THE MEDIATIC DISCOURSE FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW: FROM THE FALL OF THE PUBLIC PRESS TO THE EMERGENCE OF THE MEDIATIC FIELD IN ENGLAND, 1830s-1920s.

Jean-Karim Chalaby

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

London School of Economics and Political Science
University of London

August 1994

ABSTRACT

This research is an attempt to demonstrate that the discourse of the press was transformed during the XIXth century by the emergence of capitalism.

The pre-capitalist press produced a *public discourse,* a discourse characterised by the *function of publicity* of its texts. These texts publicised political facts and events on the one hand, and political ideologies on the other. The repeal of the taxes on knowledge in the 1850s and 1860s, (taxes which made newspapers too expensive for the great majority), created the possibility to sell newspapers for one penny, and few decades later, for half-a-penny. This price, affordable for most, created a market of readers, for which journalists and press owners competed. Their struggles for readers created the *mediatic field.* The agents of this field, because of the economic competitive struggles they were involved in, no longer produced public texts, but a new textual class, the *mediatic discourse.*

This research attempts first to set up the philological methodology to apprehend these discursive changes. It then examines the figure of the publicist and the philological characteristics of the public discourse; the formation of the new field of discursive production (the mediatic field); and the *genesis* of the mediatic discourse. It also attempts to explain how competitive struggles within the mediatic field created *discursive phenomena* specific to this class of texts, and to understand the discursive practices which produced this new textual class. Finally, it differentiates two broad types of textual class, the open and closed discourses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without my father's affection and generosity, I would not have been able to write the thesis. I am therefore greatly indebted to him.

I also wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Alan Swingewood for having taken the time and patience to supervise my work. I also thank Mr. Angus Stewart for having supervised my research between October 1991 and March 1992, while Dr. Swingewood was on leave from LSE.

In this context, I would especially like to thank Dr. Terry Mulhall and Dr. Mauricio Domingues for providing me with helpful comments on earlier drafts of the thesis. Dr. Ramses Abul Naga has discussed with me several economic aspects of industrial organisation. My brother has provided me with some useful insights in philosophy and logic. Ms. Demetra Nicolaou also deserves special thanks for encouragement and support.

To the memory of my grandfather,
Alfred Giordani

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Towards a Sociological Philology

This research has one objective. To analyse the influence of capitalism on the development of the discourse of the press. In order to examine the relationship between texts and capital, however, it is necessary to develop new philological tools. Indeed, sociologists confronted with the mediatic discourse can choose between two philological options. The first is to integrate into sociology the semiological perspective and to use its linguistic concepts. The second is to use content analysis procedures. Since none of these hermeneutic methods were of any help (for reasons specified in the next two chapters), the third solution was to attempt to establish a hermeneutic method adapted to the objective of the research. I felt the need therefore for a new philological method, for a *sociological philology*. This *sociological science of text interpretation* is termed *sociology of discourse*. It may be outlined as follows. *Hermeneutics* is the body of techniques and methods which aims at locating and revealing the sense of a text. *Sociology*, on the other hand, is the body of methods and knowledge which considers social facts as things and locates their causality in the social realm. The *sociology of discourse* is therefore the method which defines a discourse as a social fact and locates its meaning in the relationship between a discourse and the social sphere. Two other terms are associated with the sociology of discourse. *External hermeneutics* is the term chosen to refer to the technical aspect of the sociology of discourse. Philology has a broader meaning than hermeneutics and designates the culture associated with text interpretation. More specifically, it designates the multi-secular tradition of text interpretation in libraries, religious institutions and educational establishments. So, the term *sociological philology* refers to the attempt to integrate the sociological paradigm into this philological tradition.

The integration of the paradigm is done at two levels, epistemological and methodological: at the level of the unit of analysis (the concept of discourse is sociologically redefined), and at the level of the method of analysis, (a new mode of text interpretation is proposed). It is this method which is developed and used in this research. The plan of exposition of the latter can now be set out.

This research has been written in three parts. Part one (two chapters) is a critique of two of the most often used hermeneutic methods in media studies. Part two, in two chapters also, includes the epistemology and methodology of the sociology of discourse. The four chapters of part three constitute the research based on the concepts and methodology proposed in the previous chapters.

Part one forms a critique of current methods of interpretation of the mediatic discourse. Chapter one is a critique of linguistic disciplines (linguistics, semiology and semiotics). The most important critique that sociology makes of these disciplines is that discourse is an entity which cannot be reduced to language, and that the meaning of a discourse does not reside within its linguistic dimension alone. Chapter two deals with content analysis, the philological method of social sciences. The two most important trends in content analysis, the qualitative and the quantitative one, are distinguished. Since the quantitative method is the most widely used by sociologists who decipher mediatic texts, this method is illustrated with several pieces of research. The third section deals with a series of recent works labelled discourse analysis, the latest development of content analysis. The final section of the chapter concludes the first part of the exposition by clarifying the position of the sociology of discourse regarding to these two main hermeneutic traditions.

The aim of the second part is to construct the epistemological, theoretical and methodological foundations of the sociology of discourse. The third chapter is an attempt to sociologically conceptualise discourse. With the help of one epistemological condition (the condition of unique concreteness), the concept discourse is differentiated from language, to which it is assimilated by linguists as well as by social scientists and philosophers. Discourse is then also distinguished from the concept of text, which is the definition of the term given, among others, by content analysts. The outcome of this differentiation is a properly sociological definition of discourse. The concept becomes an intertextual category and designates a class of texts, a *textual class*. With such a definition, the category not only becomes an operative sociological concept, but the notion now stands for itself, and no longer for other conceptual entities, such as text or language. The concept designates a particular entity which possesses its own existence. Discourse becomes a *thing in itself*. Once the concept is established, it is compared to the adjacent notions of language, text, and ideology.

The fourth chapter proposes the hermeneutic method of sociological philology. The method is articulated by three methodological principles: *externality*, *coherence*, and *specificity*. The most basic statement of external hermeneutics is that the meaning of a discourse does not reside within itself, as linguists, phenomenologists, or content analysts, believe. Meaning instead resides in the social conditions of production, or more precisely in the relations of production, which, by conditioning the set of discursive practices productive of a specific textual class, determine the nature and the content of the texts which form this textual class. The second principle, coherence, has the objective of ensuring the homogeneity of a class of texts. Texts which belong to the same textual class must have in common certain properties in order to qualify. It is on the ground of this principle that the discourse of the pre-capitalist press, the *public discourse*, is distinguished from the *mediatic discourse*; the texts produced by journalists once they compete for readers. The third principle, specificity, aims at helping the sociologist to discover the distinctive elements of a discourse.

The four chapters of the third part deploy the method and concepts exposed in the previous chapters. The fifth chapter examines the *publicists* and their texts, the public discourse. This discourse is the class of texts which existed before the successive repeals in the 1850s and 1860s of the taxes on the press modified the conditions of the discursive production of the press. After having presented in some detail the taxes on knowledge (their origins, their nature and their effects), the chapter analyses the most fundamental philological properties of the public discourse. First, this discourse is characterised by the *function of publicity* of its texts. Newspapers publicised, on the one hand, political facts and events, such as parliamentary proceedings, and on the other, political ideologies, such as co-operation or free trade. Second, public newspapers played an important practical role, since they helped to coordinate and organise the political actions of some specific social groups and social classes. Texts from both the middle and working class pre-capitalist presses are examined.

The subject of the sixth chapter is the emergence of the mediatic field. It begins with an analysis of the effects of the repeal of the taxes on the press. These taxes made newspapers too expensive for most people, and therefore restricted the sales of newspapers to a tiny elite. Their repeals in the 1850s and 1860s created the possibility to sell newspapers for one penny, and few decades later, for half-a-penny. This price, affordable for most, created different markets of newspaper readers. Since then, press owners, and their journalists, have competed for these markets. These competitive struggles created the *mediatic field*. In this chapter, the three different mechanisms which shaped the mediatic field are analysed. These are the increase of the number of newspapers, the soar of the average level of circulation, and the limitations on the ability of newspapers to generate financial resources. Then, the role of new techniques (telegraph, railway and printing techniques) in the development of the mediatic field is discussed. Finally, the effects of the competitive struggles on the mediatic field are described. These three effects are *industrialisation, concentration* and *capitalisation.*

The agents of the mediatic field, because of the new relations of production in which they were involved (the economic competitive struggles), no longer produced public texts, but a new type of texts, which, in their entirety, form the mediatic discourse. The concern of the seventh chapter, the most important of the thesis, is the genesis of this discourse. It attempts to explain how these competitive struggles in the mediatic field created *discursive phenomena* which characterise this class of texts. This chapter not only provides the link between economic competition and each particular discursive phenomenon, such as sensationalism, trivialism, or crusadism, but also examines and describes each of these phenomena as they *emerged* in the newspapers' columns.

