IJoC Shift or Stasis

The 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* Killings,
Media Event Chains, and Global Political Responses

ANNABELLE SREBERNY
SOAS University of London, UK

The forms and flows of global media coverage of the *Charlie Hebdo* assassinations of January 2015 compel a reexamination of cherished nostrums in media studies. Limited coverage of analogous lethal attacks elsewhere suggests the privileging of certain historical narratives over others and pinpoints the urgency of honing concepts adequate to the mediated processes in play. Current notions of integrative global media events and of a rational global public sphere demand to be replaced by far more supple heuristics that engage with these attacks from the perspective of cultural history and prioritize "thick" description. Clashing narratives around colonialism, Islamophobia, and free speech circulate instantaneously, yet some traumas receive priority in global coverage. Mere repetition of frozen concepts cannot do justice to a world of considerable violence and flux.

Keywords: Charlie Hebdo*, media events, event chains, history, globality*

Preamble

Mid-morning on January 7, 2015, two jihadist terrorists armed with assault rifles and other weapons forced their way into the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, acts seemingly triggered by the publication of a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed on its cover.[1] They fired many shots, killing 11 people and injuring 11 others during their attack. The gunmen identified themselves as belonging to Al-Qaeda in Yemen, which took responsibility for the attack and claimed that it had been planned for years. The "*je suis Charlie*" icon, produced as an almost instantaneous response, colored Facebook black. The shooting of a French National Police officer as he encountered the gunmen shortly after they left the building was filmed live and posted on Facebook; to the videographer's regret, it was picked up by mainstream media and repeated endlessly for global audiences on television screens worldwide ("Man Who Filmed," 2015).

Annabelle Sreberny: as98@soas.ac.uk

[1] The magazine's offices had been previously firebombed in 2011 for publishing a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad on its cover with the caption "100 lashes of the whip if you don't die laughing."

I am trying to understand the phenomenon that in a widely accepted shorthand has become known simply as "Charlie Hebdo" as an instantiation of a number of allied issues in the analysis of global mediated politics. The saturation media coverage reminded me of Steven Hawking's early notion of the "event horizon" that describes a boundary in space-time, or "the point of no return" where a gravitational pull becomes so great as to make escape impossible. In many ways, across Europe and elsewhere, the Charlie Hebdo "media event horizon" in January 2015 functioned in that manner, with a gravitational pull that both blacked out other news stories that on another day would have made headlines and also seemed to demand a response from everyone. Put simply, this particular framing of Hebdo was as a mediated spectacle.
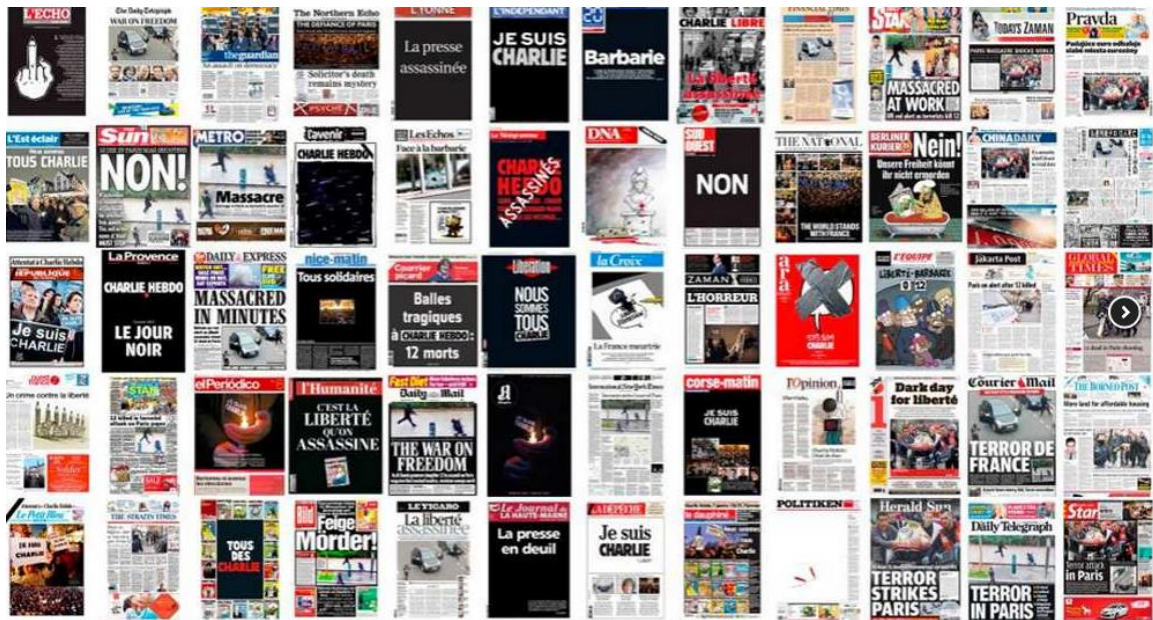
Figure 1. Press headlines from around the world about the Charlie Hebdo attack.
Source: http://bit.ly/1PBa9JR

