

PHENOMENOLOGY OF JOURNALISM

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

In a previous essay,* the authors attempted to define, in phenomenological terms, the artistic and critical attitudes.

The artistic attitude was seen as the attempt to create the image of a total world, which could be enjoyed or viewed in terms of an attitude of everyday life; that is to say, that the created image was so all-encompassing, so total, and so complete, of a concreteness and vividness, such that the viewer could suspend perceptions of all other worlds and respond directly and immediately to the world created as a work of art.

The attempt to produce a "natural" response was described as being achieved by the use of highly self-conscious methodological and technical devices which constitute the techniques and the media of the art. Thus, art was seen to achieve the effect of a natural attitude by the use of devices which in many other respects resemble those of the scientific attitude.

The critical attitude was held to parallel the scientific attitude,

* "A Phenomenological Model of the Artistic and Critical Attitudes," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XXVIII, 1967.

in that both take as their object the appearances of the natural world. Thus, the critic was said to dissect and analyze both the world of art and the work of art in a way similar to that of the scientist in analyzing the world of nature. The differences between the two methods were, however, pointed out.

Using the same methods of analysis, we should like to explore the phenomenology of the journalistic attitude.

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The journalistic attitude is related to the reporting of events in this world by media which have, as one of their central characteristics, periodicity in publication, whether it be a daily newspaper, a weekly or bimonthly journal or a radio or television program. The act of reportage is limited, not only in the sense that it conveys an image of the world defined within the framework of the reported event, but also by the periodicity of publication. Thus, time becomes a major dimension which determines a vast part of that subsequent reporting of events which defines and determines an image of the world.

The time feature is not the natural time of the natural man, because given the periodicity of publication, time is an objective factor, subject to conditions and controls that are external to the psychological conditions of action, though they may be incorporated into it.

Time, for the journalist, is purely an arbitrary accident of the requirements of publication, which has no inherent rhythm other than the economics of publication and the expectations of readers that publication will occur at given periods. Thus, regardless of the state of completeness of his research and knowledge, he must present a story which appears to be a complete entity by the time of his deadline. The element of completeness in the story, the who, when, where, and how, of journalism, resembles the images of a total world as presented in a work of art, so that in this respect the journalist is an artist, who, however, works in terms of time demands which are generally not characteristic of the artist. The requirement, however, that the story appear to be complete in and of itself forces the journalist to work for a closure which is not the closure that might

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have occurred had he not been subject to the time requirements.

A second characteristic of the journalistic attitude is based on the attitude of the journalist to his audience. In the artistic attitude, the creative artist works out his own subjective image of reality, develops it through the use of the objective techniques of his art, and imposes them upon his audience. Thus, he creates the standards and the vision by which his work is judged.

The journalist, hemmed in by the periodicity of publication, and by the fact that he is selling some kind of media or publication, is forced to anticipate the response of his audience in terms of what the journalist calls "human interest." He must anticipate what will excite, stimulate, and titillate an audience at the time of publication. This means that the flow of his attention must be consistent with the natural flow of attention of his audience. He must drop stories and his interest in events, as the events themselves shift either in their dramatic impact on audiences, or in the journalist's estimate of the audience's rhythm of interest.¹

Thus, the cliché that there is nothing as old as yesterday's newspaper is no less true because of its nature as a cliché.

For this reason, journalism cannot or does not necessarily have the depth and the timeless quality of art, though in other respects it resembles the image-making of art.

In a third respect, however, journalism has much in common with science and art, for one of the characteristics of outstanding journalism is that it results in a transvaluation, at least momentarily of the natural world. For good journalism takes as its framework the world of everyday assumptions of routine, and the normal expectations of a natural audience, and discovers, through

¹ George Simmel, in *Superordination and Subordination*, Section 5, "Leader and Led": "The journalist gives content and direction to the opinions of a mute multitude. But he is nevertheless forced to listen, combine, and guess what the tendencies of this multitude are, what it desires to hear and to have confirmed, and whether it wants to be led. While apparently it is only the public which is exposed to *his* suggestions, actually he is as much under the sway of the public's suggestion. Thus, a highly complex interaction (whose two, mutually spontaneous forces, to be sure, appear under very different forms) is hidden here beneath the semblance of the pure superiority of the one element and a purely passive being-led of the other." From *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, translated by Kurt Wolff, New York, Free Press Paperback, 1964, pp. 185-6.

the significant story, the violation of the expectations of everyday life. So, the newsworthy, the dramatic, the "human interest" aspect of reporting looks either for the dramatic affirmation or the dramatic denial by events of the world of everyday life.

