers* the fact that the people who had lost siblings were twins was a powerful metaphor for loss and an opportunity to explore the long-term repercussions of losing not just someone who was very close to you but someone who was to all intents actually a part of you, your other half.

RP: Wasn't *The Twins of the Twin Towers* a traditional commemoration and different from the films you usually do?

OL: You must remember I work within an industry and I recognise its grammar, if you like, so events like anniversaries are always going to furnish televisual opportunities. However, this particular film was a unique way to honour the people who were affected by the Twin Towers. Anniversaries in human terms are very important things too, because they make everyone stop and think about a particular event, and so people feel validated and recognised and that's important.

RP: What is the role of the editing in documentary-making?

OL: It is absolutely crucial. You have an obligation and a duty to be authentic, to take care not to misrepresent what people are saying. Of course, you can only select from the wealth of materials you have

accumulated to create something that feels like a story, but, within that, it's crucial to be honest.

RP: In my interview with Jon Snow, he warned me that reading too much into the news and building a conspiracy theory on it is risky as the news product is subject to many imperatives, most of which have to do with journalists' limited time and access to resources. That shouldn't be the case, should it, for documentaries whose production times are much longer.

OL: Documentaries are often subject to tight deadlines too these days. Of course, we have guidelines which we take seriously. Standards have slipped a bit with the advent of reality television, or what's called constructed reality television. The point is you're trying at all times to keep your journalistic integrity. Film-making is quite instinctive. There's alchemy in the cutting room, as if the film knows what it should be, like the artist who says there is a sculpture in the stone and he finds it. Filming is also like writing a book; you have an idea and research and explore it and try and uncover its truth. Many films are made independently these days, by people who get excited about something and want to investigate it and reveal it in a film. Of course, to some degree, it's inevitable to express your preferences and convictions while still trying to be objective.

   I used to run a big department at BBC Television and I would say to the people who worked for me that they needed to take account of what actually happened in front of them and that if something didn't fit their pre-conceived idea for their film that meant they had to change their idea. For instance, once I was doing a film on women on death row in America. When I started to research it, I discovered that the reality wasn't simply, 'wow, look, there are women on death row', which was something of a sensationalist headline, but that there was in fact a story to be told about women who were victims of domestic violence, who had murdered their abusive husbands and partners. So the film became a different and much more complex product. The research is a crucial part of documentary-making. Unfortunately nowadays it's much harder to spend as much time as we used to on it. It's impossible even for someone like me with an independent production company. You're given a budget and you can't go on and on as you might wish. But in the 1980s and 1990s, when I was at the BBC and sometimes only made one film a year, time didn't matter as much. That was a great luxury, and often resulted in people making brilliant and memorable films.

RP: In the documentaries I analysed in my chapter for this volume, I couldn't help noticing the choices film-makers made in representing traveller communities and, in particular, the decision to start with the topic of travellers' unemployment. I wonder, why start from that very topic?

OL: The order of presentation is very important. Of course I can't comment on that film because I haven't seen it, but I would say to you that there are lots of programmes these days that are called documentaries which I might call factual shows, and they'll be cut to titillate and sensationalise and keep the audience interested and watching. I'd like to think that my films are different from those. Of course you often put your really good bits up first and if you've got an exciting bit you put it in your pre-title, you know, at the start of the film to give a taste of what the viewer can expect – a sort of *amuse-bouche*. You have to be realistic. You need people to watch your programmes, you want good ratings and good reviews for your film and for it to get noticed.

RP: What do you think of the voice-over and the different ways this can be interpreted?

OL: In many cases these are production choices or choices dictated by the broadcaster, who may want a big-name narrator to bring in an audience. I think to be unobtrusive is best. Some people prefer to have presenters in documentaries like Michael Portillo. I don't, because the film becomes about them and creates a distance between the viewer and the people in the film. Some broadcasters believe in the need for audience hand-holding, a friendly face, for instance, Joanna Lumley, whom everyone loves, to guide the viewers. I like the subjects of my films to be the heroes and for the audience to be able to decide for themselves what they think and feel. These are all choices film-makers make.

RP: And do choices respond to practical imperatives made in consideration of the broadcaster who buys the film?

OL: Yes. At the beginning of my television career I was much more driven by my creativity; that has had to change in today's climate to more of a consideration of what the channel needs. That's a shame because sometimes you have really good ideas that would make great films but the broadcaster doesn't feel they need them. As for topics, for instance, your choices are limited by what a broadcaster would buy. However, there are limits to what one might be prepared to do, and I wouldn't make a film that would provide a platform for being racist,

or misogynist, or a film about the BNP [British National Party]. It's interesting to see how the world changes though and I remember in the '90s, when I wanted to make a film about cybersex at the beginning of internet use, I couldn't get it off the ground because it was perceived as too risqué. In general, you wouldn't want to do something that you'd then feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about. Nor would I want to make a film in which I sneer at the subjects or exploit their weaknesses. I don't even watch that kind of film.

RP: Who do you sell your documentaries to mainly? And are there differences between the broadcasters who buy them?

OL: ITV, BBC, Sky. Yes, there are differences between them. Sometimes not in subject matter but in the way you tell the story. Also, if you make an hour film for BBC it's 58 minutes, while for ITV it's 46 minutes, as ITV has ad breaks. You have to structure your film into parts; an hour for ITV has a different feel, rhythm and pace than an hour for BBC, which would go unbroken. For a very long time I worked at the BBC, so got used to that uninterrupted rhythm. That's why the BBC is so great. You get totally immersed in your story and can keep the flow going.

RP: Do these considerations impact the choice of topics?

OL: Difficult to say. In the past, being a public broadcaster, the BBC was not concerned with ratings, while commercial networks were. Now, that line has become blurred, but there are still philosophical differences. While the BBC might ask: 'What's happening? What's behind it, what's the issue?' ITV might ask: 'Is the topic *noisy* enough for us? Will our particular audience "get it"?'

RP: Are you aware viewers read different things into your documentaries?

OL: Of course. Making a film is like taking off your clothes in public, and that's true for any artistic expression. In general, though, viewers don't read into the film things that are not there. If you're authentic, people don't feel there is some sort of plan and that the film-maker is trying to show something in particular or push a specific point of view. I may leave things out, but in the great scheme of things I certainly try to represent a situation with transparency and objectivity and share with the viewers the six- or seven-month experience I have had with my documentary's subjects. So we don't have a master plan. We are storytellers and storytelling is such a primal motivation and has always been a good

way for people to try to make sense of life and experience. I feel very lucky I can do it for a living.

RP: Have you got any thoughts about any of the work in this volume, for instance my chapter on documentaries on travellers?