It is the media that names events as such, elevating them out of the flow of everyday life; hence, where there is no media there is no event. This bears repeating. In January 2015, this dynamic was horribly underlined as the story of the massacres of about 2,000 people in Doron Baga and Baga, Northern Nigeria, slowly became evident. Satellite imagery taken on January 2 and 7 was released by Amnesty International which showed that "In Doron Baga, more than 3,100 buildings were damaged or destroyed by a fire that affected most of the town, which is 4 square kilometres in size. At least 620 buildings were destroyed by fire in Baga, 2.5 kilometres from neighbouring Doron Baga" (2015, para. 5).

There are numerous, ongoing reasons why that story was not covered: Few international journalists are based in Africa, and not many Nigerian ones were near Baga; there is an endemic shortage of resources to cover international, especially "developing world," stories; there are legitimate concerns about the safety of journalists in the region; and there were profound difficulties of access, to name a few.

But all of these are by now well-known structural elements of international events coverage and will not detain me further here. That this pattern was repeated with the saturation coverage of the Brussels attacks in February 2016 and the invisibility of parallel events in Istanbul, Lahore, and Lagos reinforces the point.

Existing Concepts and Their Problems

A more theoretically productive way to think about Charlie Hebdo might be through the optic of "media events," a term coined by Dayan and Katz (1992) to describe media coverage of officially planned events that provide unifying, celebratory, and sometimes even worldwide coverage. Their examples included national events (such as a British royal wedding) or global mega-sporting events (e.g., the Olympics), and they suggested that such events have an integrative function, binding both national and transnational populations together through live television viewing, "the high holidays of mass communication" (p. 1). However, such a positive, integrationist typology has been challenged by recent global events such as 9/11—some of which was viewed in real time by audiences worldwide—while coverage of the 2004 Asian tsunami and recurrent Philippines monsoons also took up much television time. Liebes's (1998) description of mediated "disaster marathons" and Kellner's (2004) argument about 9/11 being a "terrorist media event" both speak to the unanticipated, negative mediated event. Katz and Liebes (2007) recognized that ceremonial events were challenged by the power of what they called "disruptive events."

In their volume on the Danish cartoon controversy, Eide, Kunelius, and Phillips (2008) explored the increasingly global nature of some media events. They suggest that these move beyond a national media "domestication" of the news stories—although elements of that may remain—to "a media event addressing phenomena which by nature are (more) transnational, as in the case of these caricatures which impinged upon a world religion" (p. 13). Indeed, as they go on to say, "In the case of transnational media events, the national frames of domestication . . . are challenged in new and sometimes shocking ways" (p. 6). Continuing this strand of academic analysis in their introduction to *Media Events in a Global Age*, Hepp and Couldry (2010) write of wanting "to establish the basis for researching media events today as an important aspect of power processes in a 'global age'" (p. 1). In Hepp and Couldry's subsequent definition, it is not the event itself that is global so much as the context in which it occurs: "Media events are certain situated, thickened, centering performances of mediated communication that are focused on a specific thematic core, cross different media products and reach a wide and diverse multiplicity of audiences and participants" (p. 12).