The last chapter complements the previous one. It details some aspects of the *discursive strategies* and *practices* which created these phenomena. These are the *principle of seduction* and the *objectivation of the third's subjectivity.*

PART I
A CRITIQUE OF CONTEMPORARY HERMENEUTICS

CHAPTER I
DISCOURSE AS LANGUAGE

Both chapters of this first part constitute a critique of the hermeneutic methods which are the most frequently employed to decipher the discourse of the media, semiology and content analysis.

I: The Relation of Linguistic Disciplines to Text

In spite of the internal differences and nuances which exist between linguistics, semiology, and semiotics, it may be argued that these disciplines have a similar relationship to texts. In the same way that one refers to the psychoanalytical school of interpretation, in spite of the different ways that even Freud himself interpreted texts, one may refer to the linguistic school of interpretation. The term «linguistic disciplines» is therefore used to refer to them. However, since these disciplines are not exclusively philological, the term «semiology» is used to refer to their hermeneutic facet. The generic term «semiology» designates these disciplines when they are actually employed in text interpretation or when they are specifically adapted for philological tasks. A linguist for instance becomes generally speaking a «semiologist» when adapting linguistic concepts for hermeneutic tasks or when interpreting a text using linguistic notions. In sum, the term «linguistic disciplines» refers to the disciplines which, if employed for text interpretation, have a similar relation to texts, and «semiology» refers to the specific moment when these disciplines are engaged in text interpretation.

The first common element between these disciplines which has to be underlined from the viewpoint of sociology, is that, in philology, they are used as *deciphering* techniques. Semiologists say they *decode* a text, and what they do may indeed be called an *act of decipherment*. Semiologists share the belief that the meaning of a text is not only internal to it, but deeply hidden in its entrails. For semiologists, a text is a mystery. To interpret a text is to *reveal* its meaning. A text is not transparent, its «truth» is not manifest, but latent, hidden. Truth has been masked by a veil, and the task of the prophet-semiologist is to make it reappear in its original clarity. The meaning of a text, explained Barthes, is hidden behind several strata of signs. This is the reason why he maintained that the messages in an advertisement he deciphered are not perceivable at the level of a "common reading", but only at the level of a "semiological reading" (Barthes, 1964b: 42). This exegetic attitude, sometimes close to a mystifying metaphysics, is stated with greater clarity by another semiologist: "One of the most obvious ways in which you are invited to enter the ad[vertisement] is by filling an absence. Now, in a hermeneutic universe, meaning is always «absent», in that it does not reside in things, but must be interpreted through their (limited) channels: it is found in the imaginary space «behind» them. Therefore «meaning» in the hermeneutic sense is always absent from the object to be deciphered: that is why decipherment is necessary" (Williamson, 1978: 77). The *esoteric internalism* of the linguistic disciplines however is an aspect they share with many exegetic methods, and whose origin can be traced back to Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* (e.g. *De doctrina christiana* B. II, C. VI, 7).

To identify the particularity of linguistic disciplines in their relation to texts, one has to look at their second common feature, their *linguistism*. It is concretised in semiological research through three traits: omnipresence and omnipotence of the almighty concept of sign, abstract objectivism (the fact that texts are deciphered autonomously from history (abstraction) and from agents (objectivism)), and reduction of discourse to language. Taken together, these elements constitute the specificity of the hermeneutics of linguistic disciplines. This is epitomised by the assumption that the meaning of a text is not only hidden within itself, but, more precisely, in its linguistic dimension. This *confinement* of meaning within the linguistic dimension is the specific contribution of linguistic disciplines to the philological tradition. Since the problem of meaning is without doubt the cardinal question of hermeneutics, these three strategies, by which semiology delimits within language the meaning of a text, must form the core of a critique of semiology.

II: The Semiological Decipherment of Texts

The points above mentioned have been integrated into a larger perspective itself divided into a series of five critiques. The following discussion presupposes a certain knowledge of the way structural linguistics conceptualised language and of the relationship between structural linguistics and semiology. Unfortunately, although both elements constitute the foundations of the hermeneutics of linguistic disciplines, there is no space here for their exposition.

II.1: Over-theoreticalisation

Semiology is essentially the result of the mechanistic application to text interpretation of a discipline (structural linguistics) designed to apprehend a specific object, language. This transposition of a series of concepts from one realm to another, (epitomised by Roland Barthes in *Eléments de Sémiologie* (1964a)), generated numerous epistemological and theoretical problems which, since then, semiologists have attempted to solve. The problems that semiologists face when interpreting texts, and the attempts to resolve them, created the phenomenon of over-theoreticalisation. This phenomenon is reflected in the structure of many semiological studies, where theory often constitutes the most important part of the research. An article dealing with the semiology of theatre is an eloquent example of the nature of these difficulties: "The general theory of signs is an unquestionable departure point, as well as, consequently, the nature of the sign, its structure, the different species of signs, and their characteristics" (Kowzan, 1990: 95, my translation). So, when theatre becomes a semiological object, it is not theatre, but the theatrical system of signs, which is the object of reflection. Kowzan holds that it is necessary to know how signs function before one can understand the functioning of theatre. The inevitable result is displayed in his study as in many others, in which semiology, not the object, is the main concern and main subject dealt with. Because of the insurmountable difficulties to which semiologists are confronted when interpreting texts, they are more preoccupied with the question of semiology itself, rather than with the object of semiology, such as theatre or poetry. Although the construction of a scientific object is a necessary task, it should only be a step towards a better intelligibility of the observed phenomena. Semiologists however rarely reach this level. A piece of semiological research is often a building site: definitions of concepts, theoretical corrections, methodological amendments are scattered all over the pages.

So, semiology is the main object of semiology. This phenomenon of over-theoreticalisation is therefore also reflected at an intertextual level: "one observes a paradoxical phenomenon: we have, up to now, more theoretical books on semiology of theatre than concrete analyses on a theatrical spectacle" (Kowzan, 1990: 100, my translation). It is likely that semiologists invented the ideal science: a completely reflexive science without object except itself.

II.2: Semanticisation of reality

Since semiologists attempt to expand a model developed for one object without distinction and without exception to non-linguistic and even to non-discursive objects, and since they apprehend their objects as *signifying systems*, many things became signifying systems. The linguistic model was applied to an extraordinary number of objects, from tribal kinship and marriage rules to architecture, art, fashion, human or animal communication, images, objects of consumption, painting, sport, or rites. The linguistic paradigm was also philologically applied to different discourses, such as films, plays, novels, poetry, law, religion, advertising, myths, tales, social sciences or media.

The application of a methodology designed for the study of a particular object (language) to other objects had the effect of homogenising reality. Different objects, such as sport and architecture, since being apprehended by the same linguistic methodology, took, as signifying systems, a similar appearance. More precisely, this *levelling effect* constitutes a *semanticisation* of the social realm; semiology attempting, in the study of non-linguistic objects, to supersede the science of social exchanges with a science of signifying exchanges.

It may almost be said that the objects of some studies could be interchanged without great textual transformations. It is difficult to distinguish one semiological object from another, because the method (which mainly consists in *formalising* and *lexicalising* the object of study) determines that only the «linguistic» characteristics of the objects are observed by semiologists; the non-linguistic particularities of objects are not apprehensible. Barthes for instance, reduced history (written texts) and photography (images) to one common point, the fact that both relate to real historical events (Barthes, 1967: 74-75). Similarly, nothing is left of the originality of a painting, and of painting in general, when the semiologist apprehends it as a "system" whose "textuality" and "grammatical structures" he attempts to decipher (Schefer, 1968: 161, 167).

The semiological reading of texts is similarly mostly concerned with their linguistic aspects. Not that semiology is a purely linguistic analysis of texts, but that, in one way or another, what is said about a text is always related to language. Texts, in fact, are semanticised. Even when Barthes's literary critiques seem loosely related to linguistics, language remains the most important element of mediation between his commentaries and the texts he deciphered. In one of these critiques for example, where he examined the relationship between language and literature, he defined the novel in the same way Saussure defined language, as a "complex of signs" (Barthes, 1972: 32). The level of text deciphering is always located in the semantic, stylistic, grammatical, etc., strata of texts. Without being purely linguistic, these strata are nonetheless strongly related to language. The meaning of a text being located in one of these linguistic strata, many of these interpretations are enclosed within the linguistic dimension of texts, unable to escape from what becomes a *prison* (Jameson, 1972).

So, because they interpreted these texts with a methodology based on linguistic principles, not only did they conclude that the meaning of these texts resides in language, but that the main object of these texts is, precisely, language. Lévi-Strauss, in the two concluding pages of *Le Cru et le cuit*, explained that the function of myths, similar to language, is to "signify signification" (Lévi-Strauss, 1964: 346; Jameson, 1972: 198). Todorov wrote that the meaning of the stories forming *Thousand and One Nights* resides in the "act of storytelling itself" (Jameson, 1972: 199). According to Barthes, Balzac's short story, *Sarrasine*, (which he analysed in S/Z), is "an exploration of writing itself" (Swingewood, 1986: 141). Jameson, finally, thought that the "essential content of a Simenon novel is the act of writing novels" (1972: 205).