OL: I found it very interesting – it's interesting for practitioners, who often do things instinctively and organically, to see how their processes can be analysed and explained. So much of documentary-making is a subconscious process, a question of closely observing and then working out what you think the story is and how best to tell it. Should it be with a minimum of commentary – can the contributors tell their own story with the briefest of signposts to avoid confusion? Or is a little more 'hand-holding' necessary? Then there's the importance of keeping balance and allowing the viewer to make his or her own mind up. I think what's central to your chapter is the difference between the two films you investigate. One has a script read by a narrator, the other has a presenter in vision whose presence in the film must necessarily colour it: all that we see is filtered through the prism of his presence and, like most presenters, he will have an ego and a sense of how he wants to come across. So you're right when you say that *The Truth About Travellers* [*TTaT*] is more of an entertainment show than *The Travellers* [*TT*]. It's important too to acknowledge where the films played – *TT* is on BBC Scotland – a public service broadcaster with an inheritance of Reithian values to educate, inform and entertain. *TTaT* is on Channel Five, a commercial channel, which would probably place more emphasis on entertainment and trying to bring as many viewers as it can to the channel. Of course all documentaries are coloured by the consciousness of the person making them. My personal credo is, as far as possible, to reflect the experience I've had as a film-maker coming to an understanding of a subject – if I can reuse the metaphor of the artist and the stone, just as the sculpture emerges from the lump of stone for the artist, so too will the film take shape for the film-maker.

RP: Thanks for this interesting interview and for your time.

OL: Not at all. It was interesting to be made to think about the process and articulate your reflections because most of the time you're so busy doing the film you don't really examine it. So I enjoyed the opportunity to think. The few times I've been interviewed about the fiction I write, for instance, I understand that people think you've got a master plan and that you're always fully conscious of what you're doing, but it doesn't work like that because for me both filming and writing are

an organic process; you may start with an idea, then you make connections and move in a slightly different direction. Then the work takes on a life of its own and may take its own shape entirely. That's true for documentaries as well as for fiction. The key is to keep your eyes and ears open and see where you're being taken and why.

14
Competition and Cookery in a Global Cultural Format

An Interview with Karen Ross and Doug Wood

Karen Ross and Doug Wood work for Shine Group, which holds the *MasterChef* format internationally and the rules and guidelines that govern the show's production globally. The show is formatted and broadcast in over 50 countries. Shine Group produces factual and entertainment programmes via 27 production companies across 11 countries. Karen Ross is *MasterChef*'s Creative Director in the UK. Doug Wood is Head of Research at Shine Group. They were interviewed by Louann Haarman.

Louann Haarman (LH): How does Shine operate in terms of the *MasterChef* format?

Doug Wood (DW): We have a team of dedicated production staff who go and verify that the programme is produced properly in other countries. When countries buy the *MasterChef* format they're buying a strict set of rules and guidelines about how to make it and it's for us to maintain that quality and assure that they're respecting that brand and what *MasterChef* is. We look after the brand and the format as well.

Karen Ross (KR): There are guidelines but it's basically that individual countries stay true to the essence of *MasterChef*. You have to allow for massive cultural differences, so the guidelines aren't dictatorial, in the sense that we're not saying you have to make the programme like we do in the UK, or like they do in Australia, the two probably more extreme ends of the brand. I think the base questions about *MasterChef* in production are: How does food work in your country? What does food mean? Who cooks there? How do they cook it? And once you understand how that works, then you can build the format around it. So for example men don't cook in India. It's not seen as an aspirational thing

in the same way say as it's seen in this country. So one of the ways of getting around that was to cast a big Bollywood action star, who happened to be a chef in his younger days, as one of the judges; so it had much more relevance. So that's an example of how culturally you have to adapt.

We all meet once a year and we know each other and we talk and we share things that work or don't work, but in essence it's your own creative instinct in your own country.

LH: I'm very interested in the editing process. A first-time or an occasional viewer might think that they are seeing, week to week, what is actually playing out, week to week. But, in reality, we are seeing something that, once filming was concluded, was cut and assembled and *served* to us week by week. That process would provide the opportunity to create narratives, stories and foci.

KR: Not create them. You can't do that. The biggest difference between the UK and international versions is we make our programmes for the BBC. So that sort of duty of care and level of trust means you couldn't take a shot of a contestant from the day before and put it somewhere else. You just don't do that.

What we do create is the environment they go into; they don't exist there normally. There is a real two hours. We have five cameras on that day, so we have more footage than our 59-minute cut will allow. We watch everything. We go, this is what happened and then we tell that story. There might be minor stories that happened that we can't tell because we don't have enough time. So we normally work backwards from the result. How can we make sense of that result? Well, that's the story that led to that result. It is narrative, but it's not created: it's not dramatic construct.

LH: Are you alluding to what might take place in other countries, in the US version, for example?

KR: No, but it's a very different beast in that they don't construct what they do, but it's more 'reality', say, than cooking. So their decision-making process would be very different because American audiences do want to see the interaction of people fighting with each other, whereas British audiences don't. So even if I had that footage I probably wouldn't use it because I'd want to talk about the cake or the duck breast, because that's the focus of the story we're telling. So as a production we don't look for lots of conflict, or massive amounts of interaction between our contestants, because we're just filming the food mostly.

LH: I've been intrigued by the Australian version, which is very different. For example, we see where they live, we see them around the kitchen table. Most importantly, I think, we see the loser leaving and going home and being greeted by his family, which gives the viewer a sense of closure. And the people are so nice and there's so much solidarity, and that really makes it a completely different show. A very feel-good show all told.

DW: I think it's fair to say that *MasterChef* Australia was born of a very different TV landscape, TV environment. *MasterChef* Australia was going to occupy the slot previously occupied by *Big Brother* and *MasterChef* wasn't an obvious choice to be a *Big Brother* replacement, or appear in that talent-led environment they had in Australia. So I think Mark Fennessy (Joint CEO of Shine Australia) and his team looked at *MasterChef* in the sense of developing from what was there already and perhaps borrowing elements, to make something that would suit the TV culture of Australia better.

KR: I think the broadcaster almost insisted on it at the beginning. That they would see a lot more of the contestants and they wanted them to live together.

DW: It actually ran daily at 7 o'clock during the week. So they're very different animals. So you had to create a different kind of organism to accommodate that and the demands of the broadcaster and the viewing audience and also keep in mind what else is going on in that TV environment.

KW: Israel is a really interesting example of cultural adaption, because it's a very emotional show. Very. Food is so culturally important there. I think the Israeli programmes are very interesting, I really do and they're really good programme-makers as well. Very passionate. Here's a really good example of something that Israel does that no one else did; they went to a small town in the desert and they just set up a table and they said to everyone there: you have an hour to go and make something and bring it to us as an audition. And then a camera would follow a woman back to her house as she went through her cupboards and tried to find what she had to make something and bring it back and I think that's delightful. India I think is fascinating too because it borrowed the Bollywood style in terms of its music and how it looks. It's got a wonderful energy.

I think the choice of the judges is interesting because that says a lot about the different cultures. What is defined as authority varies from culture to culture. I think that's quite interesting. In the American one you have Gordon Ramsay, a big star. In the UK we put judges on TV that have never been on TV and then they become famous. But in America they couldn't do that. They had to put in someone very famous. In India they had to put in somebody very macho to make it acceptable for male viewers and in Australia I felt like they did it quite cross-culturally, because Italian-Greek culture is very important in Australia. It's the biggest Greek community outside of Greece. The choice of the judges in Israel is really interesting. And I think that it's because it's the first sign, isn't it really: when you turn on the TV, who's tasting the food?