In dramatizing the denial of everyday life by events, the journalist exposes the incongruities between image and realities, the fraud and chicanery behind many facades, and suggests the operation of more essential structures governing the world of appearances. At times, such activities result in a renovation of values which are frequently neglected because they are taken for granted and not looked at. At other times, the effect of continuous exposures may cause the devaluation of values because they appear to be inoperative. But in both cases, the act of good reporting is something more than reporting; it is an act of creation and re-creation. Its effects, while they may be startling at a given time, however, are likely to be temporary, because the journalist is forced continuously to shift the focus of attention, as even the exposure in a given area becomes routinized, and as the response of his readership shifts.

While the result of such activities may, from time to time, cause public scandals, the arrest of malefactors, the redesigning of automobiles, the enactment of new legislation, and changes in the sensibilities of audiences, the journalist who lives at the point of the chasm between appearances and reality is likely at a personal level to feel that all appearances are fraudulent, are managed, engineered for reasons totally unrelated to the appearances. As a result, his personal attitude may be one of intellectual cynicism, which however is not necessarily incongruous with intellectual honesty and the maintenance of high standards of personal ethics.

In presenting these characteristics of the journalistic attitude, we have tended to neglect the simple and more obvious characteristics of technical facility in the handling, arranging, and manipulation of words and symbols, so that taken together they produce for the moment total images of a reality as adumbrated around an event or a story.

Viewed in terms of his technical virtuosity, as a craftsman and artisan, the journalist is an information-disseminator. He is able to present images of the world in apparently clear, per-

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sonalistic, simple, and dramatic forms that are not abstract, academic or complicated.

This latter aspect, the technical and aesthetic virtuosity of the journalist, not only constitutes his professional and artistic methodology, but constitutes his basis for evaluation and appreciation by others, including other journalists.

THE APPLICATION OF THE JOURNALISTIC ATTITUDE

The qualities of the journalist as information specialist may be seen under two perspectives: first, that of the social functions of journalism, and the social consequences of journalism; second, the relation of this attitude to intellectual work of all types, including the scientific, the artistic, and the scholarly.

THE SOCIETAL SETTINGS AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF JOURNALISM

Journalism as an activity becomes meaningful in various societal settings, which, if these settings were not extant, would not require a journalistic attitude. Thus, journalism is appropriate to only limited kinds of social worlds. In a small-scale society, in which all available knowledge is gathered through direct and personal experience, the journalistic attitude would not develop, or would be part of the normal cognitive and perceptual equipment of every individual in this society. This also applies to the amount of differentiation within a society. For if all individuals in the society are equipped to understand from direct experience the total range of events and activities in that society, then the normal channels of personal communication would be effective in disseminating information within that society.

When the technical development of a society grows to the point where most of the basic issues and dynamics of a society are too complex, too abstract, too removed from the experience of the individuals in the society, there is need for the qualities of personification, dramatization, and the removal of abstraction and complexity from events and issues.²

² Alfred Schutz, in his essay, *The Well-Informed Citizen—An Essay on the Social Distribution of Knowledge*, formulates this problem in a somewhat

Thus, the journalist becomes necessary as the result of societal developments which coincide with the growth of large-scale civilizations, the increased differentiation within society, and the development of complex administrative, scientific, technical, and industrial processes which at an operative level can be understood only by highly trained, experienced professionals.

The journalist, by developing professional competence in one or more of the abstract technical areas in the society, and by combining them with his "communications skills," makes distant and complex areas of the world available to audiences who are presumed to lack either the experience or the equipment to understand those events and issues directly in their own terms. As a result, he is or seems indispensable to a mass society.

The second aspect of the information function of journalism is related to the uses of information in a large-scale society. Organized groups, business corporations, government agencies, universities, and other large-scale organizations are or become aware that information dissemination is related to their specialized public and private purposes. There is need to employ specialists at dramatization, personalization, simplification, in order to present most effectively the specialized claims of these groups to distant publics. It is no accident, then, that the beginnings of professional propaganda began with the beginnings of professional journalism. For the information talents of the journalist develop in response to needs for substitute sources of information when genuine or direct sources of experience are not available. But this situation, in which the individual is not capable or is presumed to be not capable of evaluating issues and events in terms of direct experience, is precisely that situation which makes possible large-scale fraud, charlatany, and

different but related perspective, in which he constructs three ideal types: the expert, the man in the street, and the well-informed citizen, as three separate forms of social knowledge (see the *Collected Works*, volume II, p. 129 *et passim*). The present essay on the journalistic attitude focuses upon certain aspects which Schutz developed only in passing. See also W. Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1925): "Modern society is not visible to anybody, nor intelligible continuously and as a whole. One section is visible to another section, one series of acts is intelligible to this group and another to that" (p. 42).