The semanticisation of texts had therefore three effects on the way semiologists decipher texts. The first is to reduce the question of meaning to language, that is, to enclose the meaning of a text in its language. The second is to create a tautology which states that these texts are mainly about the linguistic material out of which they are made. (This tautology, which states that the subject of these texts is the texts themselves, also reflects the fact that the main preoccupation of semiologists is semiology itself.) Third, since Jameson was able to do an analysis of Simenon's novels similar to the one of Lévi-Strauss concerning Indian myths, it may be noted that the homogenising force of the linguistic model in philology also resulted in the homogenising of texts of a very different nature and annihilated the cultural characteristics which differentiate and oppose the two societies which produced Simenon's novels and Indian myths.

II.3: Abstract Objectivism

In spite of some corrective attempts (presented as «revolutions» ! (Kristeva, 1984)), the object of structural linguistics, language, and the objects of semiology, most notably texts, are conceptualised and apprehended independently of performing agents. Indeed, semiologists reproduce, in their relationship to texts, the relationship of linguistic disciplines to language. This relationship, which can be characterised as *abstract objectivism,* is a particularity of structuralism which has already been the object of many criticisms, notably from linguists, (Bakhtin, 1977: 96-119), phenomenologists (Ricoeur, 1969: 233-262), or sociologists (Bourdieu, 1992b: 272-288). Despite fundamental divergences between phenomenology and sociology about the nature of the relationship between subject and language, (mainly due to the epistemological individualism of phenomenology), the *idealist subjectivism* of phenomenologists may be usefully contrasted with the abstract objectivism of semiology[1]. The phenomenological critique of semiology places in perspective the structuralist aspect of linguistic disciplines which is of most consequence for their hermeneutics: in the same way that language is for linguists a system without agents, semiologists also attempt to interpret texts independently of their producers, as *self-sufficient units.*

The basis of the conflict between structural and phenomenological hermeneutics is that phenomenology refuses to dissociate language from speaking or writing agents.

[1]Both terms «idealist subjectivism» and «abstract objectivism» are derived from Bakhtin.

Phenomenologists do not comprehend language as a *langue,* as a system, but as a *parole,* the individual actualisation of language. Originally, phenomenology shared with classic psychoanalysis the characteristic that it does not interpret a text for itself, but in order to understand its author in his or her subjectivity. To the category of being, Schleiermacher linked the cardinal hermeneutic notion of *Verstehen*. These two notions form his *hermeneutic circle,* that he summarised in this aphorism: "One must already know a man to understand his discourse, and yet, one should know him only from his discourse" (Schleiermacher, 1987: 28, my translation). To the "linguistic law", Schleiermacher opposed the "linguistic use" (1987: 22). Language exists only through those who speak it, and, conversely, no one possesses a language in its totality. Language, which is more a virtuality than an entirety, is divided in time (alliterations) and space (dialects and provincialisms) (1987: 34). This close relationship between language and subject is condensed in the dualism of his two hermeneutics. In the grammatical hermeneutics, "man disappears with his practice and appears only as the organ of language"; in the technical hermeneutics, "language disappears with its determining power and appears as the organ of man in the service of his individuality, ..." (1987: 49, my translation).

Similar to Schleiermacher, contemporary phenomenologists reject the structuralism of *langue* analysed independently from the subject. Since language cannot be dissociated from the speaking subject, language is not an object, but a *mediation.* It is a medium of communication between persons, between a person and reality. These two dimensions of language, its functions of communication and expression, constitute the axis of the phenomenologist thought on language, as well as the reason for its opposition to linguistics. Through language, argued Ricoeur, one "says something on something", and in this sense, it is by and through language that one guides oneself towards reality (Ricoeur, 1969: 247, my translation). Ricoeur considered that the theme of *signification* cannot be addressed by the semiological model which sees language as a web of differences between signs; as an autonomous structure. For

Ricoeur, language, contrary to the manner in which linguists conceptualise it, is not self-sufficient. One must see in language the possibility to "designate reality by the means of signs" (1969: 257, my translation). This function is essential because language is the *medium* through which the subject exists and communicates, through which the world is revealed to her or him (1969: 252).

The phenomenology of *parole* in the work of Merleau-Ponty also approaches language *via* the speaking subject. Language is an act by which the subject displays linguistic knowledge. Merleau-Ponty subordinated the linguistic system to the actuality of *parole*: it is when the "speaking subject uses his *langue* as a means of communication in a living community, [that] *langue* rediscovers its unity: it is no longer the result of a chaotic past of independent linguistic facts, but a system all of whose elements work together in a unique effort of expression turned towards the present or the future, and thus governed by a current logic" (Merleau-Ponty, 1960: 107, my translation).

So, phenomenologists do not apprehend language as an autonomous object separated from *Homo loquens*. Language only exists as speech-acts, as *parole*. It exists in the present, as long as it is performed, as long as it is actualised by individuals. To language as an autonomous sign system, they oppose the language that subjects use, "my language" (Merleau-Ponty, 1960: 107, my translation). Language is an *epiphany* of human beings, through which they define both their relationships to the world and to other subjects.

Sociology can duplicate the phenomenological critique of language without subject at the philological level in condemning the illusion of text interpretation without agent. From the viewpoint of sociology, if the relationship agent/text must be maintained, it is because semiologists, by autonomising texts from the producing agents, interpret these texts *independently of the historical and social relationships in which agents produce texts*. As it will be argued in the fourth chapter, texts should only be apprehended through social relationships for the reason that the nature of these relationships only explain the meaning of texts. With the semiological method however, texts appear as transcendent objects unrelated to any productive subjectivities socially and historically located. The result is a *de-historicisation* of texts. Texts, being autonomised from social relationships, lose the specificity which confers on them their historicity. To make explicit this specificity, these texts have to be related to the position of their producer in the system of social and historical relationships. The semiological de-historicisation, on the contrary, corresponds to a reification of the object. This concept may be understood here in the sense, precisely, proposed by social phenomenology, i.e. the "apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly supra-human terms" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 106). The outcome of this reification is double. First, texts being autonomised from the relations of production, are *fetishised* and not only become things but also «mysterious things». Since their social character disappears behind their signs, and their signs are supposed to have a self-explanatory power, the meaning of these texts becomes increasingly obscure. Second, these texts are *naturalised*. Being a-historical, they become eternal, and being eternal, their existence is legitimised by their sole presence. In other words, with semiologists, the legitimacy of a text, of what it conveys, becomes immanent to its presence.

II.4: The Philological Performance of Semiology

The third series of critiques concerns various aspects of the philological performance of linguistic disciplines. First, one notices the poverty of the results obtained with the semiological method. As noted earlier, the methodological and theoretical apparatus is often disproportionate with the results it produces. Hénault for example had the honesty to apologise for the "insignificance" of the "applications" of her method despite the "long theoretical developments" (Hénault, 1983: 73). Another illustration is Eco's *Structure absente* (1972). After several theoretical chapters, Eco applied his method to four advertisements. The findings of his reading is a four class typology. The first class of advertisements are those which are rhetorically and ideologically redundant; the second are those which are rhetorically informative, but ideologically redundant; the third is those which are rhetorically redundant but ideologically informative; and finally, those which are both ideologically and rhetorically informative (Eco, 1972: 246). What he meant by this typology is that some commercials innovate graphically (rhetorically) and ideologically, or either graphically or ideologically, or do not innovate at all.

This typology however is not particularly informative on the discourse of advertising, and its heuristic value is not self-evident. The theoretical effort, 200 pages of abstract theory, to discover that some advertising agencies innovate graphically, while some others try to provoke the consumers at the level of ideas, seems to be disproportionate. Moreover, the contribution of the conceptual apparatus set out by Eco in the previous chapters to this typology is not clear either. This remark leads us to the second point, the arbitrariness of the results.

Findings of many semiological studies are arbitrary in the sense that they are loosely connected with the method, both things being relatively autonomous from each other. In much of this research, semiological concepts and notions are practically unusable. Constructed independently and separately from reality, most of the time they are too arcane and too complex for practical use. It is significant that only the first theoretical part of Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language* has been published in English, while her analysis of Lautréamont and Mallarmé was left aside (1984). It is revealing on the autonomy of theory in semiology and of its separation from its object of analysis.

Not only is theory thought to make sense by itself, but, as most semiological decipherments show, their philological commentaries do not rest on the pseudo ultra-sophisticated methodological apparatus they are supposed to be grounded on. This separation may be illustrated by the fact that while semiology may theoretically define what a sign is, when it comes to interpret a concrete text, semiologists discover that their science does not tell them what the signs of a particular text mean. Semiological findings are more due to implicit traditional philological methods, to the literary culture of semiologists and, finally, to their personal philological intuitions, their «hermeneutic imagination». Most of these qualities being acquired at school, it is more on this institution, rather than on science, that semiological interpretations rest.