DW: The judge is almost your entry point to the experience; to be that authority; to have that opinion, to be believable. If they're not believable then it's not going to work. These people have the authority; the cultural authority, or the cooking authority, to make that judgement, and I can trust that judgement as a viewer.

LH: In the UK *MasterChef* 2014 final, there was a very long introduction, about 15 minutes, and very elaborate representations of the three finalists both visually and through the narrative of the voice-over.

KR: We call it the food journey. In the final we have the chance to look back at all the people from the beginning and to get a sense of where they started and what's happened. We tend to do it for viewers who might not have watched every show. We always have a lot more viewers for the final, so we do tend to go into a bit more detail. When you start to watch the cooking you realise what's at stake and you'll understand why somebody will win and why somebody will lose. In the UK, we show the contestants the programmes before they go to air. So they always see it first. So we're sort of going: 'Does that make sense?' 'Is that what it was like?' 'Do you get why you won now?' 'Do you get why you lost?'

LH: Are there any contestants that cause problems?

KR: In 30 series over ten years we've had two contestants that we no longer have any contact with and that's from over a thousand. One was very young and he went to live somewhere else and we sort of

lost contact. The other one just could not cope with the fact that he didn't win. Some are better suited for the experience than others. I certainly wouldn't say they're difficult, but I think it's a physically and mentally gruelling experience for those cooking and for those making the programme. We also have what we call *a duty of care* afterwards, which we don't discuss or talk about and don't film. We'll help different people get a start, where they go to a restaurant for a work experience. Some of them want agents, some of them want to be in contact with restaurateurs, some of them want to do television. We're not agents, we don't act as agents but we're there, I suppose, as a support.

LH: Are there auditions?

KR: There's thousands and thousands of applications. Again, we're on the BBC in the UK, so we have a very different duty of care. We tend to go first come, first served, in a way, talking to prospective *MasterChef* contestants. And then we see maybe a thousand people, taste their food, going around the country filming in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Birmingham, Liverpool, London. Then a colleague and I sit there on the couch for about six hours watching everyone.

LH: Do you think about cultural diversity and gender balance?

KR: No, never. I've learned it's pointless. But it's really hard to know if people can cook or not. And you get it sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Sometimes they come in with an incredible dish but you don't really know how big their repertoire is. To survive on *MasterChef* you really need to be able to learn like that [snaps fingers].

LH: How do the professional or celebrity *MasterChefs* differ from the amateur version? Are they still contestants?

KR: The format's slightly different. Professionals' food is extraordinary and it's a lot more high-end driven so we go to bigger restaurants, but the contestants tend to be mainly male, tend to be mainly working class. They're very driven, they're very competitive, they really want to make the most of food. And it's very much about food and less about the personality of the chef. Celebrity is a weird one. We have a celebrity booker who will ring round the agents and go: 'These are the dates.' 'Who's interested?' 'Who can cook?' We're always desperate that they

can cook, and the agents always go: 'Uh, such and such is a fabulous cook!' One turned up and said: 'I haven't had a kitchen in 20 years'.

LH: What about the web participation in the programmes?

DW: It's very much the fan voice, the authentic experience of *MasterChef*. That works very well for the UK version because that's what it is: the authentic experience. There are no reconstructions, nothing prompted.

In America, Fox, the broadcaster, looks after all social media. In America social media is seen as part of the function for the network, so they look after it – with the help of the production team. But it's all very much driven by the broadcaster. In Australia the production company do it, so the fan gets to feel they're more in touch with the producer; not going through the broadcaster.

We started looking at social media a lot more closely this past year, because, as you say, it's somewhat of a critical mass and we should at least be aware of what it's talking about in terms of programming and the media genre. Also, there's something very interesting about Twitter in that it's a real-time response to something that's happening and it's never been recorded before like that. You do get some bad people doing stuff, but on the whole I think it's a good way to see what your fan base is doing. These are the people who are driving the wide audience. If you're following a programme on Twitter or Facebook that means you're a fan of the show. These are people who understand the show and love the show. You monitor what they're saying because sometimes they spot things early on that perhaps others wouldn't spot. It's quite interesting dynamically. We've never had access so immediately to those people before.

KR: Now and again when a show goes out I will watch it and be on Twitter but I find it a terrifying experience. It really varies. Series by series. The year that we did the little change (Series 7 to a more 'shiny floor' American format) it was just awful. Last year it was very positive. I want the contestants to have a good experience and my fear is that when they're bullied or attacked on Twitter – it doesn't happen a lot – you want to protect them. When you've put your life in our hands on television and people tweet insults or say offensive things, it's awful. But, so far, so good. It's a whole new world, isn't it?

15
The Morals of the Money Shot

The Journalistic and Personal Perspective on Creating a Porn Documentary for Channel 4

Martin Daubney

Martin Daubney is an award-winning journalist and broadcaster. He was the longest-ever serving editor of the men's magazine *Loaded*. However, when he became a father, he found himself reassessing his attitude to lads' magazines and pornography. The journey led to his involvement in the Channel 4 documentary *Porn on the Brain*, where he investigated how teenagers' pornography habits have changed, and the effect that modern pornography – its content and accessibility – is having on their brains. This was his first documentary experience. Anne Caborn approached him to contribute to this volume after hearing him speak at the *Women of the World Festival* in London, March 2014. He wrote his reflection after discussing the topic with her. In it he explores his own understanding of documentary-making as both a journalist and a participant.

In the spring of 2013, I set out on a real-time journey to analyse the divisive and highly contentious thesis that pornography – like better understood substances and behaviours – had the power to be addictive. What followed was a six-month journey of total immersion and absolutely no idea what the outcome would be.

It's safe to say I was not against pornography. I'd consumed porn since age ten when I found my dad's 'mucky books' in a biscuit tin under his bed. My involvement was all the more surprising when you take into account that for eight years I'd edited a lads' magazine called *Loaded* and had long been accused of being a pornographer, something I'd always vehemently denied.

Nevertheless, I became a skilled defender of people's right to consume porn, touring university debating societies, TV sofas and lecture theatres and always trouncing adversaries, whom I considered censorial naysayers.

But when I became a father in May 2009, I quit my job at the magazine within a year. Editing a lads' mag and fatherhood didn't chime right; so when I wrote in the *Daily Mail* about how I agonised that maybe *Loaded* did feed darker pornographic desires, the article attracted Channel 4's attention. Unbeknownst to me, they'd been desperate to make a film about porn for two years, but lacked the right 'front man', somebody who wasn't anti-porn to dissect what porn had become. As a result I got a phone call from Blink Films one Tuesday morning in early 2013. They wanted me to front their proposed documentary called *Porn on the Brain*, and were going in to see Channel 4 in 20 minutes time. I said 'yes'. Two days later, despite me having no TV experience whatsoever, the project was signed off. In TV terms, that is light speed. But there was a massive appetite to harness the nation's fascination with porn, and the banning of it versus freedom of choice to consume it.