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deceit by misdirection. For the conscious manipulation of information becomes possible only when access to genuine information or direct sources of experience is obscured by the complexity of events, issues, technology, size, differentiation, etc., in a society.³

The development of a complex society provides the opportunity and the motivation, but the misapplication of journalism supplies the means.

PERSONIFICATION

The journalist, in avoiding abstraction and the cold deadness of difficult and abstract themes, seeks to find the image or the personality that embodies the idea, and deals with the image or personality in place of the idea. This enables him to communicate at levels that a large and non-professional audience is able to understand. Frequently, the characteristics of the journalistically treated personality begins to transcend that idea. Thus, the personal habits, the love stories, the leisure pursuits, the personal character or lack of it, all overpower that which would make the personality of journalistic interest originally.⁴

Thus, for Einstein, the journalistic treatment would emphasize his eccentricities: the haircut, his hatred of shaving cream,

³ Leo Gurko, *Heroes, Highbrows and the Popular Mind*, New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1953. "The enormous specialization that accompanied the spread of scientific and technical knowledge broke life up into smaller segments, and made the custodian of each segment increasingly important. In due course this custodian developed into the professional expert who, by virtue of his total knowledge of a single area (and often total ignorance of everything else), set up shop as middleman between his area and the public at large. His very concentration on a single sphere at the expense of every other kind of knowledge was a strong element in his functioning as an expert." (p. 236)

⁴ Leo Lowenthal, *Biographies in Popular Magazines*, reprinted in William Petersen (Ed.), *American Social Patterns*, Garden City, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956, p. 71: "A biography seems to be the means by which an average person is able to reconcile his interest in the important trends of history and in the personal lives of other people"; also pp. 108-110: "The important role of familiarity in all phenomena of mass culture cannot be sufficiently emphasized. People derive a great deal of satisfaction from the continual repetition of familiar patterns... there has never been any rebellion against this fact... the biographies repeat what we have always known..." (p. 110)

his absent-mindedness, his proclivity for wearing old sweaters, etc., all at the expense of any presentation of his contribution, which is defined as so abstract that only a dozen men could understand it.⁵

The concreteness and "comprehensibility" embodied in this form of journalistic treatment results in the "here" or the "star," who symbolizes and personifies, in terms larger than life, a field of endeavour which would otherwise not be salient. Once the attempt is made to make the "star" salient, the person who is momentarily presented as a star has a fabricated image. The dramatic aspects have to be emphasized; traits are created either in the person himself, so that he is made to resemble his journalistic image, or so that the image is made independent of his genuine characteristics or qualities.⁶

In this sense, journalism not only reports on the operation of appearances, and on realities underlying appearances, but also creates appearances or the appearance of realities.

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Starting with the pure model of the journalist as developed above, a whole subsidiary set of occupations, which can be called applied journalism, can become available. These include the information functions, i.e., the information specialist in large-scale organizations, and primarily as defined by the term in government. In this sense, the information specialist translates the often complex, scientific, abstract procedural documents of quasi-lite-

⁵ Orrin E. Klapp, *Symbolic Leaders—Public Dramas and Public Men*, Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, 1964, especially Chapter 8: "Hero Stuff," p. 217, for other props of famous characters: sweaters, spectacles, mustaches, stovepipe hats, etc.

⁶ Edgar Morin, *The Star—An Account of the Star System in Motion Pictures*, New York, Grove Press, 1960: "The actor does not engulf his role. The role does not engulf the actor. Once the film is over, the actor becomes an actor again, the character remains a character, *but from their union is born a composite creature who participates in both, envelops them both: the star.* G. Gentilhomme gives an excellent primary definition of the star (in *Comment devenir vedette de cinéma*): "A star appears when the interpreter takes precedence over the character he is playing while profiting by that character's qualities on the mythic level.' Which we might complete: 'and when the character profits by the star's qualities on this same mythic level'." (p. 39)

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rate technicians into the dramatic, the personal, the concrete imagery characteristic of the essential journalistic model.

But, in addition to this, as an employee of a specialized agency which has vested interests of its own, his job entails the repression of information which is not consistent with those specialized interests, the concealment of weaknesses, of original documents, and their restatement so that the positive interests of the agency are enhanced.

To the extent that journalism makes itself available for such uses, it destroys one of its original basic attributes: that of revealing conflicts between appearances and underlying structures. Instead, it reverses this relationship, in that it contributes to the manufacture of pseudo-appearances, and contributes to a fraudulent public life.