What semiology presupposes is the devotional relationship to the text inculcated in an educational system where the objective interest of class teachers is to spread the belief that a text is a treasure box whose jewels will be revealed provided one discovers the key to open it. The intimate relationship between school and semiologists is most of the time implicit both in the selection of texts (the texts semiologists choose tend often to be already sacralised in classrooms), and in the semiological deciphering themselves. However, this intimacy is sometimes directly expressed, for instance by cultural references to which students in humanities are familiar. Riffaterre recognised in a poem a "classic" mistake of translation of a "famous" quotation made by Latin students in "French schools" (Riffaterre, 1984: 95). Scholes dedicated *Semiotics and Interpretation* to "the teachers in whose classrooms my interest in poetics and semiotics was both stimulated and tested" (Scholes, 1982: VII). What semiologists often reveal, when interpreting a text, is indeed more a privileged and symbiotic relationship to the culture of classrooms than the meaning of the text, more their adherence to a system of values than the heuristic value of a system.

Another example of the sterility of semiology and its inability to connect method and findings is given by *Mythologies*. At the end of the series of articles, Barthes attempted to develop a general semiological framework to explain the linguistic nature of modern myths (Barthes, 1957: 193-224). The myth is conceptualised as a "semiological system" (as a particular language), but distinguished from the *langue* by the way it organises the signified and the signifier. It is on these premises that Barthes proposed a "reading and decipherment of myth" (Barthes, 1957: 213-224). However, when he begins the analysis of the function of myths in modern society (1957: 224-244), his methodology ceases to be the semiological framework he set up, or even linguistics in general. His main source of inspiration becomes Marx's *German Ideology*, which he quotes five times (1957: 229, 231, 236, 239 twice). His argument is that modern and Western myths transform "history into nature", an assertion the origin of which Barthes attributed to himself (1957: 229). Moreover, Barthes, quoting Marx, also used the concept of contradiction. Once the semiologist «discovered» that myths naturalise history, he concluded that myths represent a reality without contradiction (Barthes, 1957: 231).

The point to be raised is not about the nature of these statements, but their origin. These arguments have nothing to do either with semiology in general, or with Barthes's own linguistic conceptualisation of myth in particular. To say anything pertinent about myth, he had to apprehend myth within its social and historical «context». This is why he came to link modern mythology with bourgeois ideology. For Barthes, the bourgeoisie mask themselves by producing myths which naturalise their social norms (Barthes, 1957: 234). The problem is that by using Marxist notions, Barthes contradicted himself, and went against the principles of semiology, whose method, as formalised in *Eléments de Sémiologie* (Barthes, 1964a), consists in searching for the meaning of a text within its linguistic dimension, and not in the social position or the interests of those who produce it. To explain the meaning of a text by its «context» is a philological movement which is directly opposed to the internal procedure of semiology.

Semiology, by insisting that a text is explainable by its internal signifying structure, automatically abstracts a text from its social and historical situation. A semiologist would be the last one, if he or she was using a semiological method exclusively, to understand that myths in modernity mask the interests of the bourgeoisie. Barthes's problem was that he attempted to be critical whereas his methodology did not allow him to be so. Semiology is apologetic in its essence, mainly because it stands too close to the text it deciphers. Considering the linguistic dimension of a text as the only source of meaning of the text, semiologists are too dependent upon the text to critically interpret it. In sum, modern myths might represent a world without contradictions, but Barthes's work is not devoid of them.

Barthes could not quote a philosopher whose relationship to texts stands more in opposition to semiology than Marx. *Mythologies* and *German Ideology* are two polar antithesis. Karl Marx is among the few philosophers (along with Nietzsche) whose hermeneutics is external. His method is illustrated in his critique of Kant's philosophy by reference to the position of the German bourgeoisie of the early XIXth century. One way to illustrate the difference between both methods is to apply Marx's method to semiology.

From a Marxist perspective, semiology is the philological expression of the linguistic consciousness that arose with modernity. If one wonders about the existence of this consciousness, one discovers that, as members of a collectivity, language is one of the few things individuals possess in common. Indeed, with the growing importance of private property as the basis of the organisation of social and economic life in modernity, (due to the role private property plays in the capitalist mode of production), language (being one of the few things individuals of a certain collectivity share), acquired an extraordinary visibility. Above all, the consciousness of a common language became useful to found the illusion of the community while its substance is, on the one hand, hacked by the contradictions generated by the divergent interests of private property and society, and on the other hand, dissolved in the increasingly separate existence of propertyless individuals who, not possessing anything in common but words, relate to each other with much difficulty. Semiology being the hermeneutic branch of this linguistic consciousness, its real foundation therefore is private property and the social conditions of existence it creates. Far from explaining the myths of the bourgeoisie, as Roland Barthes thought, semiology is itself a constituent of the myth that the linguistic consciousness contributes to maintain which is to create the illusion of the existence of a community. (The fact that Ferdinand de Saussure, the founder of structural linguistics, was from Geneva, and that the de Saussure are one of the patrician families of the city of Calvin, does not prove the point, but puts structural linguistics dangerously close to the spirit of capitalism.) So, the main default of these disciplines is that, instead of explaining the discursive production of modern capitalism, as semiologists sometimes claim, they are based on its economic foundations. The opposition between the two texts (*Mythologies* and *German Ideology*) now becomes clearer, and it is explained by their opposite relationship to private property: while one attempted to eradicate it, the second constitutes one of its cultural manifestations.

II.5: Discourse as Language

Finally, the reductionism of the semiological model may be underlined. This critique can be done at several levels and for several reasons. It has been argued for example that the linguistic sign is a reduction of the symbol and of other grammatical categories that form language (Ortigues, 1962: 65-67). Durand, a follower of Bachelard and student of myths, strongly contested the semiological interpretation of myths. He criticised the application of the linguistic model to myths on the ground that the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign cannot be transposed to symbolic images, and that the symbol is a category which does not belong to language (Durand, 1984: 26). The problem, from the perspective of the sociology of discourse, is that semiology reduces discourse to the linguistic realm.

This section begins with the semiological definitions of discourse, continues with the consequences of these definitions for the semiological hermeneutics, and ends with an assessment of the influence of the semiological definition of discourse in the social sciences.

I

Linguistic disciplines reduce discourse to language. They achieve this reduction, first, by defining discourse with linguistically related concepts, second, by apprehending texts in their linguistic dimension. For semiology, «discourse» is a synonym of «language», and since this synonymity is stated in a linguistic perspective, it means that *a discourse is a language*. This reduction has been articulated in different ways which may be illustrated by a series of definitions.

In 1957, Barthes asserted that there was no distinction between language, discourse and *parole*. The three terms designate the same entity, that is, any verbal or visual "unit" such as a photograph or a newspaper article (Barthes, 1957: 195). Twenty years later, (in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France), he confirmed the undifferentiated use of the two words: "You could see that during my presentation, I surreptitiously moved from language to discourse, to come back, sometimes, without warning, from discourse to language, as if it was the same object. Indeed, I believe today that, under the perspective which is chosen here, language and discourse are undivided, because they belong to the same axis of power" (Barthes, 1978: 30, my translation).

If Barthes simply dissolved discourse into language, Greimas reduced discourse to its linguistic dimension by another means. The context of the following definition of discourse is the juridical discourse: "On the one hand, there is the linear syntagmatic manifestation of language, on the other, the form of its organisation. It is this latter which is taken into consideration, and which includes, besides the phrasal units (lexemes, syntagms, statements), the trans-phrasal units (paragraphs, chapters or discourse-occurrences)" (Greimas, 1976: 83, my translation). This definition of discourse is based on the two axes of language defined by Saussure, the syntagm and the system. Greimas transformed the second axis, and instead of developing the systematic axis, he elaborated on the syntactic axis. He divided this axis into two parts. One concerns the organisation of language within each sentence (within the phrasal units), the second between sentences (within trans-phrasal units). Greimas's definition is interesting as it shows a recent tendency in the linguistic definition of discourse, which tends to become a meta-linguistic unit.

Todorov for instance apprehended the concept in a similar way. In *Les Genres du discours*, he explained that, to complement the generic notion of literature, one has to introduce the concept of discourse. It would be the "structural complement" of the functionalist concept of the "use of language" (Todorov, 1978: 23, my translation). Language produces, from vocabulary and grammatical rules, sentences. These sentences, being "articulated between themselves and enunciated in a specific socio-cultural context, transform themselves into statements, and language, into discourse" (1978: 23, my translation). The conceptualisation of discourse as a meta-linguistic unit is also the conception of the notion of semiologists who study the mediatic discourse.

Hartley for instance, raised the question whether "TV news is an autonomous language" (Hartley, 1982: 7). "News is a discourse he answered which is structured by the larger discourses of television. These larger discourses themselves are dependent upon the overall language-system for their elements (signs) and their rules and conventions (codes)" (1982: 7). This straightforward semiological definition of a type of discourse is complemented by some classic semiological tools of decipherment such as the "sign-referent" (1982: 36), or the different reading codes (the "dominant code", the "oppositional code", etc.) (1982: 148).