We knew the show would attract headlines because of the subject matter, but I was determined to make this a serious journalistic exercise. At the time, pornography was a political hot potato and rarely out of the newspapers. In a speech in the summer of 2013, Prime Minister David Cameron declared war on 'toxic, corrosive', online pornography, and the *Daily Mail* called for it to be blocked or even banned altogether.

But while there was lots of debate on the effects of porn, we didn't know if kids were watching it at all, and if they were, what was it doing to them, and could it possibly be addictive? Above all, as a parent I wanted to know what I could do to protect my young son. He was only four at the time, but with Home Office and NSPCC figures showing porn was routinely being seen by ten-year-olds, I wanted to tool up for a very personal battle.

As part of the programme's investigation into what kind of pornographic stimulus was readily available online, I was filmed carrying out my own online research on the very first day of filming, so my first reactions could be used as part of the documentary. The film crew set up a laptop in the middle of a darkened room and filmed my immediate response to what I found – in all its horror.

Then I spoke with some of the world's foremost experts: anti-porn campaigner Gail Dines, Dr John Wood who works with the UK's most violent sex offenders, as well as British and American clinical

psychotherapists and psychologists who treat those who feel their porn use is becoming problematic.

We were invited into York High School to film a sex educator asking kids aged 13–16 for an A–Z of sexual terms, and the menu was clearly being determined by porn and how videos featuring bestiality and even amputee porn were routinely shared in the playground.

This first part of the show was designed to shock the nation's parents out of complacent delusion: your children are watching porn, and it is absolutely nothing like the innocent porn of your own youth.

The documentary also wanted to test if porn could indeed be addictive. Via an internet call-out and *The Sun*'s 'Dear Deirdre' problem column, we recruited 19 young men who told us they thought their porn use was spiralling out of control. Some had lost jobs, flunked exams, had trouble holding down a relationship, or real sex just didn't do it for them any more.

We then presented these men to Cambridge University, where Dr Valerie Voon, a world-renowned addiction expert, subjected them to an intraoperative Magnetic Resonance Imaging (iMRI) study. It was the first time this equipment, which uses magnetic field and radio waves to create detailed images of brain activity, had been used to measure reaction to pornography.

Dr Voon knew what addicted brains looked like from previous studies into cocaine, alcohol, heroin, nicotine and even gambling addiction. The hypothesis was that there might be parallels between the way the brain of a heavy porn-user and that of another type of addict responded to stimulus. The reaction of our volunteers was measured against a control group.

The iMRI scans showed that compulsive users of pornography exhibited similar brain activity to alcoholics or drug addicts, with the reward centre of the brain, the ventral striatum, reacting to seeing explicit material in the same way. This research formed a very important part of the final documentary.

But we also focused on a very human story. This came in the form of detailed interviews with one very brave 19-year-old lad who decided to sacrifice his anonymity and, for the first time on film, confess how his porn use was destroying his life. We'll call him C. His name was used in the documentary but it would add nothing to this piece to use it now.

In raw and often painful interviews, C would describe how he'd flunked his exams, going from a straight A student at GCSE to a straight failure at A-levels, as he spent all his available waking time masturbating to internet porn.

Channel 4 lawyers were nervous. Some thought C was a fraud. After all, it wouldn't have been the first time members of the public had lied their way onto TV to get their 15 minutes of fame – then sell their stories to the papers and have the last laugh.

To address this, a lot of work was carried out behind the scenes to prove C was a credible case history. We had him clinically assessed twice, once by Dr Voon at Cambridge University where he undertook hours of (unfilmed) compulsive behaviour tests, and a second time by Paula Hall, an expert featured in the show and a sex addiction psychotherapist who has worked with hundreds of patients with sex and porn issues.

Perhaps most importantly, I spent a lot of emotionally intimate time with C. I quickly came to realize that he was a frightened young boy who felt his life was out of control. A father myself, I am only two years younger than his dad. We became close friends. He respected my background on lads' magazines he'd read and my own admission to being a porn user since age ten. In turn, I respected him and let him vent without fear of judgement. Most of this happened off camera.

This intense personal relationship resulted in the film's most extraordinary sequence, and one that I still find difficult to watch without being driven to tears.

We were to spend a second day filming in Oxford, and C was to drive myself and a film crew around his home town, showing us where he picked up women. I told the director I wanted it to be just C, myself and a camera in the car. I hadn't filmed anything before. They gave me a camera that I balanced on my lap.

It was a baking hot summer's day, and we'd passed hundreds of scantily clad girls in the student town. But C told me he was looking for 'that perfect girl' who reminded him of his current porn fantasies.

And then it happened. We drove past an attractive but otherwise unremarkable girl with long dark hair. His eyes widened and he roared his car into a pub car park, stopped the car and dashed across the car park to the pub's toilets. I knew he'd gone to masturbate. When he came back, I could see the sadness in his eyes, and I grilled him about how he felt. The camera was rolling throughout. As we drove back to where the crew was – bear in mind it was just the two of us in the car – he pleaded with me not to tell them what had happened. He needed time to process. I said, 'sure' – but when we pulled up, all eyes were on me, and the crew said: 'Well, did you get anything?'

When C wasn't looking, I looked to my producer and mouthed 'f**king hell, we got it!' while pumping my fist. It was a dichotomy: by so exposing C's weaknesses we'd captured the strongest part of the film.

I'd been entirely and solely complicit in engineering – perhaps forcing – the situation. But my integrity as a film-maker had to come first. That excerpt became the most talked-about in the documentary.

We also had a strong duty of care to C. We offered him total control over what was aired. Afterwards, we got him psychiatric care and I spent a weekend in a residential 'porn rehab' with him, none of which was filmed.

The show was 'pick of the week' in every UK newspaper and sent ripples around the world. It is a body of work I feel tremendously proud to have been a part of. Its message is still as pertinent today as when the show was aired in October 2013. From time to time, it airs in another country and interest starts afresh. The show has since been screened around the world: Australia, New Zealand and recently Germany.

Channel 4 wanted to repeat the show again in the UK, which is practically unheard of, but we decided to run that past C first. He didn't want us to do it. He said he wanted to move on. Legally, he had no hold over us; we could have ignored him and screened it anyway. But that would have been morally reprehensible. What if he'd taken his own life? You have to be mindful of the worst-case scenario. You have a deep moral responsibility to your subject matter.

I sometimes wonder what C is up to, and occasionally Google him. I want to pick the phone up and say 'hello', but I haven't. I fear I may be a reminder of a part of his life he's trying to put behind him. At heart he was a good kid. More than anything, I hope in some small way the show helped him come to terms with what he'd become and helped him work it through. That is the thought that keeps you sane: that in some small way, we might have helped.