Unfortunately, in a complex society where the sources of information are so varied and numerous, the journalist and his enterprises in their basic news reporting function are frequently forced to accept pseudo-journalism in the form of the press release, the handout, as a substitute for the genuine legwork that results in journalism as a peculiar art form.⁷

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In the above discussion, the journalistic attitude was primarily located in journalism as an occupation, and corruptions of the journalistic attitude were seen in the use of journalism by applied journalists for ends not related to the original ends of journalism.

⁷ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image, or What happened to the American Dream*, New York, Atheneum Books, 1962: ...“our whole system of public information produces always more ‘packaged’ news, more pseudo-events... The common ‘news releases’ which every day issue by the ream from Congressmen’s offices, from the President’s press secretary, from the press relations offices of businesses, charitable organization, and universities are a kind of *Congressional Record* covering all American life. To scure ‘news coverage’ for an event, ...one must issue, in proper form a ‘release’ ...The release is news pre-cooked, and supposed to keep till needed ...The account is written in past tense but usually describes an event that has not yet happened when the release is given out ...The National Press Club in its Washington clubrooms has a large rack which is filled daily with the latest releases, so the reporter does not even have to visit the offices which give them out. In 1947 there were about twice as many government press agents engaged in preparing news releases as there were newsmen gathering them in...” (pp. 17-19)

Now, one must not forget that journalism in the original sense of our usage has been a "habit of mind," a way of viewing the world, and of creating articulate images of it. The point that it is important to make here is that this journalistic habit of mind can become independent of a specific occupation, and can become applied to spheres other than that of journalism itself, or of bureaucratic information-control and information-manipulation. This is especially true since the social conditions which evoke the journalistic attitude are independent of journalism itself. The complexity, differentiation, abstractness, and social distances of modern society force everyone who wishes to communicate with others who do not directly experience the events or phenomena communicated to do so in manners and styles that flow from the journalistic attitude.

These manners and styles, we have indicated, are: use of drama, personification, concreteness, simplification, imagery, etc.⁸

JOURNALISTIC TREATMENT

The use of the objective techniques of journalism can become independent of professional journalism in its primary and original sense.

Once this occurs, it is followed by what we call journalistic treatment, in which the methods of journalism—personification, simplification, the quest for imagery, along with incomprehensible information—are used in non-journalistic enterprises.

Thus, whenever a new idea, institution, technological development, art work or form appears, in a society imbued with highly developed journalistic tradition, these new forms are almost

⁸ Israel Gerver and Joseph Bensman, "Towards a Sociology of Expertness," in *Social Forces*, volume 32, no. 3, March 1954: "...symbolic experts may personify complexities not only for the distant public, but also for insiders under conditions which are sufficiently complex so that these complexities cannot be understood exclusively and immediately in terms of direct participant experience ...In many fields of endeavour the symbolic expert is not actually a substantive expert but appears to be one. The symbolic expert is not necessarily a particular living person but may be a complex of traditional evaluations and definitions which become personified... such as Rembrandt, Beethoven, Bach, Van Gogh... Copernicus and Galileo..." (pp. 277-228)

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immediately redeveloped, reported, and publicized, within the framework of journalistic treatment.

Modern art, or a new development in modern art, will become within a relatively short period of time, in journalistic form, invested with the glamour, the exoticism, and the chic-ness inherent in a "hero" or "star" system.

Given the appeal of the journalistic treatment to audiences whose interests have been aroused and jaded by past journalistic treatment, there is a high probability that the new development will have almost instantaneous currency, via both the form of its treatment and the media of mass dissemination for such material.

As a result, within the last 100 years, it can be argued that the time interval between the development of a style, a form, an innovation, and its acceptance at a popular level, has been shortened and shortened, so that by now, instant acceptance of innovation is often guaranteed, provided the availability of the innovation for journalistic treatment, even before the idea can be properly understood and developed by its protagonists. The individual as worker or innovator is pulled into the world of the stars and of public characters, before he has time to assess, criticize, and develop the innovation.⁹ There is a probability that basically good ideas are exhausted, vulgarized, or bowdlerized before their immanent meaning emerges. Or, in the absence of general ideas, effects may be forced by a wilful experimentalism and sensationalism.