For Fowler discourse is also a para-linguistic concept. In *Linguistics and the Novel*, he defined discourse as the specific way an author uses language (Fowler, 1983: 72). Then, in *Language in the News* (but sub-titled *Discourse and Ideology in the Press*) the discourse of the press is defined as the type of language used by the press (Fowler, 1991: 38-45). The news is a particular discourse insofar as journalists have a specific use of language. As a whole, discourse seems to be defined as a particular materialisation of language.

Even when semiologists attempt to integrate archeology into a linguistic framework (whereas, as it will be seen, Foucault explicitly stated that archeology was intended to go beyond the linguistic interpretation of texts), they persist in linguistically oriented definitions of discourse. This is the case of Inglis. In a chapter entitled *From Semiotics to Discourse,* he assimilates Foucault's discourse with Eco's notion of code, and suggests that both refer to the way "language organises meaning within semantic space" (Inglis, 1988: 104). Similarly, Kress writes: "Institutions and social groupings have specific meanings and values which are articulated in language in systematic ways. Following the work particularly of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, I refer to these systematically-organised modes of talking as *discourse*" (Kress, 1985: 6). Another linguist, Fairclough, attempted a "social theory" of discourse by linking linguistics and archeology. Although it is difficult to distinguish what is sociological in saying that acupuncture, homeopathy, and AIDS, are discourses, (Fairclough, 1992: 3-4), he kept and used, in his linguistic analysis, classic linguistic definitions of discourse, this latter being defined as a "spoken dialogue", a "spoken or written language" or a type of language used in certain situations, such as the "classroom discourse" (1992: 3). These definitions illustrate the capacity of linguists to feign refutation of linguistism while defining discourse linguistically. But they cannot imagine a definition of discourse which is not meta or para-linguistic.

II

As already briefly mentioned (section II.2) semiologists decipher texts, first, on para-linguistic levels, second, with concepts that are derived from the sciences of language. While semiological readings of text are not purely linguistic, nonetheless, when semiologists analyse texts at the level of their signs, codes, statements or sentences, they apprehend them in their linguistic dimension. The interpretative techniques of the linguistic disciplines consist in adapting linguistic concepts to the reading of texts. This transcription from one realm to another is manifest in many para-linguistic analyses.

When Greimas proceeded to the semiotic description of the «scientific discourse», he commented on the linguistic function of some linguistic units used by social scientists. He examined the function of idioms such as «one knows that...», «one saw that...», «it is obvious that...», «we must recognise that...», and concluded that the scientific discourse develops its own "internal referent" to validate its own assertions (Greimas, 1976: 22-42, my translation). From these premises he concluded that these linguistic strategies function as a system of mirrors through which the scientific discourse legitimates itself, and that these strategies "discredit the entirety of the social sciences" (1976: 31, my translation). In other words, Greimas claimed to assess the degree of validity of the social sciences by grounding his judgement on a semantic analysis of some marginal words used in scientific writing.

In media analyses, the principle is the same. Fowler's discourse analysis (close to Hartley's semiotics) works on the following basic principle: what a text implicitly means is revealed by understanding the way a signified may be the signifier of another implicit meaning (Fowler, 1991: 170).

Another illustration is provided by van Dijk. His *News as Discourse* is a para-linguistic analysis of the «news discourse». All the sciences he associates with discourse analysis are related to linguistics, or at least have a connection with the linguistic dimension of a text. News articles are examined at the grammatical, semantic, thematic, stylistic or rhetorical levels. Even the stylistic or rhetorical levels are related to language (van Dijk, 1988: 27-28). As he says himself, "discourse analysis denotes a theoretical and methodological approach to language and language use" (van Dijk, 1988: 24).

For many linguistic disciplines (some sciences of language, such as pragmatics or rhetoric, are excluded from the following statement), the sign plays a key role in their hermeneutic technique. The sign, either in its Saussurian (semiology), or in its Peircian (semiotics) definition, functions at the same time as a principle of explanation (discourse as a sign-system) and as a means of interpretation (it is by its signs that a discourse is interpreted). In other words, once the discourse is said to be an entirety of signs, these signs still have to be interpreted. This double function of the sign places it at the very core of their hermeneutics. All the elements of a text converge towards the sign, and all the possibilities of interpretation depend upon it. If this mechanism is generally implicit, it became manifest in the semiotics of Riffaterre. He developed (after Peirce) the notion of interpretant, that is, a sign which reveals the meanings of the other signs of a text, which "explains what else the text suggests" (Riffaterre, 1984: 81). A type of interpretant is the textual sign. These signs represent, in a text, another text to which the reader is sent (1984: 174). Another type of interpretant is the text-generating dual signs, which, within the same text, generate another text (1984: 91). The interpretant therefore is a sign which not only needs to be interpreted to discover that it is an interpretant, but which, once identified as an interpretant, also helps to interpret other signs. Riffaterre's semiotics however only makes manifest an implicit mechanism which is general to semiology.

In sum, when semiologists declare that *the meaning of a text resides in its language* they not only locate its meaning in the text itself, but they confine it to its linguistic dimension.

III

The semiological definition of discourse is the dominant definition of the concept in the social sciences. The usual and legitimate definition of the concept of discourse is today the para-linguistic one. For social scientists and philosophers, the word «discourse» does not designate any entity in particular, but is understood as a synonym of language. The following list of authors is meant to be eclectic. The aim is to demonstrate that the para-linguistic definition of discourse has been and is being used in a great variety of disciplines.

Herbert Marcuse did not make a distinction between the two terms, and alternatively used the two words for the same idea; dominant rhetoric, i.e., the reflection in language of the dominant ideology. So, in spite of the title of the fourth chapter of *One-Dimensional Man*, "The Closing of the Universe of Discourse", he is preoccupied with the ideological dimension of language (Marcuse, 1964: 84-120).

John B. Thompson constitutes another example. In his case however, as for most scholars, the undifferentiated use of the two notions does not create a problem, since his preoccupation is not with the definition of either of the two concepts. Reviewing three different socio-linguistic schools, whose objects are the structures of interpersonal communication patterns in different social settings (Sinclair, Sacks and Fowler), he employs «discourse» and «language» indistinguishably to argue about the ideological dimension of language (Thompson J. B., 1984: 98-126).

A third illustration of the undifferentiated use of the two concepts is given by Laclau and Mouffe. They linguistically redefined Foucault's concept of discourse with the help of Benveniste, Saussure, and Wittgenstein (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985: 106). The influence of structural linguistics is evident in their definition of discourse as a "system of differential entities" (1985: 111); Saussure defining language as a system of differences between signs. Since this linguistic definition of discourse is completed with a definition of discursive practice which includes most social practices, both together have the effect of transforming concrete social reality into an abstract para-linguistic world. These definitions, central to their theoretical framework, place them in between semiologists who linguistically analyse discourse and postmodernists who linguistically conceptualise society (Mouzelis, 1993: 687).

In the philosophy of language, Ortigues used both terms, language and discourse, to refer to language (Ortigues, 1962). In Bakhtin's work finally, if his translators can be trusted, discourse has a predominantly linguistic meaning. In the translation of *Discourse in the novel,* the term «discourse» is used freely and the range of significations of «slovo» (the term they translate as «discourse») extends from «word» to different linguistic uses of language. So, they confess that the title of Bakhtin's essay, instead of *Discourse in the Novel,* could have been translated as *The Word in the Novel* (Bakhtin, 1981: 427). In the French translations of Bakhtin, surprisingly, «reč» is translated as discourse. Bakhtin's French translator explains that «reč» designates "*parole, langue,* language, discourse" (Bakhtine, 1977: 90). The confusion may arise from Bakhtin himself, who refused, (contrary to my aim), to define the word by attaching to it a precise signification. Regardless however of what the right translation is, both translations indicate that the word is primarily a linguistic concept. As far as it can be judged from these translations, he used the term in both a linguistic and a para-linguistic sense. In the first meaning, the word designates, classically, *parole,* speech, utterance, or language. In a para-linguistic meaning, it is synonymous with prose, genre, or style. In this case, the concept is employed to refer to a para-linguistically defined type of text. The notion of «novelistic discourse» for instance is synonymous with novelistic prose or a novelistic genre. So, for Bakhtin, or at least for his translators, the term circulates freely within the linguistic and para-linguistic spheres. Within these spheres, the concept of discourse is not autonomous and does not possess a proper identity. It does not cover a particular and delimited linguistic or para-linguistic fact, it is always the synonym of another term, it always signifies another concept.