But I suggest that if such events are to be seen in the context of "an increasingly globalized world" (Hepp & Couldry, 2010, p. 8) of numerous cultural environments, it is frankly impossible to expect there to be shared meaning about them. This has implications for the ideas of both "thickening" and "centering." The first term, which evokes Geertz, suggests a simple agglomerative process. The latter suggests a movement toward a core—of agreement, of shared beliefs. Neither term leaves much room for contestation and disagreement. It also remains unclear what "reaching" people means and suggests a rather passive notion of audience, not fully belied by the invocation of "participants." The availability of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and their equivalents in different contexts has radically expanded people's

power to create and distribute their own varied visual and aural responses to reported events on a potentially huge scale. Furthermore, given media's role in both distributing narratives articulated by other actors (the state, politicians, etc.) as well as producing narratives of their own, the notion of a thematic core is also opened up for scrutiny. I suggest that, in the turn toward the global, the relevant conceptual issues have become much more complex than Hepp and Couldry suggest.

Here, I try to accomplish three tasks. First, I work from and with my assemblage of such a globalized media event to explore what new problems might emerge. I think this is a time for thicker description rather than overly abstract theorization, and that the writing of such description can throw new light on old conceptual problems. En route, I will critique the enduring notion of a rational and orderly public sphere that is belied by contemporary dynamics and spear the notion of methodological nationalism yet again as inadequate for understanding our planet.

Second, I take up the serious challenge of conceptualizing media studies as implicated in a form of contemporary historical analysis that sees and identifies global linkages between moments. This takes me back to the first page of Dayan and Katz's book, where they ventriloquize the anticipated reaction to their idea: "The live broadcasting of history? Don't they know that history is process, not events? Certainly not ceremonial events! Don't they know that media events are hegemonic manipulations?" (1992, p. vii).

I suggest that in the intense focus on events in media studies, broader ideas about what constitutes history and how historical narratives get written have been lost. Increasingly, the analysis of both kinds of events—the integrative/ceremonial and the disruptive—seem to evacuate the history of and by which they are eventive: sporting histories, previous natural disasters, political violence. Indeed, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish how a media event differs from an event (see Mitu & Poulakidakos, 2016). Cottle (2006) puts it neatly: "The category 'media events' . . . has become a victim of its own success, suffering conceptual inflation and loss of analytical bite when applied too widely and too indiscriminately to different types of exceptional media phenomena" (p. 420).

Yet the media offer their historical narratives of an event and proffer the narrativizations of others while inviting responses, indeed challenges, to yet other discourses. A language of moments and the theoretical imperative to understand history as a set of competing narratives that draw event chains together—to cite Hawking's more recent term—takes me very close to Laclau and Mouffe's account of articulation:

> We will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call moments. By contrast, we will call element any difference that is not discursively articulated. (1987, p. 105)

Historical narrativization attempts to tie together discrete elements—what so far I have referred to as events—within a discourse, reproducing them as moments *pace* Laclau and Mouffe.

One implication is the need to think about Charlie Hebdo and other such major mediated stories not as a singular event but as a chain of events—what above I called the event chain. Acting as a contemporary cultural historian, the time line that I present attests to a complex—and often antagonistic as well as agonistic (Mouffe, 2005—process of call and response that involved a *range* of audiences and a *range* of participants, developing a media event chain that was precipitated by the shooting.

But a second implication is that an event not only needs to be explored forward, in terms of the moments that unfolded within the ("my"?) Hebdo event chain. It also needs to work backward, in a more complex analysis of contemporary cultural politics, to previous moments/discourses to which Hebdo might be attached: to representations of Islam; to the worldwide controversy around *The Satanic Verses* and the Iranian fatwa against its author Salman Rushdie at the end of the 1980s; to the Danish cartoon controversy of 2005 about the visual representation of the Prophet; to the war on terror and real acts of violent terror by various agents, including states; to French histories of violence on domestic soil, and to French and other imperialisms and the West's export of violent war abroad; and so on. The competition to define the dominant historical narrative by which such seemingly discrete events can be explained is the stuff of contemporary global mediated politics.

We begin to see the analytic difficulties in separating out one event from another—or, better, separating one event chain from another—and encounter a *range* of historical discourses that national media channels, the commentariat, academics, and others attach to an event. Indeed, the evidence of such a range of contemporary historical claims and narratives is a useful challenge to the unitary sedimentation of history and a prevalent sense that events are contained by and in a singular narrative. The elaboration of the media-events paradigm has rarely paid attention to the problem of artificially isolating an event rather than seeing such an event as lying within one or more historical narratives that helped produce its eventness in the first place. It also becomes clearer that the event chain is itself the object of rival articulations, part of a struggle for hegemonic dominance that is never fully accomplished— although even my naming this as Charlie Hebdo suggests the temporary success of a specific articulation.