If this is true of innovators, it is even more true of audiences, who must be prepared, if they wish to be *au courant*, to leap from one journalistically created vogue to another, preferably before the high point of each succeeding vogue has been reached. The artist or innovator must risk the danger of becoming out-model before, almost, he has done his work. And if he values his recently acquired stardom, he must learn to leave that work

⁹ Bernard Rosenberg and Norris Fliegel, *The Vanguard Artist—Portrait and Self-Portrait*, Chicago Quadrangle Books, 1965: "by becoming celebrities too soon, many of the young are deprived of experience. The quiet novice, an extended period of steady work without public celebration, toughens and inures a man to success. With adequate pre-conditioning and time to grow he can take it in stride. Young men in a hurry, overambitious to start with, who 'click' on the marketplace find it difficult to resist the ballyhoo which envelops them." (pp. 57-58)

which becomes *passé* as new styles replace it. In this sense, the dangers of journalistically induced success are greater than the dangers of obscurity.¹⁰

Other forms of journalistic treatment abound. The most frequent form occurs when journalistic treatment combines with academic treatment, in which the journalistic explicator must explain in journalistic terms how work that is independently valuable was really done, or how it can be understood in more simplified and "basic" terms. This results in the industry of commentaries. But it is not enough for the journalist (or non-journalist who provides journalistic treatment) to simplify, and explain the original work. He must add elements to the original work and to previous commentaries to justify his present commentary. This results in journalistic "improvements" of the original work by individuals who are not equipped to do the original work, but who know how to write about it.

THE JOURNALISTIC ATTITUDE OUTSIDE OF JOURNALISM

Given the growth of journalistic treatment as an activity apart from journalism *per se* it becomes necessary to consider the uses of the journalistic attitude by non-journalists in non-journalistic situations. Perhaps the simplest form of application of the journalistic attitude is the use of this device by a scholar or expert toward his peers who presumably have the experience, the background, the technique, at levels which do not require the simplifications of the journalistic attitude. Why this should occur so pervasively is not directly perceivable. Perhaps the habits of mind developed from dealing with outgroups become so pervasive that the trained professional presents his own materials to other trained professionals in ways that previously would have been considered inappropriate.

¹⁰ Rosenberg and Fliegel, *op. cit.*: "To get their work before a sizable audience, artists feel they are forced into alien procedures; they must also accept the fact that much of their work will be acquired by aesthetically unappreciative buyers. They are elated when things go otherwise, but there is rarely any expectation that they will. Few can hold out for the 'perfect buyer.' The size of the purchasing audience often makes it difficult for the painter to know who his 'customer' is." (pp. 194-195)

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Regardless of the cause then, the specialist as receiver of information must guard himself against the forms of information which might mislead him, even though he himself, in his dissemination of information, might use the very same form.

Related to these activities is the journalistic institution of the book review, as a means of coping with the immense flow of information to be found in technical and specialized journals. This flow is so great that the academician is often forced to subscribe to reviewing journals, and to engage clipping services and graduate students to provide abstracts, digests, and quotations from unread books, monographs, and articles.

The journalistic attitude has a dual character: it has a specific attitude toward the material of scholarly work, and a specific attitude toward the audience.¹¹ The journalistic attitude treats the audience as a consumer; i. e., knowledge disseminated should excite, stimulate, titillate, entertain, surprise, and evoke temporary interest, but require no effort, on the part of the consumer. But a genuine educational attitude must treat the neophyte as a producer, must teach him to handle the complexity, the difficulty, the abstractness, etc., of the data of his field, in its own terms. When the journalistic attitude becomes part and parcel of the process of education, then the would-be producer is treated as a consumer, and his perception of the field is distorted by the importation of dramatic elements into what might be serious, undramatic, persistent, long-term technical work. Disillusion must follow an orientation to work based on the expectation of the drama of work.

But more important, the use of the dramatisation inherent in the journalistic attitude delays the entry of the neophyte into the work itself, so that it is difficult for him to learn what work is. Again, to repeat a cliché, he learns *about* the work, instead of learning the work.¹²

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We have discussed above first, the journalistic attitude in relation to its social roots; secondly, we discussed the “mi-

¹¹ See Bensman and Lilienfeld, *op. cit.*

¹² William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1896): “There are two kinds of knowledge broadly and practically

gration” of the journalistic attitude out of professional journalism *per se* into the field of education, wherein it was seen to substitute popularizing methods of presentation in place of more traditional apprenticeship method of teaching and learning.

JOURNALISM IN INTELLECTUAL WORK

We may now want to consider the journalistic attitude in relation to the genesis and shaping of works of science, philosophy, art, and scholarship.