These examples illustrate the general confusion between language and discourse, or more specifically the use of the word «discourse» as a synonym of «language». This synonymity is the consequence of the fact that, epistemologically, semiologists, sociologists and philosophers do not distinguish discourse from language. A discourse however is not a language. The conflict between linguistic disciplines and sociology does not reside in the definition of any linguistic unit, or of language itself. The sociology of discourse simply states that *the synonymity between language and discourse has to be broken.* The distinction between both concepts is paradigmatic, and constitutes the epistemological pre-condition for an analysis of discourse which could not only be independent of linguistic disciplines, but also properly sociological. Not only must sociology of discourse overcome the linguistic element of discourse, but the sociology of discourse is possible only if it does so. The first task, in going beyond linguistic philology, is to create a difference between the two concepts, so that when a symbolic form is identified as being a «discourse», a specific object of science is designated. Discourse must not be reduced to language and must specified as an object in itself. Before proceeding with this programme, another synonymity must be examined: discourse understood as a text.

CHAPTER II
DISCOURSE AS A TEXT

«Discourse» in the sense of «text» is close to the free use (by opposition to the conceptual use), of the term. It is the definition generally given by dictionaries, along with its philosophical one, which originally comes from classical rhetoric. Philosophically, «discourse» means a specific sort of text, i.e. a dissertation on an academic subject. This is the meaning of the word in titles such as Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. More generally, as an open word, discourse is a text, and, by extension, it signifies «things said», («*choses dites*»), either written or spoken.

The first reason why this use of the notion needs to be examined is that it is the way many exegetists have traditionally employed the word. Many philologists, unless they use it in a linguistic way, usually mean «text» when writing «discourse». Even semiologists, in parallel with the preceding definition, use the word synonymously with text. In this chapter also, and up to the point where the sociological definition of the word is given (in the next chapter), «discourse» and «text», unless otherwise specified, are used alternatively. Among the hermeneutists who employ «discourse» in this sense are content analysts. Content analysis constitutes the official hermeneutic technique of the social sciences. Among the texts social scientists decipher with this method are those produced by the press. Indeed, content analysis, under various forms, is the philological method used by many media sociologists. Because content analysts use the term «discourse» as the equivalent of «text», this philological method is examined in this chapter.

«Text», however, is also a conceptual meaning of discourse, and this is the second reason why this use of the notion must be examined. Discourse defined as a text can be related to language. A first connection between the notions of text, discourse, and language, takes place at the level of text interpretation. This connection is illustrated with Ducrot's semantics. The three notions are also linked at a theoretical level by phenomenology, notably by Ricoeur.

This chapter is divided into four sections. It successively examines these disciplines which either define discourse as a text or use discourse as the equivalent of text. The first section therefore examines Ducrot's attempt to link linguistics with para-linguistic discourse analysis. This approach is mentioned in the chapter since it illustrates a group of disciplines which linguistically define discourse as a text. The same section examines Ricoeur's definition of text. The second section deals with content analysis, and, more specifically, with the application of this philological method to the media. In this section, some studies are presented. In general, the criterion of selection is historical interest, and therefore relatively old pieces of research have been preferred to more recent ones. The third section examines recent developments in content analysis. Recent pieces of work which use content analysis often entitle their methodology «discourse analysis». It is therefore under this title that two pieces of research are examined. The last section concludes on the relationship between linguistic disciplines, content analysis and the sociology of discourse.

I: From Language to Text

Between discourse as language and discourse as text, the gap has been filled by various means. The first series of links is constituted by the continuum formed, on the one hand, by three sciences of language (stylistics, modern rhetoric, and semantics), and on the other, by para-linguistic discourse analysis. Some semanticists, for example, attach some importance to the notion of text and argue that a text constitutes a concrete situation in which language is used. On the other hand, there are some discourse analysts who define discourse as a text, but who employ para-linguistic methods to interpret texts. Van Dijk for example, whose para-linguistic approach to texts was mentioned in the preceding chapter, uses both notions of text and discourse as synonyms. Three times at least he uses the expression "text or discourse" (van Dijk, 1988: 1, 4, 17). The equivalence is confirmed when he explains that he "simply use[s] text and discourse interchangeably" (van Dijk, 1988: 24).

Both semanticists and discourse analysts have in common to distinguish themselves from semiologists in the sense that they do not apprehend a text as a linguistic system but as the context in which language is used. Texts (discourse) are not reduced to language, but apprehended as the framework in which certain linguistic forms are used, or in which some linguistic phenomena appear. Another difference between semiologists who reduce texts to language, and semanticists or discourse analysts who apprehend texts as a linguistic context, resides in the choice of the unit of analysis. In the first case, the unit is the sign, the word. In the second case, now presented, the unit becomes the sentence or the statement.

I

Ducrot's argument in *Les Mots du discours* (1980) is that there is a reciprocity between text analysis and linguistics: they mutually help each other. A sentence possesses a certain "signification" (Ducrot, 1980: 8-9 & 14). The task of the linguist is to discover this signification, and from this perspective, the linguist can help the text analyst in suggesting some readings of the sentence which are not apparent at first glance. This signification however is never fixed. It varies according to the text or the situation in which the sentence is located. Once the sentence is performed, it becomes a statement, and the meaning of this statement varies according to the text. So, there is a dialectical movement between the *signification* of a sentence and the *meaning* of a statement. To predict the different meanings that a sentence can take in various texts or various situations, its signification must be known. Conversely, the signification of a sentence does not make any sense if one cannot determine the different meanings it can take. Ducrot rejects the notion of signification when it is not linked to different possible meanings. So, the task of the linguist is to reveal the signification of a sentence, while the text analyst searches for the different meanings of the sentence in various conditions.

From this perspective, he develops, for instance, the notion of allocutor (*allocutaire*) as distinct from the notions of addressee (*destinataire*) or audience (*auditeurs*) (Ducrot, 1980: 33-56). An allocutor is a person or a group of person who is nominally addressed to. If John says to Paul, "Paul, I am talking to you", Paul is the allocutor. An addressee is the person for whom a statement is made. If a statesperson says «order will be maintained at any price», he or she takes as addressee two distinct groups of people. The politician makes a promise to the «good» citizen, a victim of the chaos, and, at the same time, he or she makes a warning to the «bad» citizen who creates the chaos (Ducrot, 1980: 39). The audience are those who simply hear a statement. So, for Ducrot, the differentiation between the allocutor and addressee is essential if the sense of a statement is to be understood from the signification of the sentence. It is with such concepts that linguistics can help with the understanding of a text, since to understand a "discourse", i.e. a text, is for Ducrot to understand this type of linguistic strategy which gives sense to "words" and "sentences" (1980: 56).

II

The second link between text, discourse and language is located at a theoretical level. This connection may be illustrated by the work of Ricoeur, who defined the notion of text in a series of articles entitled *Qu'est-ce qu'un texte?* (Ricoeur, 1986: 137-211). To grasp this definition, the symbolic form he designated as «discourse» must be understood, and to understand the definition of discourse, the way the phenomenologist defined language must be known. Ricoeur explained that the basis of his text theory is the «linguistics of discourse» suggested by Benveniste (Ricoeur, 1986: 103). For Benveniste, «language» is a synonym of *langue,* and «discourse» a synonym of *parole.* So, Ricoeur used the notion «discourse» to restrict language to its phenomenological dimension; language as a *parole,* as (speech-)acts of mediation and signification between persons. For instance, it is in a section entitled *La Parole comme discours* that Ricoeur explained his conception of language (Ricoeur, 1969: 84-89). In Ricoeur's lexicon however, if «discourse» means, most of the time, «*parole*», the word may also signify «text». In his work, it is the context of the term which fixes either one of its two possible meanings. Indeed, *parole* and text are almost synonyms, in the sense that a text is defined as a "discourse fixed by writing" (Ricoeur, 1986: 137). In other words, a text is a *written discourse,* or a *written parole.* Among these concepts (language, text, discourse), Ricoeur mainly conceptualised the concept of text. It is the reason why the triple equivalence of text/written discourse/written *parole* is more important than that of *parole*/discourse.

His definition of text articulates these three concepts. There exists for Ricoeur five criteria of *textuality.* (1) The first is the "effectuation of language as discourse" (Ricoeur, 1986: 103, and for the following quotations, my translation). In other words, language, conceptualised as a *parole* (discourse) is an *event.* This assertion implies several points. The discourse (1.1) is temporally realised, whereas the linguistic system (as constructed by structuralists) is "out of time" (1986: 104). Second (1.2), whereas *langue* is an autonomous system without «subject», *parole* as an event depends on the person who speaks, the locutor. The discourse represents the «linguistic performance» of a «speaking subject». Third (1.3), the discourse is an event in the sense that a discourse always refers to a "world it pretends to describe, express or represent" (1986: 104). (2) The second criterion of textuality is the "effectuation of discourse as a structured work" (1986: 107). A work is a linguistic "sequence" which conforms to a certain "form of codification" (1986: 107). A work may be structured as a narrative, a poem, an essay, etc. Within this second element, where language becomes a worked material, the "discourse becomes the object of a *praxis* and of a *technè*" (1986: 107). The third element of definition of text is the passage from orality to writing. A text - a discourse fixed by writing - is a form of expression which becomes autonomous from its author, which liberates itself from the "dialogic situation" of the *parole* (1986: 111). (In the context of our discussion, the two last criteria of textuality are less important.)