16
Authenticity in Documentary-Making

An Interview with Anya Sitaram

Anya Sitaram is founding Director of Rockhopper TV, an internationally recognised production company, which has produced documentaries and films for broadcasters including the BBC, Discovery, PBS, Al Jazeera, Showtime, NHK and more. The company's awards include BBC World Viewer's Choice Award for Best Documentary. She is a former news anchor for both the BBC and Sky News and a BBC *Tomorrow's World* presenter. She was interviewed by Hilary Bruffell.

Hilary Bruffell (HB): Could you tell me about the documentaries that you produce?

Anya Sitaram (AS): Most of the documentaries we do are about global health, environment and the developing world, and filmed in developing countries. Half the reason for this is that I was originally a health correspondent and I continued to be interested in health, whereas my husband, who is the other director, was an environment correspondent, so he's very interested in the environment. From this we developed contacts with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), foundations, etc.

A number of the most successful documentary series have been funded by organisations like the Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation who might be interested in health or climate change. We develop the idea for a series or a documentary with the broadcaster and with the foundation/funder. For instance, we did a number of programmes with the Gates Foundation about infectious diseases and also health; not Western health, but health conditions like TB and Aids which have a bigger impact in the developing world.

We tend to work with global broadcasters like Al Jazeera, BBC World or other Public Broadcasting Services because it can be difficult to get

programmes about foreign issues aired in Britain. It's not xenophobic, it's just that people, commissioners and broadcasters, always want to have a British angle or something British in their programmes. I think this is mainly because they think their audiences won't be interested.

HB: Do your funders have any input in how you produce a documentary?

AS: No, they don't have an input at all. Of course, they wouldn't be funding something they have no interest in, but they have no say in the scripts or the people we interview. Ultimately, editorial control rests with the commissioning broadcaster.

Broadcasters want everything to be very accurate. Everything is fact checked, so yes they have an input in that. They want things to be clear and understood, and they will change anything that doesn't meet their standards. They have commissioned the documentary so that it tells a particular story and they want it to be successful.

HB: That's an interesting point. What determines and defines success? How do you establish how successful a documentary is?

AS: I consider our documentaries successful if they have made a difference, not just on the number of people who have seen it. For example, we made a series called *Alvin's Guide to Good Business* with Alvin Hall the money expert, who went round the world visiting social entrepreneurs and examining their business models.

One involved a wonderful organisation called Riders for Health. They provide transport in Africa like motorbikes, etc. to get vaccines and medicines to the villages. As a result of this, Riders for Health found they were able to set up in African countries much more quickly, because their story had gone out on the BBC. They were taken very seriously. Also, a viewer who had access to cheap motorbikes contacted Riders for Health to offer help. That's serendipity.

HB: So *you* like to make a difference, but what about the broadcasters' objective?

AS: The broadcasters want to see an audience. So if you haven't got a certain audience level you haven't got a success.

HB: How do you refine the topic?

AS: We approach people on the ground and NGOs in foreign countries who can get us into different places and who will know people. We do research, find case studies and talk to academics. The parameters are

laid down, to some extent, by the broadcasters because they want a certain type of documentary. We want the people that we have found, the contributors and the characters, to tell the story.

HB: You use the term 'characters'. How much do the characters then dictate the way the documentary goes?

AS: Getting the right characters is important, but they don't dictate the story. I don't think the people appearing in documentaries know they may be perceived as characters. It's not like in this country where people can take part in reality programmes and dictate things by behaving absurdly. Our contributors are people with very strong characters, but not people having tantrums, etc. And when I say 'character' I mean someone with a passion. We've met some extraordinary characters who are changing things and are articulate and larger than life. For instance one of my favourite people came from a very traditional family in a Maasai village and wanted to go to university in America.

   She'd been to school, but in Africa most girls go to primary school and then drop out because their parents don't want them to go to secondary school, especially in rural areas. They have to work at home and are married off early. However she resisted that tradition and made a deal with her dad that she would finish her education and would be allowed to go to America for her further studies if she were circumcised. There's this quote in the film where she says: 'I traded my body parts for an education'. She went to America and did her education and then decided she wanted to encourage other girls to have an education. She went about finding the money to set up a girls' boarding school in her village. She became really successful in America and was supported by the Nike Foundation which adopts women and their causes. I first met her at a *Fortune* event about successful women. We filmed her in America and then took her back to Ethiopia and met her family. That's the sort of person I mean by a character, people who are actually doing amazing things.

HB: Can the characters influence the direction a story takes?

AS: It all depends on the circumstances. For instance, I made a film in Malawi that was meant to be about HIV, but it turned out to be very different. Again, it was about young women, and I went to UNICEF who introduced me to a local group in Malawi who knew people on the ground. I was taken to a village where there was a young girl, about 17, who had HIV. She was a single mum with a young son who it was thought possibly had HIV. It turned out she had a relationship with her

stepfather after her mother died and she was about 14 or 15 at the time. She had a child by him.

So I went to interview the stepfather. He was actually someone that we'd identify with, in the sense that he was about 45 and had a nice-looking house with electricity and running water on the edge of the village (as opposed to a mud hut). He was reading a newspaper on his veranda. He was educated and spoke good English. It soon became apparent he had taken advantage of his step-daughter. He had abused children from another of his marriages and when I asked him about it, he said on camera that basically a man should be allowed to do what he wants. So I ran the story like that. However, there were other things I heard about him that I couldn't show. For instance, he apparently had this scam of selling drugs and medicines that he'd taken from the hospital and would sell on the black market from his house. But I couldn't prove that and also this didn't fit in with the story. So even though there were all sorts of different facets to him, I could only use certain aspects.

HB: What about the effect of social media?

AS: That is success the more people tweet about things. We had a series on ITV which is nothing like we normally do. It was a cookery show, and the more tweets people got the better it was for the show. Even the horrible, negative tweets were still good because it meant people were watching. Social media shows viewer engagement and many of our short films have had thousands of views on Facebook, etc.

HB: So are you saying there's no such thing as bad publicity?

AS: Yes, in a way. The cookery show was on ITV daytime. It was a series with the lady who made the royal wedding cake for Kate and William and called *The Home of Fabulous Cakes*. The more engagement we got the happier we were. In news it's no longer just the reporter who's telling us what's happening, it's social media acting as the citizen journalist. It's totally different.

HB: So the audience are part of the process? The audience are constructing what they want to view?

AS: Yes, and I think that perhaps broadcasters will find different ways of using this.

HB: If you're covering a very sensitive topic, how do you deal with broadcaster/audience perspectives and what happens if their interests sit against your beliefs?