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Here we would distinguish between two ideal types: “self-generated” material, and “externally generated” material. “Externally generated” material is that material which is developed simply to meet a deadline, and to fill up space in a journal, or to fill time, as at a broadcast or popular lecture. “Self-generated” material includes all those books, art works, scientific reports, etc., which are developed out of concern for immanent empirical or theoretical problems, out of perceptions or improvisations on the part of a writer or artist which are seen by him as promising and requiring further development or investigation, but which do not inherently take their genesis from any immediate external pressures. Preoccupation with the material alone generates the work to be done.

A major component of journalistic activity and of the journalistic attitude is, however, the pressure to have something written in time for a deadline, and of sufficient volume to fill the

distinguishable: we may call them respectively *knowledge of acquaintance* and *knowledge-about*... In minds able to speak at all there is, it is true, some knowledge about everything. Things can at least be classed, and the times of their appearance told. But in general, the less we analyze a thing, and the fewer of its relations we perceive, the less we know about it and the more our familiarity with it is of the acquaintance-type. The two kinds of knowledge are, therefore, as the human mind practically exerts them, relative terms. That is, the same thought of a thing may be called *knowledge-about* it in comparison with a simpler thought or acquaintance with it in comparison with a thought of it that is more articulate and explicit still.” (pp. 221-222)

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space or the time allotted to it. Thus, to paraphrase Karl Kraus, the journalist must write though he has nothing to say, and the journalist has something to say, because he must write.¹³ If, under this pressure, it happens that the journalist finds something to say, all is well, but if not, he must then have recourse to various devices.

One such device is to have recourse to that body of material which is, as described above, "self-generated," and to "popularize" it; to explain it, "clarify" it, make it amusing, dramatic, etc.; or, one may go further, and in the process may "improve" the material by removing from it what one takes to be offensive to an audience, or merely boring, or threatening to one or another interest group. Here, the journalistic attitude actually acts as mediator between two groups; towards the public, it decides what that public is fit or able to understand, towards the producers of work, it will dictate what may or may not be appropriate for an audience presumed to be rather lightly educated and having a somewhat limited capacity for attention. If this journalistic attitude becomes internalized by a producer of self-generated material, he may become induced to shape this material in ways different from those he would have chosen had he not anticipated public responses. Thus the extent to which the journalistic attitude becomes internalized may serve to distinguish various classes of intellectual work from one another, ranging from speculative philosophical works, works of high art, original theoretical treatises, on one hand, to works of popularization, "Introductions to" one or another subject-matter field, "how to" books, anthologies, readers, etc.

The distinction made here between "self-generated" and "externally generated" material actually describes the opposite poles of a continuum; at one end stands, in Schutzian terms, the expert, at the other end the journalist or the propagandist; somewhere in between stands Schutz's model of the well-informed citizen.¹⁴

¹³ Karl Kraus, *Beim Wort genommen*, p. 212. This and many other features of the journalistic attitude were first developed in the polemic and satirical writings of Kraus, e. g. "A historian is often just a journalist facing backwards," *ibid.*, p. 215. Kösel Verlag, 1955.

¹⁴ See Schutz, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-3 and 132-3.

Part of journalistic treatment is to present arguments for or against a given issue or idea in such a way that the arguments of the advocate can be understood and accepted without access to the complexities, the abstractness, the legality of the issue in its original form. Most points of contention in a complex society are dealt with in terms of legalistic, technical, administrative, procedural, and economic complexities. Their substantive merits are not immediately visible, especially as major substantive points will frequently turn on relatively innocuous but abstract legal or technical issues.

The argument at the level of abstraction of the original issue is often difficult to present, especially to a lay public, difficult to understand, difficult to evoke loyalties and passions, even though these arguments may involve the life and growth of major groups and institutions within a society. The journalistic treatment of these issues provides a solution to this problem. The techniques of personification, simplification, imagery, linguistic devices, and the truncated journalistic story can, at its highest point, provide a description of a story concerning the issue, in which no argument is ever made. The selection of words and the emotional loading of words, the slanting of the treatment of events, the sympathetic or unsympathetic treatment of personalities all constitute the application of journalistic treatment to complex issues. The argument is contained in the form of the treatment of the story, rather than in the argument itself. Argumentativeness, that is, the ideologized form of argument, is frowned upon from this point of view, for the ideological form or the logical form of the argument alerts the individual to the idea that an argument is about to be presented. This signals him to adopt a critical stance in which the argument is to be subjected to logical or empirical criticism, or simply to emotional resistance. The argumentative form in its essential nature implies that the "other" should be prepared to resist the argument, and invites him to develop counter-arguments. In using these forms of journalistic treatment, the individual is not alerted to the polemic situation, is not warned, alarmed, and invited to use his critical faculties. The argument is presented in such a way that the individual does