In sum, discourse, text, and language, can be related in two ways. Either through para-linguistic discourse analysis and sciences of language such as semantics; or *via* a phenomenological conception of text. In the second case, the concept of *parole* plays a role of pivot. Not that discourse is directly defined as a text, but since a text is a written discourse (a fixed *parole*), the concept of discourse is all together interwoven with text and language.

II: Content Analysis

With content analysis, a trend opposite from that noticed with linguistic disciplines may be observed. Whereas most of the time semiologists over-theoreticalise, content analysts are more pragmatic, putting aside the theoretical quibbles to focus on empirical research. Theoretical works on content analysis are not as numerous as in semiology. By way of contrast, there exists a gigantic amount of research and case studies on specific facets of the content of «mass communications».

Content analysis is the main hermeneutic method employed by sociologists who decipher the content of the mediatic discourse. It is also the official hermeneutic method of social science. The presentation of this method begins with the distinction between the qualitative and quantitative procedures. We will then focus on content analysis in media research, presenting and discussing the quantitative procedures and the designs of the quantitative approach. The pieces of research selected as examples in this section have been selected for their historical significance, the influence they had in the field of media research, the type of content analysis they illustrate, and the way they relate to some themes that will be subsequently developed. Because of these criteria, the set of references is mostly constituted of pieces of research written around the 1950s. These items of research however form the matrix of the current content analyses and discourse analyses, of which two examples will be assessed in section III.

I

Content analysis is a procedure of decipherment characterised by its scientific pretensions. Most definitions of content analysis reflects this preoccupation. According to Holsti for instance, content analysis has as a minimum two essential qualities. First, content analysis must be objective, in the sense that each step of the research must be carried out on the basis of explicitly formulated rules and procedures. Second, content analysis must be systematic, in the sense that the inclusion and exclusion of content categories is done according to consistently applied rules (Holsti, 1969: 3-5). On this common basis, two major trends, the qualitative and the quantitative, can be distinguished.

The *recording units* are the segments of a document which are selected for the coding. A content analyst may select one or more of the following units: a word, a sentence, a group of sentences, a paragraph, a theme, or an entire text. In a qualitative approach the word or the sentence are rarely chosen as a unit. Quantitative studies, on the contrary, are based on the word as a unit of measurement. The second difference resides in the fact that the *categories of coding* (the variables in which the units are aggregated for the interpretation), in a qualitative approach, are more open and not necessarily quantifiable. Ghiglione and Matalon proposed four series of qualitative variables (1978). The first series includes psychological categories, which enclosed psychoanalytical concepts. A text may be interpreted according to the principles of pleasure and reality. Second, there are the psycholinguistic categories, whose purpose is to discover the psychological characteristics of individuals from their writings. This range of categories is used in psychiatry to find the schizophrenic elements of language in the discourse of a patient. The third group of categories is psychosociological, and is related to attitudes. For instance, the need for achievement, or the need for affiliation of an individual to a group is assessed through his or her discourse. The most open of the qualitative categories is the thematic category, with which the researcher distinguishes the themes that appear in a text. This method is used in marketing research, where advertisers attempt to identify the themes that are associated with a certain product through a sample of persons drawn from the «target-market».

So, the difference between both approaches is concretised in the differences between the categories and recording units employed. As these non-quantifiable categories show, the task of qualitativists can become quite interpretative, as they may, unlike quantitativists, work with wide categories. The qualitative approach is used for example to analyse in-depth interviews. For this reason, it is mostly employed in the fields of psychiatry or psychology. Media sociologists however rarely use a qualitative procedure. In addition to the social and economic reasons for the development of quantitative methods (which will be mentioned below), there exist two methodological reasons why they prefer this approach.

In the field of media research, analysts seek to describe characteristics of the texts themselves, so that empirical observations about a sample of documents are themselves relevant. For instance, they may monitor the amount of violent acts in a sample of magazines for teenagers. Outside the field of media research, in psychiatry for instance, (unless the research is conducted for theoretical purposes), practitioners are not interested in the content of a text for its sake, but only so far as it can help them to diagnose a patient's problem. In this case, a document is simply a means to understand the psyche of its author. In psychiatry, a text is seen as a symptom. In psychology, a text is a manifestation, and is analysed in relation to a particular person. This difference has two consequences. First, in this latter case, analysts do not need to justify, as much as media researchers at least, the procedure they employ. The result in a cure, or the progress of a patient, may be enough to attest of the adequacy of a method. If, on the contrary, the focus is on the analysis itself, as it is the case with media research, findings are accepted only if the researcher can demonstrate satisfactorily the validity and reliability of the coding procedure employed to obtain the data on which findings are based. So, because media researchers need to methodologically justify their findings, they become increasingly preoccupied by their methodology, fall in the trap of methodological fetishism, and use the methods which provide them with the highest coefficients of reliability and validity.

The second reason for which a scientist opts for the quantitative method is the usual size of a content analysis that prevails in his or her research area. For various reasons, the amount of data involved in a study on media content can be enormous. Pool for instance, in a study on international relations, analysed 19,553 editorials published in American, British, French, German and Russian newspapers (Pool, 1951). Since the pre-coded categories of the quantitative approach are faster to treat than the broader categories of the qualitative one, which demand a close reading of the texts and are not easily computerised, the mass of material used by media sociologists prevent them from using coding categories which are too open. Above all, since these large scale pieces of research employ numerous coders, the categories must be as reliable as possible, that is, understood and applied the same way by all coders. Although quantitative coding procedures are not automatically reliable, they tend to be less ambiguous than the qualitative ones and therefore can be used more easily by different coders. For these two reasons, the quantitative methodology became the canonical approach of researchers who analyse the mediatic discourse. A few of the most fundamental procedures of the quantitative approach are now presented.

II

The quantitative procedures employed by analysts to decipher the discourse of the media can be classified in two broad categories, the penetrative and non-penetrative procedures. The non-penetrative methods concentrate on subject-matter analysis. Quantitative content analysts do not always «penetrate» into texts and are sometimes happy to remain at their periphery. Indeed, they may simply classify newspaper or magazine articles in certain categories and then analyse the statistics they obtain. It is this procedure which is used when a quantitativist observes that a certain percentage of the space of a particular newspaper is devoted to home news. This procedure will be discussed with the designs of the quantitative approach, once the penetrative procedures are briefly presented.

When these analysts engage with texts, the quantitative approach rests on the counting of occurrences of selected units. Most of the time, these units are words. The units can also be words in their context, or words which have been classified in certain categories, or fragments of texts in which a word fits into a specific coding category. However, as recently acknowledged by a specialist "many content analysts focus their efforts primarily on the most frequently occurring words" (Weber R.P. 1990: 49). The importance for content analysts of the unit-frequency count (and especially of the word-frequency count) is illustrated by Cotteret's work.

Cotteret is a well known content analyst in France. He published a quantitative analysis of the speeches of Mitterrand and Giscard d'Estaing during the 1974 French presidential campaign. He pioneered, in his country at least, the use of computers in content analysis. So, one of Cotteret's claims was that his method was "automatic" (Cotteret, 1976: 15). (His insistence on the fact that he used computers is explained by the magic aura that computers still possessed in the 70s.) Most of the analyst's findings originate in the occurrences of certain words. The first series of findings concerns the "statistical characteristics of the speeches" (1976: 42, my translation). He observed that the speed of allocution of Mitterrand is slower than that of his rival (respectively 128.1 words/minute against 132.9); but Mitterrand used a richer vocabulary (425 new words for the 900 first words of an allocution against 335 new words for Giscard d'Estaing) (1976: 43-49). He also analysed the most common themes of both candidates. To do so, he monitored the occurrence of certain words. Giscard d'Estaing pronounced the word "France" 117 times, "society" 50 times, and "workers" 37 times. Mitterrand pronounced "France" 52 times, "work" 25 times, and "collectivism" 8 times (1976: 60-78).

Cotteret examined the last debate between the two candidates. He discovered that Giscard d'Estaing addressed his opponent more often (218 times against 206) than Mitterrand, tended to speak more directly to the audience, and spoke more often about himself than the socialist candidate. Giscard d'Estaing said «I» 253 times whereas Mitterrand pronounced it 190 times (1976: 79-89). Cotteret's conclusion on this debate is that each candidate strove to give the most "euphoric" self-image possible, while each tried to create a negative image for his opponent (1976: 115).

The last topic is a comparative analysis of the speeches. His main finding is that the more the campaign advanced the less the allocutions were politicised (1976: 124-128). Mitterrand's vocabulary was less socialist in his last speeches and during the last debate than at the beginning of the campaign. He pronounced "nationalisation" 18 times before the first vote, and only twice when debating with his opponent (1976: 124-128). The concluding chapter insists on the functions of the political discourse; the function of confirmation (for the sympathisers), and the function of aggregation, as the candidates attempt to gain the floating vote (1976: 149-157).