Third, Daniel Dayan, among others, has explored the significance of the performative in media discourse. Dayan (2009, p. 25) analyzes how "the role of television is to produce, cater to, and manage public attention." He uses the term *monstration* for a mediated performance—and he focuses mainly on television—that "calls for and modulates attention" (p. 25). This clearly echoes arguments by Davenport and Beck (2001) and others about the growing significance of the "attention economy" that recognizes the intense competition for "our" attention in order to mold our attitudes and values and as the necessary precursor to competition for "our" dollars. Dayan (2009) goes on to argue that once "situations" (his term) have been "validated by their large diffusion, once established as real by being shared on a grand scale, such situations are picked up by the new media and submitted to radical critiques or open challenges" (p. 27). The recognition of critique and challenge (to [Western] mainstream media) is important here—and echoes my critique of Hepp and Couldry's position.

But Dayan's language also sets up an interesting resonance with "demonstration," with the collectively embodied responses that were a large part of the Hebdo phenomenon, both peaceful and

violent. So I would argue that analysis of globalizing media event chains needs to encompass both monstration and demonstration, both mediated and embodied elements. Mackenzie Wark has argued that media events "are events because they interrupt routine time. They are media events because they happen within a space and time saturated in media. They are global media events because they traverse borders and call a world into being" (Wark, 2004, p. 119).While Wark remains evocatively ambiguous about what that world is, the analysis of Charlie Hebdo does say a great deal about a world that was summoned, of the call and response that produces a global encounter, stretched in both space and time, and one that was raw and raucous. This is not a rational "global public sphere," as many would still try to contend (Kunelius & Nossek, 2008; Volkmer, 2014), but a crowded, often highly emotional and sometimes bloody space of engagement in which "we" see "others" and "they" see "us."

So let me return to the case and find the flesh for my own conceptual bones. In the process, I write not *the* but rather *a*—that is, *my*—narrative of Charlie Hebdo.

The Unfolding of Charlie Hebdo

After the initial attack, France raised its Vigipirate terror alert to its highest level and deployed soldiers in Île-de-France and Picardy. The suspects, brothers Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, were found by police on January 9, and they exchanged fire. The brothers took hostages at a signage company in Dammartin-en-Goële and were gunned down when they emerged firing from the building. Coulibaly, another gunman, also shot a police officer on January 8; the next day he took and killed hostages at a kosher supermarket near the Porte de Vincennes and was himself shot by police. Both of these related "events" were filmed live and frequently repeated by television channels, leading to considerable debate, especially in France, about the purpose and utility of such live coverage. Liveness is central to the original media events argument, as when a globalized audience is synchronously constituted through its television watching, even if the dynamic has shifted somewhat from celebratory moments to tragedies. Here I am less concerned about the specifics of liveness than the sense of an unfolding event chain that is occurring in real time, even if on "our" experiential periphery. The terrible refugee crises of 2015–2016 were represented by Western mainstream media in a similarly interrupted but ongoing manner.

The attacks of the first few days killed a total of 17 people, in addition to the 3 perpetrators of the attack, and wounded 22 others; a fifth shooting attack did not result in any fatalities. Numerous retaliatory Islamophobic attacks, including on mosques, were reported. So even the initial singular event was itself more like a series of events.

On January 11, around 2 million people, including more than 40 world leaders, met in Paris for what was invoked as a French "rally of national unity."

Figure 2. The Paris "rally of national unity."
Source: http://i100.independent.co.uk/article/do-world-leaders-at-paris-march-really-care-
about-press-freedoms--gkvcJDoscx

Another 3.7 million people joined demonstrations across France. The phrase "*je suis Charlie*" (I am Charlie) became a common slogan at the rallies and across social media.[2] Numerous world politicians turned up in Paris in support of press freedom. Ironically, among them, nine of the countries represented were in the bottom third of the 2014 World Press Freedom Index as compiled by Reporteurs sans Frontières (2015): Algeria, Mali, Ukraine, Tunisia, Palestine, Jordan, Russia, Turkey, and Bahrain. The initial photographs suggested that these great and not-so-good political figures were leading the march, while later photographic evidence revealed that was not the case, rendering it an interesting example of a