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not know that an argument has been made. If the presentation is successful, he accepts the argument as a series of facts, emotional tones, or as a reality. He has been manipulated. This form of journalistic treatment finds its most concentrated expression in "mood advertising," in magazines like *Time*, and in indirect public relations campaigns. It is for this reason that ideology as a form of disputation has become unfashionable in a world where journalistic treatment replaces ideological or polemic treatment of controversial issues.¹⁵

JOURNALISM AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Public Relations attitude requires a state of continuing innovation, i.e., new and exciting stories about occurrences within an institution must be generated at relatively frequent intervals, for press releases, etc., since the routine operation of an efficient institution is not in itself newsworthy. When public prominence becomes an important need for an institution, the temptation to increase the rate of technical innovation is increased. Thus, publicly valued technology, such as high-powered computers, teaching machines, team teaching, systems analysis, and many other similar ideas, which may be valuable in and of themselves, are likely to be misapplied, or at least introduced, for needs other than purely technical ones, the more so as they are highly amenable to public relations treatment.

Under this heading come such developments as the establishment of university chairs at very high salaries, for which an outstanding scholar is hired, primarily to enhance the "image" of the institution, the establishment of special curricular and

¹⁵ A by-product of this process is the development of a special journalistic language which conveys meaning by indirection, and by surrounding familiar words with new emotional connotations to convey meanings opposite to their traditional sense. In addition, new language, spelling, and coinages, elisions, acronyms, etc. are invented. These debase the traditional usages of language and introduce new forms of barbarism. They do, however, facilitate the above-described journalistic treatment of events. See, for example Dwight MacDonald, *Against the American Grain*, New York, Vintage Books, 1962, pp. 12-13, and the essays, "The Strong Untuned," pp. 289 ff and "The Decline and Fall of English," pp. 317 ff. See also Karl Kraus, *Untergang der Welt durch schwarze Magie*.

educational programs and degrees, new construction of various types, and the establishment of various research institutions.

JOURNALISM AND BOOK PUBLISHING

The "migration" of the journalistic attitude out of journalism and into various fields has been discussed above. Its effects in the publishing of books may be briefly indicated. There are three principal loci of the journalistic attitude in book publishing. A firm may wish to fill out its catalogue in various subject-matter fields, for reasons of competition, and so may commission or generate books (often in the trade called "non-books") which would otherwise not have existed. Textbooks for schools, and "Introductions to etc." for the general trade, come under this heading; thus, externally-generated material. The second principal locus of the journalistic attitude in publishing is frequently located among editors. An editor who receives a manuscript from a subject-matter expert may find that its obscurity and disorganization of style require reordering clarification. In so acting, the editor is following the Schutzian model of the well-informed citizen. But a book editor may follow another model, as described above (pp. 16-17), namely that of anticipating audience responses to original, controversial, difficult, or otherwise disturbing material, and may in the process truncate, disfigure, or suppress a book entirely. This may be operative especially in the area of translating a major work into English, either from a foreign language or from technical jargon, in the process of which the editor frequently announces his deletion of considerable amounts of material which he has considered as not suitable for the English reading audience. Here, the editor has clearly adopted the journalistic attitude.

The third locus of the journalistic attitude in the field of book publishing lies in the area of reference books. The development of a complex technological world, and with it of journalism in all senses of the term, has led to a need for information about areas and field which an individual cannot be expected to know at first hand. For "the well-informed citizen" reference books may serve a legitimate purpose, but they of

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course may serve journalistic purposes as well, enabling a popularizer, rewrite man, commentator, etc., to assume the mantle of a depth of scholarship he does not possess. The influence of journalism may be shown not only in the proliferation of encyclopedias, textbooks, and references books, but in the regularity with which they are revised and updated to include the latest developments, to the point that they come to resemble periodicals in being constantly updated, even though the developments may be peripheral or of ephemeral interest in a subject-matter field.

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It remains to consider one more function of the journalistic attitude as it is applied not only by journalists, but also by scholars in the presentation of their fields.

At any given point in time in any field of study, the sum total of knowledge in that field is fragmentary, unorganized, and quite frequently disorganized. A vast number of individuals are working on a series of frequently unrelated problems, while others are working in terms of intellectual traditions which are often competing, antagonistic, or anomalous. An accurate summation of knowledge in any field, for those who expect a unified, organized, progressive march of science and knowledge, might prove discrediting to that field. When public relations purposes are first in mind, the presentation of the state of the art or science requires that the field be presented in an orderly, systematic, unified, and dramatic front, such that all professionals have two orders of data about their own field:

(1) one, of inside knowledge which determines the operative data for the professional in his intramural work;

(2) the other, which is a pseudo-integration of his field, which is presented to laymen, neophytes, the general public, and to outside administrators whose work impinges on the field.