AS: It's not about my beliefs. I work with what I am given and I hope that what we've done is the truth. For example, we made a film in Bangladesh about maternal health and we'd always heard about these really ancient, terrible practices with traditional midwives but we'd never been able to prove their existence. This time the crew got access to a particular village and filmed the most appalling things that happened there, such as a young girl was giving birth and the midwife was basically pressing on her stomach in a really horrible way, literally standing on her. She was forcing the girl to retch by sticking fingers down her throat, thinking that this would get the contractions going. So, from our perspective the whole birthing process was terrible. And then afterwards they believed that the colostrum is bad for the baby and of course colostrum is the most important bit of the milk. So they took the baby away from the mother for 24/48 hours and fed it with things like honey, water, all things which you're not meant to give a new-born baby. We filmed all this, and when the crew got back I said: 'Oh my God, didn't you want to intervene?' The baby was all right in the end, but another baby in one village died as a result of that traditional practice. Unfortunately, unless someone is about to fall off a bridge and die in front of you, you film it. It's very difficult to make that call and the whole thing can be very uncomfortable. The documentary was a very powerful bit of television, but it was really just awful to watch the birth.

HB: So is the role of the documentary to educate by being powerful?

AS: Well it raises awareness and I think it might make a few people think. The commentary in the film about birthing practices did not say this is bad, it just observed what was happening. The commentary's role is to just nudge the pictures along and be absolutely neutral. The audience can make their own mind up; they're intelligent enough to do this. You don't have to say 'this is a really bad way of giving birth'. You might say 'the baby's in danger' or something like that, but you stick to the facts of what you're seeing. The documentary has to be authentic.

HB: What about the choice of narrator/commentator? Does that change the tone?

AS: It's very, very important. You listen to well-known actors and actresses and decide who's going to do a good job. They can also be directed to some extent and they can, without going over the top, emphasise things a little bit, or say a certain word in a certain way.

HB: And what about the actor's reputation? If they're a well-known voice? Does that have impact?

AS: Yes that's very important as well; that a documentary is narrated by someone famous is obviously a selling point. There's the actor who plays the butler in *Downton Abbey*, Jim Carter, and he's always doing voice-overs on stately homes and things, because he plays the butler in *Downton Abbey*. The role has given him a voice of authority in that area. Even though he's just an actor and he's not actually a butler, we still associate him with that performance and this makes his voice more authentic.

HB: Authenticity is an interesting term. How do you ensure it? How can you say you are being authentic?

AS: I think you just hope you're reflecting reality as is and you're showing it as is. It's real and it's not made up. You can't control it. I don't think you want to control it. You control what you do at the time of recording, but afterwards that's it. You've released it. You have your idea, your vision, or you want to do your best by it and then it's off.

17
Documentary and Reality TV as Modern Fairytales
An Odyssey in Character, Content and Commissioning

Jan Euden and Mick Sawyer

Jan Euden is a producer director and writer with an extensive broadcast career in factual genres. A social historian by training, she draws on storytelling to shape content. Productions she's worked on have won awards at Sundance, New York and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA). Mick Sawyer produces and directs factual material for broadcast, corporate and educational markets. His specialities include music, arts and history. Together, they run a small independent television production company, Reeljems. Their reflection was developed by them after initial conversations and an interview carried out by Anne Caborn. In it they explore the challenges involved in aligning creativity and commissioning imperatives.

Once upon a time, in the early part of the 21st century, the pre-scripted factual drama or scripted or constructed reality show became fashionable and popular. In the UK, the series that defined this genre was *The Only Way Is Essex* (or *TOWIE*, as its fans would call it). Inspired by two American series – *The Hills* and *Jersey Shore* – it employed the same hybrid formula by being not quite drama but not quite docudrama either.

In common with soaps, shows such as *TOWIE* were built around a selection of character types – the good, the bad and instead of the ugly, the surgically enhanced, to name but a few. All were playing out modern versions of classic storylines found throughout literature from fairytales to Dickens. These shows consistently raised a storm of controversy about the veracity and authenticity of their content.

In most of these programmes the participants were acting out – allegedly – dramatised versions of themselves. The cast of *TOWIE* (and most other shows of this genre) would insist that the events within the programmes were close to what happened in their non-screen lives. Nevertheless, essentially the participants were enacting scenarios created by the show's producers but talking and reacting as themselves. These scenarios would be honed over several days of rehearsal. The one occasion when *TOWIE* went out live was generally regarded as a road crash of epic proportions and possibly one of the worst moments in British television history.

From the very beginning *TOWIE* attracted negative feedback, particularly from many residents of Essex who took exception to what they saw as extreme stereotyping of the Essex persona. Ironically, much of what *TOWIE* was doing was as old as documentary-making itself. From casting its main characters to moulding their lives to fit a more attractive narrative shape, the documentary form has regularly employed techniques from drama in order to heighten its impact.

The use of such techniques goes as far back as the era of the father of documentary, Robert J. Flaherty, the man generally credited with creating the first full-length documentary feature – 1922's *Nanook of the North*, a portrait of an Inuit family surviving in a hostile environment. It was filmed over several years, but when much of his early, purely observational footage was destroyed in a fire, Flaherty decided to change his approach. He resumed his project by casting his documentary like a drama and created sequences for dramatic value rather than fully reflecting actuality. His lead subject was not called Nanook and his 'family' was cast from the local community – one of Nanook's 'wives' in fact was having an affair with Flaherty himself. To ramp up the visual drama, he filmed his Inuit subjects using spears to hunt with, despite the fact they'd been using rifles for many years, and insisted they dressed in hand-made fur clothing rather than the factory-made shirts they generally wore, bought from the local store. In comparison, this makes *Ice Road Truckers* look like a piece of *cinéma vérité*.

Similar 'inauthentic' touches were commonplace in the films made by the first wave of British documentary-makers in the 1930s. The much-vaunted *The Night Mail* (1936), following the progress of a postal train between London and Scotland, contains many constructed sequences. Scenes supposedly shot inside the train's sorting office carriage were in fact filmed on a replica studio set, while the conversations between various members of the crew are entirely scripted – although the crew are genuine. There were technical reasons for this. Recording synchronised

sound on board a moving train at that time would have been incredibly difficult, so the only images actually filmed on the train were shot mute. (The first 'talking head' interviews to feature in a British documentary, made only a few years after *The Night Mail*, required a sound truck the size of an outside broadcast vehicle to record them.) And in defence of the scripted dialogue, it was based on actual conversations written down over several weeks by a member of the production team regularly travelling on the train. This approach was not uncommon in documentary features of this period and few contemporary critics questioned the authenticity of the films themselves.

In essence what Flaherty and his British counterparts wanted and what today's factual programme-makers also require is control over their subject matter. The form that control takes may differ but one of the great conceits of documentary/factual programming is the way narratives can be imposed upon the random events of life. As documentary-makers ourselves we know that there are times when you have to direct your subjects along certain conversational pathways, for example. You don't literally tell them what to say but you ask them to talk about certain subjects to allow the illusion of an overheard discussion.

TOWIE's production format mimics several different forms of TV programming. Most obviously it uses the framework of TV soap opera and relies on character-driven scenarios for its dramatic success. At the same time it uses elements originally developed in the first observational documentaries of the 1950s and 1960s, which gave birth to the term 'fly-on-the-wall'. This in itself had already been adapted to form the basis of the formatted challenge shows such as *Big Brother*, which had provided the most immediate inspiration for the structured reality shows. But all of these seemingly unrelated television forms rely on a common feature – casting the right people to tell your tale.