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[2] The phrase has echoes of "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" (I am a Berliner), the solidarity phrase used by President Kennedy denouncing the erection of the Berlin Wall. "*Je suis Baga*" was utilized on some critical demonstrations, as was "*je suis Nigeria*." "*Je suis Raif*" has been used in support of the Saudi blogger sentenced to 100 lashes by the Saudi authorities and "*je suis Volnovakha*" in relation to the 2015 bus attack in Ukraine. During the British election campaign in April 2015, when Labour Party leader Ed Miliband was filmed eating a bacon sandwich rather messily, there were comic photographic responses of people having difficulty eating bacon sandwiches under the hashtag #JeSuisEd! Hashtags function as memes, to be used and repurposed endlessly, so a subtheme that could be developed for analysis would be the history and employment of hashtags such as these.

"pseudo event" of attempted symbolic management *within* a highly mediated event (Boorstin 1961/2012). The British satirical magazine *Private Eye* printed an aerial image with the tagline "Je suis charlatan."

Figure 3. World leaders attend a Paris rally—but do not lead the march.
Source: http://ind.pn/1WYyE7Z

Rallies to support the victims of the Paris killings were held in many locales, including Atlanta, Montreal, Stockholm, Berlin, Madrid, Rome, Thessaloniki, Nicosia, Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Sydney, and Tokyo. Saudi Arabia called it a "cowardly terrorist attack that was rejected by the true Islamic religion" (Burke, 2015, p. 244). The Arab League and Egypt's al-Azhar University—the leading theological institution in the Sunni Muslim world—also denounced the incident, while Iran, Jordan, Bahrain, Morocco, Algeria, and Qatar all issued similar statements. Sometimes, Baga was there as a trace alongside Charlie.

But there were plenty of contrary and negative responses. Rallies in Turkey and Indonesia, which enjoys the largest Muslim population in the world, changed the identification to "We are all Mohammad."

Figure 4. A counterdemonstration in Turkey.
Source: http://arabi21.com/story/838953

In the Philippines, the preposition was altered, suggesting not "we" but "you" are Charlie, evidence of the growing international response in the event chain. Actually, there were mixed responses in Turkey, as was probably the case everywhere. The government condemned the Paris attacks but also warned that rising Islamophobia in Europe risked inflaming unrest while the secular newspaper *Cumhuriyet* published translated versions of the *Hebdo* cartoons.[3] That triggered a counterdemonstration in Istanbul, during which protesters burned copies of the paper and threated that its employees "will pay for what they did"; some support was expressed for the Kouachi brothers who had carried out the original attack.

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[3] In Britain, the press engaged in a lively debate as to whether the cartoons should be reprinted and whether the decision not to republish was motivated by anything other than fear. This is another interesting subdiscourse of this event chain.

One of the problems of media studies is that it can tend to inflate the internationalization of media content while overlooking the multiculturalism of populations. Paris showed the different communities caught up in Hebdo, with formal funerary protocols for police officers as well as Muslim and Jewish ceremonies.


Figure 5. Muslim and Jewish funerals in Paris.
Source: http://www.wsj.com/articles/funerals-memorials-for-victims-of-terror-attacks-
1421168002

The hashtags changed to reflect this ethnic diversity: "JeSuisAhmed" and "JeSuisJuif." Cartoonists were quick to respond, evoking the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center, turning the Eiffel Tower into a pencil and rendering automatic weapons as pens. There is plenty of focused research to be done on the hashtags, cartoons, and memes that were used.