This may appear at times to be necessary; however, the attempt to treat the pseudo-order as genuine often results in a falsification of the entire field. Further, when a field is full of the conflicts and divergences of approach which is necessarily characteristic of a search for knowledge based upon free inquiry by independent minds, then the problem of orientation to the

various approaches within a field is important not only to the public, to the neophyte, but also to the professional. Here, the scholar as intramural journalist operates by defining lines along which an individual can find avenues for the expression of loyalties and commitments. At the same time, the lines define the "enemies," and, with, it, those schools of thought and approaches that are to be ignored, disdained, or accorded low prestige.

Journalism of this nature is necessary for the political organization of any intellectual field, and parallels within this field the use of journalism as a device for controlling and manipulating information by the public relations man and by the information specialists of large-scale bureaucracies.

Journalistic treatment combines with scholarship, to be sure, in other forms as well. The most frequent is that in which the journalistic explicator must explain in popularizing terms how work that is independently valuable was really done, or how it can be understood in more simplified and "basic" terms. This, as we have previously indicated, results in the industry of commentaries, in which each commentary on basic work encrusts itself on other commentaries, so that the original idea, which was sufficiently attractive to invite commentaries, gets lost in the total weight of commentaries. But it is not enough for the journalist (or for the non-journalist-scholar providing journalistic treatment) to simplify and explain the original work. He must add elements to the original work and to previous commentaries, to justify his present commentary, frequently "on the basis of more recent scholarship." This results in "improvements" on the original work by individuals who are not equipped to do the original work, but who know how to write about it.

One conceptual device which has become a major part of the critical industry, and which can be traced back to journalistic usages, is that of the establishment, within a subject-matter field, of a pantheon of the major historical figures of that field. Many a survey of a field for the beginner or for the layman, has the model of a guided tour of the pantheon, in which the leading figures are brought forth, their lives and works briefly sketched using the techniques of personification, simplification, etc., and then their relative merits are established. Thus, one figure will be established in the main section, others in the lesser wings

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of the pantheon, according to their statue, as established by the critic describing the field. Thus, we will be given ratings of the figures in the field: the greatest and most important, the second after him, the next, and so on. This device of establishing, as though once and for all, the relative merits of the figures in a field, is journalistic in nature, borrowed primarily from the sports pages of the newspaper, in which individual athletes and teams are rated either according to their standings in the season's competition, or on the basis of long-term statistical measures, or according public opinion polls.

This industry of commentaries also serves the political organization of an intellectual field in the problem of according recognition for original or valuable work which originates in an opposing or rival school of thought. If the concepts or findings developed are really indispensable, they can be gradually and anonymously appropriated, and sources for the appropriation can be eventually cited only among scholars of an allied, rather than an opposing, school of thought.

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In the above cases, we have presented the development of a phenomenological model of an attitude as related to a specialized kind of treatment of information appropriate to given types of social and societal structures. The journalistic attitude is evoked by the needs for the periodistic presentation of images of the world to distant publics who are not able to comprehend necessary parts of their world in terms of their direct experience. At its best, journalism performs an extremely important function in the creation, re-creation, and re-emphasis of world images. It transvalues the world even in the process of trying to present it.

But the very development of the skills and techniques for manifesting such images demonstrates the possibility of use and abuse by those who would use the journalistic attitude for non-journalistic purposes, and in a society in which the need for information is so great that, when fulfilled, the fulfillment cancels the need by drowning the public in information.

But in addition to the overabundance of information pre-

sented to the society at large, one finds that public relations treatment has been imported into most other areas of life, even by those who are not professionally aware of using the journalistic attitude. Thus, when journalistic treatment begins to pervade a great part of the major institutions, and the thinking processes of a society, the creation of images and appearances becomes an autonomous process in which the institutions, techniques, and methodologies of the society become the product of the attempt to manufacture images.

Thus, the image is no longer a by-product of the generic and necessary operation of an institution, but becomes a major *raison d'être* for the institution. When this occurs, the activities and operations of the institutions are depleted of their intrinsic meanings, and extrinsic meanings become the only meanings available. If and when this occurs, self-consciousness concerning image-building, that is, the journalistic attitude and journalistic treatment, results in the devaluation of all intrinsic meanings. The articulation of meaning thus becomes a device by which meaning is depleted of its content.