Even 'fly-on-the-wall' film-making relies on some sleight of hand to convince an audience that they are watching pure, unvarnished events. Such film-making is rare, and it can be argued that the very presence of a camera distorts reality. For the most part all films – feature or documentary – require enormous amounts of pre-planning and, most crucially, good casting. Many of the best observational films of the 1960s were based around people of great charisma, so the narrative was almost incidental. When Robert Drew filmed John Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey going head to head for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1960's *Primary*, his story told itself through the observation of two contrasting but powerful characters. Likewise D. A. Pennebaker's

1965 classic *Don't Look Back*, featuring Bob Dylan on tour in the UK, required the camera to remain as anonymous as possible and record a picaresque tale full of wonderful encounters.

It was a natural progression for such techniques to be applied not just to the famous, but to lives and experiences of so-called ordinary people, giving rise to an era of film as 'social document'. In its infancy in the UK, the adoption of this style formed part of an attempt by certain programme-makers, particularly within the BBC, to take the microphone away from the voices of Oxbridge and let other voices tell their tales. Nevertheless, you still had to find the right kind of ordinary people – people who could operate in front of a camera, who weren't fazed by a microphone in front of them. And just like drama you could only find such people by casting them.

The British documentary producer-director Paul Watson is often given credit for pioneering both UK fly-on-the-wall documentary and reality TV. His 1970s BBC series *The Family* – directed by Franc Roddam (responsible for the original *MasterChef*) – is an obvious precursor of *TOWIE*, but while it contained elements of serial drama, it did not steer its subjects along pre-ordained pathways. It created its revelations and narrative structure in the edit, driven by the fact that the family chosen for the project – the Wilkins – were prepared to be filmed warts and all.

For much of the time the Wilkins' drama was suspended around the mundane – such as problems with passport applications, not the everyday piece of paperwork they are now as overseas travel was less commonplace. Even so, in 1974, the Wilkins were a television phenomenon and probably not prepared for the media circus that erupted during the last stages of the series. The culmination of their story was the wedding of one of their daughters, which was raided by paparazzi and to an extent rather blew the fly-on-the-wall premise of the programmes. Effectively the series had taken ordinary people and transformed them into media celebrities – albeit of a much lower key than their present-day equivalents. For better or worse, instant celebrity has been a consequence of such programmes ever since.

A more recent Watson production, *Rain in My Heart* (2006), brings us closer to the serious issues attached to this type of production and has much to do with upping the ante as to what can be revealed on TV screens. The film dealt with the experiences of four alcoholics being treated for their addiction. During the making of the film two of the subjects died and both were filmed on their deathbeds. It created an

inevitable controversy when the show was broadcast but, at the same time, established new benchmarks for what is now required from film-makers.

Watson himself has complained that the growth of a particularly sensationalist brand of reality television has made it harder for documentary-makers like him to get the cooperation of such institutions as hospitals and the people who live (or die) or work in them. No doubt Watson views himself as a straight player in this game, building relationships of trust with his subjects and not exploiting their issues or personal dramas. Equally, as a serious programme-maker, he wishes to challenge the taboos of what television can and can't show. For him and other documentary-makers, as long as the participants have been consulted and agreed to the material, the programme-maker's conscience is clear.

But whatever the *best* intentions of the programme-maker, the reality is that commissioning editors are now requiring more extreme or knowingly controversial content than ever before. Producers are being required to guarantee content much more tightly than in earlier times. As owners of Reeljems we recently sat in on a pitching session where the producers of a proposed documentary feature on piracy were asked by a commissioner if they could guarantee a pirate attack on camera, with all the requisite gun action. No amount of pre-planning could assure such a thing, so unless the producers were willing to fake the whole exercise, the answer was no.

To summarise how life can be remodelled into a modern fairytale for TV viewers, look no further than Channel 4's 2014 series *Benefits Street*. From the beginning the programmes had all the appearance of casting by numbers – think of a stereotype and find someone to fit the bill. Some of the stereotypes could have been extracted from a Dickens novel – the Artful Dodger going on a scam, the good-hearted matriarch – and it is clear that, whatever the alleged intentions of the programme-makers, here was a series that appeared to have created a number of narrative arcs that it wished to fit its participants into.

In the end the programme-makers were the losers. Channel 4 got its desired quota of media coverage and decent viewing figures but when the production company went out to make a follow-up series in a different part of the country, they found it difficult to recruit willing participants. No one trusted them.

In the end does it really matter how 'true' shows like *TOWIE* are? Despite having a passing resemblance to certain kinds of documentary from earlier eras, they are conceived primarily as entertainment.

What they share with much other factual broadcasting is a love of the recognisable stereotype. Handled honestly there is nothing wrong with profiling people who – outwardly at least – conform to certain personality types. The gift of the great film-maker is to take an apparently stereotypical individual or group and reveal something truly distinctive or unusual about them; or at least something to which a wider audience can relate. This is as close to the truth as factual programming can hope to get.

One of the finest and most creative documentaries of the 20th century was Orson Welles's *F for Fake* (1974). It's a freewheeling cinematic essay on forgers and forgery – and contains many elements of cinematic fakery of its own. At the beginning Welles promises the audience that for the first hour of the film everything he says will be true. Later in the film he reminds the audience of this, and points out that the hour expired 17 minutes ago and ever since then he had been lying his head off. Such honesty might not come amiss in some recent TV documentaries.

By way of our own conclusion, documentary producers like us are always searching for a great story, and when we find that story, turning it into a documentary comes with responsibilities. We know there are a lot of would-be celebrities out there very willing to say or do whatever it takes to get on screen. Equally there are many moving and extraordinary stories that never see the light of day because they don't quite fit what commissioners think will sell. The challenge for us is to find a way to tell those stories that doesn't compromise our own values and allows us to eat. It's a conundrum that some are willing – and able – to try to confront, so it remains possible for documentary and factual programme-making to shed light on the extraordinary nature of ordinary life. Long may it last.

18

The Interplay between Conflict and Character in Drama and Its Possible Influences on the Construction of Reality Programming

Harry Duffin

Harry Duffin is an award-winning British screenwriter, as well as the author of two novels. He worked in theatre and radio before moving to television, where he joined the hugely successful BBC series *Howards' Way* and then *Eastenders*. His career encompassed two other major UK soap operas screened on independent television - *Coronation Street* and *Crossroads*.

As Head of Development for the UK independent television production company *Cloud 9*, he was lead writer and script executive responsible for seven major television series and co-creator of the UK Channel Five teen drama *The Tribe*, which ran for five series. The following reflection was written by Harry Duffin after discussions with Anne Caborn and then further developed by him at the editing stage. He focuses on television as entertainment and the implications for drama, in particular, soap opera and reality TV.