The remaining staff of *Charlie Hebdo* continued publication, with issue number 1178 selling 7 million copies in six languages, in contrast to its typical French-only print run of 60,000. Its cover image was of the Prophet saying "*tout est pardonnné*" (everything is pardoned); perhaps an allusion to the phrase "*tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*" (to understand everything is to forgive everything) as well as to the title of a popular French film of 2007.
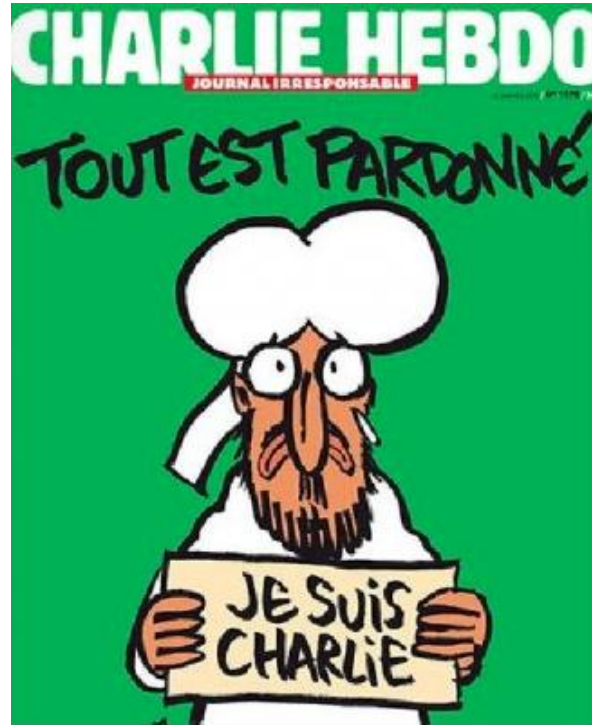
Figure 6. Charlie Hebdo's cover after the attack.
Source: http://bit.ly/1xW45Hl.

The critical, contestatory responses continued. On January 17, there were peaceful demonstrations after Friday prayers in Khartoum, the North Caucasus, Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania. In Algiers and Amman, protesters clashed with police, and in Pakistan and Niger, there was serious violence.

On February 14, there was more violence in Europe with an attack on the Krudttonden Café in Copenhagen, where the artist Lars Vilks was discussing Islam and free speech. One person was killed, and three police were injured; the suspect later went on to shoot a security guard in the city's great synagogue and was himself shot by police the next day. Danish was added to French and English in the proliferation of hashtags. On February 21, a gathering of Norwegian Muslims and Jews encircled the synagogue in Oslo in a show of community solidarity.

On March 18, a violent attack on the steps of the Bardo Museum in Tunis killed 22 people outright, with another person dying later. One could debate whether this was actually a part of, and should be included in, the Hebdo event chain. Its inclusion might require that many other acts of jihadist-inspired violence be attached to Hebdo, an issue that should certainly concern future historians. I, acting as a contemporary historian, include it here because the collective response triggered new hashtags— "JeSuisTunisie" and "JeSuisBardo"—connecting it in representation and memorialization to Hebdo.

Figure 7. A new "je suis" meme after the attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunis.
Source: 1. http://bit.ly/1nP5zl6; 2. http://bit.ly/1Sb0EI6; 3. http://bit.ly/1lSaTTl; 4. http://cnn.it/1NAGizL.

On June 26, 38 tourists were killed by an armed gunman on a Tunisian beach; this was readily linked by media analysts to the previous Bardo violence but not to Hebdo. How events chain or become chained together, what traces one link to another, and what discourses claim to make those links is the very stuff of contemporary history making in which the media themselves often play immediate and central roles. It appears that even the meta-level, overarching war on terror discourse still allows for possible differentiation within national contexts.

On May 3, gunmen killed a security guard at an event being held in a Dallas suburb; the gunmen were subsequently shot and killed by police. The event was the culmination of a contest with a $10,000 prize for the "best cartoon depiction of Mohammad" staged by the American Freedom Defense Initiative, a group Pamela Geller—the noted U.S. Islamophobe activist—and Robert Spencer had created in 2010. The Southern Poverty Law Center uses the group's other name, Stop Islamization of America, and lists it as a hate group. Again, should we stop and ask about the connection to Hebdo? A competition for cartoons of the Prophet—how can this not be connected in the event chain? Is it not, and Hebdo also, part of a far longer event chain of Islamophobic antagonism inside Western democracies that is designed to provoke violent responses? And is that not itself part of an even bigger event chain of Western intervention in the Middle East, including the Afghan and Iraq wars, ignoring Palestinian claims for self-determination, and others? Thus, an event is readily seen to compete for inclusion, or not, by the narratives proffered by different political discourses, themselves the very stuff of history. One indication that such Islamophobic events are watched very closely by globalized audiences is the demonstration mounted in Pakistan in response to the Geller exhibition.

Also in May, the PEN American Center announced it would give the first PEN/Toni and James C. Goodale Freedom of Expression Courage Award to *Charlie Hebdo* at its annual fund-raising dinner in New York (Weaver, 2015). But six prominent members—Francine Prose, Peter Carey, Michael Ondaatje, Teju Cole, Rachel Kushner, and Taiye Selasi—protested and withdrew from the event. They argued that, while the killings were "sickening and tragic" and that no expression of views should be met with violence, such an award would be "valorizing selectively offensive material: material that intensifies the anti-Islamic, anti-Maghreb, anti-Arab sentiments already prevalent in the Western world" (Weaver, 2015, para. 6). Subsequently, more than 200 other PEN members added their names to the protest, while Salman Rushdie, among others, defended the award.

A report from the Committee to Protect Journalists (2015) suggested that cartoonists are under particular attack in many countries, including Malaysia and Iran, where satirical cartoonist Atena Farghadani is currently imprisoned. It is little wonder that in mid-May 2015, Renald Luzier, the remaining cartoonist at *Charlie Hebdo* magazine and better known as Luz, announced his retirement.

Other discourses triggered a different trajectory of actions. Ireland is considering writing new blasphemy laws, while in Canada, Prime Minister Stephen Harper seemed more than happy to repeal hate laws in the name of "liberty" and "free speech," as he did recently with Bill C-304. France stepped up its surveillance and arrested the French comedian Dieudonné M'bala for being an "apologist for terrorism" after he suggested on Facebook that he sympathized with one of the Paris gunmen. The Conservative government in Britain wants greater surveillance of universities and its counterterrorism Prevent strategy now reaches into primary schools. Indeed, one is tempted to suggest that such outrages are periodically necessary in order that governments can tighten their surveillance and control over domestic populations.

And there is much more detailed analysis to be done of major media content and its enduring mythologizing: Nigel Farage of the British political party UKIP told Fox News that there are no-go zones for non-Muslims in France, while Steven Emerson, an American TV pundit, declared on Fox that

Birmingham, England's second city, is a no-go zone in the United Kingdom. Social media provide sites for ridicule of such statements which otherwise might go unchallenged.

Some Concluding Notes: From Media Event to Globalized Event Chains

One: In the contemporary world, there is no event without cameras. Even Baga/Doron Baga only happened in the West when Amnesty International, not news organizations, sent drones over the locations to gather photographic evidence. There had been no mobile-phone evidence from the poor and remote victims during the massacre. Communicatively, the unphotographed tree falling in the midst of the forest makes no social sound in our planet.

Two: No event is single, unconnected to others. Wark, cited above, wants to make the case for "weird global media events "because each is singular and none conforms to any predetermined narrative. They introduce a new quality of time" (204:119). I would suggest that competing historical narratives quickly emerge to situate the event, but I do recognize an implicit argument with Wark that cannot be developed more fully here.

Regarding Charlie Hebdo, the events on the ground were multiple—a series of events that continued in a lengthy event chain, moving us beyond the moment of a single occurrence, the event, to a longer historical narrative which may or may not become *the* narrative. Indeed, this event chain is still unfolding forward. *Charlie Hebdo* has been sold to new owners. The wife of one of the cartoonists is suing for lack of security. A January 2016 cover provoked angry responses about the magazine's position on refugees. This event chain is the direct result of the original violence in January 2015. My analysis finishes one year on. An update would have to include the Brussels violence in March 2016, whose coverage mimics many of the elements that I have described for Hebdo, and indeed triggered a renewed squabble about Hebdo's editorial positions, given its March 30 cover that referenced Brussels.

Three: But there is temporal stretching backward. Actions become events within historical narrativization, a point that takes us back to Dayan and Katz's earlier but rather undeveloped concern about history. An event becomes situated within a wider chain of discourses and other moments, usually multiple. A range of competing historical narratives entwined the event: the history of violence on French and European soil as well as that wrought by European powers elsewhere during their colonial rule; regarding struggles for freedom of speech; about moments of jihadist violence; about the rise of Islamophobia and the return of antisemitism and racism in Europe; and the rhetoric of the "war on terror." Indeed, the problem of the sedimentation of historical narrative presumably concerns which of these discourses has sufficient weight and durability to become dominant. What contemporary analysis can show is the competition for that hegemony. What a subtle media studies could offer is comparative analysis of (all?) these discourses, their origins, their articulations, their stickability.

Four: There is also spatial stretching. Beck's (2003) exploration of the limitations of "methodological nationalism" remains a challenge for empirical research and analysis. "Old" media relayed the stories; social media offers elaboration, critique, judgment. And old media in languages other than English also offered different interpretations of the same facts. The embodied responses in support of

those who were killed were transnational, but so, too, were the demonstrations against the unqualified demand by the West for a right to not only offend but, it appears, to provoke, which *Hebdo* came to represent. Between the multiple national and the singular global are many layers of cultural activity.