Much has been written about drama, but if all the books have one point of agreement it is that drama, good drama at least, is conflict. No conflict, no drama. Imagine a drama composed of two people talking; they talk and they agree with each other. It's reassuring for them, but tedious for the eavesdropper (viewer). Conflict is, in this respect, not only entertaining but also entertainment.

This brings us to an interesting question in terms of the purpose of this book. Is all television (meant to be) entertainment? Basically, yes, I think it is. Anyone making programmes for television has to think about how to entertain their target audience. Be it drama, documentary

or even news. Conflict as a device, therefore, has a place in both fiction and reality programming. And, of course, as a topic is repeated it gets stale, so it has to be re-presented in different ways to maintain audience interest and ratings share. Conflict as the clash of irresolvable opinion, whether that's the polite, political tussling across the *Newsnight* table or fists flying on *Jeremy Kyle*, entertains audiences and keeps the ratings up. In the context of making programmes, ratings are everything.

Hence, in my opinion, the escalation of sensationalism in storylines. Once upon a time a trivial fallout between Ena Sharples and Minnie Caldwell (two of the original matriarchal figures in *Coronation Street*, first screened on ITV in 1960) would have gripped the nation. Now one of them would have to plan to poison the other, or push them over a cliff on a street outing, to grab the headlines.

When I was working for *Coronation Street*, one of the characters lost their leg in a road accident. Today I wouldn't get away with such a simple tragedy if I presented it at a story meeting. One of the other characters would have to be involved, either by causing the accident (accidentally or deliberately) or being in some other way at fault.

In *Eastenders*, invariably, it would be a deliberate act; followed by suspicion, an investigation, court case and resolution, such as imprisonment, with the possibility of a longer term follow-up act of revenge (by victim or perpetrators). It's like one of those Balkan family feuds that endure through generations. One escalation leads to another, which is magic to the soap producers and increasingly to other types of programming that are looking for ratings and repeat commissioning.

Drama is conflict, with (the opportunity for) resolution (at least temporarily). It's not reassuring for an audience to be left with the conflict unresolved. It may not be the resolution they want, or expect; in fact it's often better if they don't expect it. But they should achieve a resolution in some form. Having said that, I'm currently writing a stage play to be performed by schools and youth theatres in which the unresolved central situation leaves the audience with questions. Whether that proves satisfying remains to be seen.

Back in the mid-1980s I was asked to join the writing team of the now-defunct *Crossroads*, a motel-based soap opera. *Eastenders* had just burst onto TV screens and was grabbing attention in the entertainments pages of the popular tabloids. So the bosses at Central Television, which produced *Crossroads*, determined to go on the counter-attack.

At the first writers' meeting I attended I learnt that one of the main characters, played by an attractive actress in her late 30s, would be raped

by one of the guests at the motel. That was the first rape in a soap since Sue Johnson's character in *Brookside*, which was way ahead of its time in raising 'issues' in soap form. This was definitely sensational for a programme broadcast well before the watershed [9 pm].

The purpose of the writers' meeting was to discuss the next block of storylines. There were various ideas, which I can't remember precisely at this distance, but which involved something like another main character being involved in a car crash, or discovering they had cancer.

'Hang on', I said, feeling very much like the new boy, and thinking I had missed something. 'What about the rape?' Blank looks all round.

Long story short, the idea was to totally ignore the incident once it had happened, presumably grabbing its share of headlines, and then move onto the next sensational 'plotline'.

I browbeat them into letting me research the aftermath of the rape with the Rape Crisis team in Birmingham, which was where the programme was made. So for the next two weeks after the rape episode, along with more mundane bread-and-butter storylines, the programme explored the effect of the rape on the character and her colleagues, until finally she was packed off to her family in Canada to recover.

In retrospect, it would have had much more dramatic impact, and value in long-term story terms, if the woman character in *Crossroads* had been raped not by a motel guest but by one of the other regular characters. The possibilities for development of the storyline and its consequence are much greater. And that's what the best soaps do today: once you have thought of a storyline, mine the hell out of it. There must be similar pressures on those responsible for today's reality programming.

Developing characters for soaps and one-off drama or series is a different process. Soap characters have an indefinite, sometimes infinite, lifespan, so generally they don't change much, and the audience doesn't expect them to. Largely they fulfil particular roles: the strong, brassy woman typified by Elsie Tanner in *Coronation Street*; the attractive but dangerous 'wrong-un' like Den Watts in *Eastenders*; the village idiot like Benny in *Crossroads*.

Finite dramas require the main characters to develop, have a discernible 'arc' and reach a conclusion. As the textbooks say, 'Character is Action, and Action is Character'. To develop those characters, the writer has to know where the characters are at the start of their story, which means knowing where they've come from. So it's usual to create a 'bible' for the chief protagonists; their individual back-story, which

goes into some detail, often into their childhood and sometimes before they were born.

In contrast, soap characters often start with a sketchy, undefined back-story, because, by and large, they don't need to surprise the viewer; generally it's the storylines that provide the drama and incident. And those storylines can often involve events and people from the characters' past, which surprise the viewer (and quite often the writer); because in most soaps the stories are made up as they go along, on a week-by-week, month-by-month basis.

For instance, Ken Barlow in *Coronation Street* has been married or in a relationship so many times because he has been a regular character since the first episode. If he'd had one partner for all that time, well, the character would have been axed long ago; so things have to happen to change his status: adultery, divorce, death of partner... These opportunities for conflict and resolution are thrust on the character to keep it fresh. In real life, on the contrary, such a character (person) would be seen as a disaster.

Storylines may and should throw up events/incidents that surprise the viewer, but soap and long-form drama addicts also like to know where they stand with the characters, whom they almost see as 'friends' or at least people they know as well, if not better, than their neighbours. And that knowledge, I suspect, is what participants in TV 'reality' programmes trade on to create their own TV personas, as do the TV companies making the programmes. Ratings are king and, as most viewers don't want to work too hard after a hard day's work (all television must be entertainment not work), it is easier to resort to stereotypes that everyone knows and understands.

I'll end with the most pungent portrayal of TV reality shows I have ever seen, which was a BBC Theatre 625 production in 1968. It was by Nigel Kneale and called *The Year of the Sex Olympics*. The premise: a group of real people isolated on an island who have a sex orgy for the titillation of the viewers (*Big Brother* anyone?). Except that the format was growing stale, ratings were falling, so the producers introduced a new element. One of the participants is a killer and during the show will kill someone on camera.

So, is there an end to escalation? In reality, it depends on how much the audience will take, or want. There's a big debate going on with and amongst TV professionals at the moment about the increasing amount of graphic violence being perpetrated on women in drama. Shocking violence that comes right into the living room. Some argue that it only

reflects what is happening in the real world and that not to show it would be irresponsible. Others are deeply concerned that quite a lot of the violence shown is gratuitous and meretricious. And it is feeding an increasingly salacious appetite, firstly on the part of the producers, and then on that of the audience. Just where the line will finally be drawn between drama imitating life, life imitating drama and reality television imitating both is anybody's guess.

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Note: Locators followed by the letter 'n' refer to notes.