Five: It is debatable whether all these responses really count as a smoothly evolving process of thickening, as Hepp and Couldry suggest. A good part of the response was a denunciation of the initial response. The event is not only translated and thickened in different locations; it is also rebuffed, rejected, overturned. They write of "transculturality" taking over from "transnationalism" yet do not define culture. It is unclear whether they include religious faith as culture, although the suggestion by Hepp that transculturalism is new does seem to exclude faith communities. What is clear in the case explored here is that many Muslims around the world participated in pro-Hebdo rallies even as some participated in anti-Hebdo ones and that—yet again—Islam *cannot* be made to speak with one voice.

Six: As I have already noted, such a media/event triggers many diverse strands of argument and competing discourses about its framing. Anything like a comprehensive mapping of the variety and range of voices that became involved in this event chain is probably impossible. The trigger events were reported on by big media and were commented on by the public on the websites of big media around the world (for example, France24, BBC, and *The Guardian* in Europe). But it was also discussed by the English-language commentariat on sites such as Open Democracy, Jadaliyya, and Alif, and those pieces were in turn commented upon. It was tweeted, with the hashtag #JeSuisCharlie trending for days. And there was much discussion in languages beyond English. Countless stories, images, and comments were distributed across Facebook. Cartoons multiplied, with many repetitive visual memes.

Seven: The event is maintained through academic and writerly discussions. In April 2015, a planned academic event, "Understanding Charlie: New Perspectives on Contemporary Citizenship After *Charlie Hebdo*," at Queens' University Belfast was canceled for a "lack of security assessment," allowing the proposed speakers to have a field day with the irony of the situation ("Queen's University," 2015). Whereas the Belfast event was canceled, an academic event was held in Dublin in early May. Conference papers quickly emerged (my own were given in Doha, London, and Montréal), and books and special issues of journals began to be compiled and commissioned. A British television program, portentously called *3 Days That Shook Paris*[4] and offering "the definitive story" of the attacks, was shown in September 2015 ("*Charlie Hebdo*: 3 Days," 2015). *The Guardian* newspaper keeps adding to its archive, which is labeled as displaying "all content related to the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*" (*The Guardian*, 2016, para. 1).

Eight: This is hardly the stuff of a simple rational public sphere. What I have described was raucous, emotive, contestatory. It was variously encoded in text, images, bodies, and blood. But the event chain does show remarkable evidence of transnational attention, an emergent singular contestatory globalized public space (of encounter, of conversation?) even if many smaller networks are within it and many different modalities of communication as well as many different verbal and visual languages used. There are multiple nodes of global interconnection. But this is not all narrowly rational; much is highly

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[4] The title evokes John Reed's book on the Russian Revolution, *Ten Days That Shook the World.*

emotive, including violence as the ultimate expression of anger/aliveness. Wark's world remains far from Beck's cosmopolitan vision.

Despite attempts to keep the notion of the global public sphere alive, it really does not work very well. A global conversation, however, sounds too much like a middle-class dinner party. A global argument sounds as though there are only two positions. But I have shown that there is a globalizing event chain of multiple actors and positions, even if our language does not yet stretch to fully embrace this. But the world does not need another ugly neologism.

Nine: It is important to note the paradox in my own argument, which has to acknowledge that those who are mobilized pro-Hebdo see those who are mobilized against. Thus, even in its antagonistic performances, a public ethos of participation/argument is in construction, albeit interspersed with violence. So far, this appears less the emergence of a singular cosmopolitan planetary consciousness than a growing awareness of the deep global divisions and differences that exist: a singular world without shared opinions. And Hebdo highlighted just one of the many existing fault lines.

Finally, we need to appreciate the deterritorialized assemblage of contemporary event chains and develop better terms to name these processes and better tools to assess their likely outcomes. Although memory studies and media histories are important, media studies could also make a more significant contribution to contemporary historical understanding and historiography. The globalized Hebdo event chain reveals the complex shifts that are happening across media, public participation, and social analysis and that are challenging our understanding of history, politics, and representation. We need to avoid platitudinous neologisms and reductive simplifications. We need to thicken our own models.

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