Four criticisms may be directed at this hermeneutics of the accountant which consecrates positivism in philology. First, the method is arbitrary. This means that the same findings could have been proposed by logico-inductive propositions, and then empirically demonstrated. An example is the depoliticisation of the political speeches during the campaign. The simple hypothesis that orators adapt their speech to the audience, (a hypothesis which forms the ground on which rests Greek and Latin rhetoric), would have been confirmed by any qualitative content analysis, knowing that the first allocutions are pronounced in front of the respective party militants, while the last was a debate in front of a television audience of millions of viewers, of which many are undecided. The political «context» of these speeches, then, is a bipartite democratic election. Experience shows in several countries that not only the speeches but the political programmes of the opposite parties tend to adopt a politically «central» position. Furthermore Max Weber argues that the "more mass effects are intended" in speeches, and the "tighter the bureaucratic organisation of the parties becomes, the less significant is the content of rhetoric" (Weber, 1968: 1129-1130). Weber's remark is a first indication that the sense of these speeches would reside more outside than within them. It implies that the locus of the meaning is more the political situation than the texts themselves. Besides, the strategies employed by speakers depend upon the mode of political struggle, the state of these struggles, the position of the speakers in these struggles, their ultimate objectives, and their overall strategy to reach them. The words which constitute a political text, therefore, should not be apprehended from the text itself, but from the political field and the position of politicians within this field; a position that their discursive tactics attempt to modify.

The second critique concerns the triviality of the findings. On this symbolic confrontation, many interesting aspects could have been developed by philologists not fascinated by numbers. This would include a study of the strategies of legitimation used by both candidates, (the use of De Gaulle as an appeal to authority, the claims of political experience, etc.), the different strategies of seduction towards specific social groups or professions (civil servants, peasants, etc.), the implicit political visions that are revealed by the presence (or absence) of certain themes, the political ideology that is masked by the constant use of certain euphemisms and other figures of rhetoric, or the implicit consensus between the agents of the political field about certain social problems.

Possibilities for investigation by qualitative content analysis are virtually endless, but the wish for a scientific outlook results in an extreme poverty of analysis.

The third critique concerns the validity of the frequency technique. It can be argued that the only thing that the frequency of a word proves, is its frequency of occurrence. A word by itself does not have any «value», as linguists say, the latter being determined by the linguistic environment of the word in question. In other words, since the meaning of a word is partly derived from its linguistic context, content analysts cannot really know the sense of the words they atomise. Besides, this technique fails to examine the linguistic subtleties which inhere in texts, and which agents use, among many other things, to modulate the strength of assertions, to make a remark sounds ironic, etc. Moreover, it takes for granted an unproved correlation which assumes that the most frequent words reflect the theme of a text, or the main preoccupation of its writer. It is unclear however how inferences relative to the meaning of a text can be made from word-frequency lists: can it be assumed that because Mitterrand used more often than his opponent the word «France» that he is more preoccupied than his opponent by problems of national identity? And if Mitterrand was indeed more of a nationalist than the right-wing candidate, does this higher frequency really demonstrate anything that Mitterrand did not clearly and explicitly state?

Content analysts are conscious of this problem and it constitutes the recurrent theme of many books on content analysis. One of the most prominent theoreticians in this field acknowledged that "counting words rarely poses reliability problems but the validity of such counts remains obscure" (Krippendorf, 1980: 130). The truth is that most content analysts, (as reflected by the statement of Robert Weber on content analysts' preferences), still count words, but the solutions they propose for textual problems do not seem very satisfactory. Solutions include coding the occurrences as positive, negative or neutral, considering the context of each word, using computer software which «disambiguates» texts (as they say), and weighting each occurrence according to the way it connotes a category. The problem however is deeper than this and is inherent to the two-phase process which consists in extracting and separating the symbols of a text (disaggregation), to reassemble them (second phase) by the law of similarity (reaggregation). The assumption is that the reaggregration of these symbols reveals the meaning of a text. But most discursive phenomena are too fluid to be observed with such a rigid mechanism. This positivistic deconstructionism may be compared to someone who would review a sociological book by commenting on the conceptual index.

Finally, the use of numbers and of computers in philology stemmed from the need to avoid the human, and therefore «subjective», aspect of the other philological methods. Numbers however do not suppress human intervention and «subjectivity» but simply modify its nature. Even in the most automatised procedures, when texts are read by software which aggregate recording units in pre-defined categories, the fact to pre-allocate certain words to some categories of coding is in itself an interpretative act. For instance, the Lasswell Value Dictionary of categories classifies 216 terms under the category «wealth-other», among which diverse terms such as «agriculture», «backwardness», «electricity», «forest», and «highway», come under the above heading (Weber R.P., 1990: 29).

For all these problems, the quantitative approach does not seem to be philologically very effective. It should be added that this judgement does not fully apply to the qualitative school. Although qualitativists use the same process of disaggregation, the larger size of the recording units, and the larger range of coding categories, attenuate the effects of quantitativists' positivism and fascination with numbers. Quantitativists however hold the dominant position in their discipline since during the past decades they convinced many social scientists of the scientificity of their approach (e.g. Berelson, 1952; Lasswell, 1953). Although today quantitativists are not as peremptory as Lasswell, (who denounced the "unconscious bias" and the "dubious" character of qualitative studies (1953: 268)), the underlying assumption for most media researchers is still that frequency-lists are the most secure way to establish facts about a text or a group of texts. Because of the gap between the philological performance of the quantitative approach, and the claims of its practitioners to its excellence, this positivistic hermeneutics is reminiscent of another philological method famous for the same discrepancy: cabbalism. We may now look at the application of these procedures, both penetrative and non-penetrative, to the decipherment of mediatic texts.

III

Quantitative content analyses of mediatic texts are constructed on two main designs. Either analysts compare texts with each other, or compare texts employing different standards, such as objectivity. In the first design, they either observe *differences* between several newspapers at a given period, or monitor discursive *trends*, that is, changes in the same newspaper or series of newspapers at different points of time.

The first variant of the first design is illustrated by two analysts who attempted to determine whether the news coverage and editorial content of newspapers that are faced with competition differ from papers that have a monopoly in their circulation area. They chose the quantitative method of subject-matter analysis, and so counted the respective proportions of space that "competitive" and "non-competitive" newspapers devoted to foreign affairs, to politics, to sports, etc. Taking as a working hypothesis that no major differences should be found between competitive and non-competitive newspapers, the authors confirmed the hypothesis that competitive and non-competitive situations do not significantly change the content of newspapers (Nixon & Jones, 1956: 314). The 1947-49 Royal Commission on the Press combined both variants and compared the news pages of nine national dailies, and did so at three different points in time (1927, 1937 and 1947) (Royal Commission on the Press, 1949: 238-267).

Both pieces of research were based on the most common non-penetrative procedure, the subject-matter analysis. This technique, which can be useful if employed in studies which do not exclusively rely on this procedure to prove an hypothesis, has however a major default: the proportion of space a category of article occupies in a newspaper or a type of newspaper does not necessarily reflect the content of the articles which are classified into these categories. With each article being categorised «foreign news» or «sport», the proportion of space occupied by each category is compared with those of newspapers in different situations or different periods. But this comparison rests on statistical rates which do not allow content analysts to engage with texts and condemn them to remain outside at the boundary. Texts of a very different nature, therefore, may be placed in the same category, since both street crimes and PM speeches may be classified «home news». For the same reason, the only way to differentiate coverages of politics is by article length. But the difference in the proportion of space that *The Times* and the *Daily Mirror* devoted to politics in 1927 says nothing about the nature of their respective treatments of politics. This second difference however, more certainly than the difference of space proportions, reflects the two opposed positions (dominant/dominated) of the readerships of these newspapers in the class structure and the different relationships of these social classes to politics. In addition, knowing that not only the creation of categories[2] but also the selection of articles in different categories depends on relatively subjective decisions (because of the difficulty in determining criteria of categorisation), it may be concluded that this procedure is too questionable to constitute a solid basis for the findings of a philological study.

In the case of Nixon and Jones, it is not the fragility of the process of categorisation and the superficiality of the procedure which rendered them incapable of recognising in economic competition a determining factor of the content and nature of newspapers. The reason is that the influence of competition on

[2]As Curran admitted, referring to this problem in an article favourable to content analysis: "What questions you ask - i.e. what *coding* categories you use - in a quantitative content analysis define what answers you get" (Curran, 1976: 5).

newspapers can be only apprehended with a *genetic philology*; that is, a hermeneutics which locates text producers in concrete history and which apprehends their texts as social and historical facts. The reason why they could not observe differences between "non-competitive" and "competitive" newspapers is that the newspapers they described as "non-competitive" are nonetheless the historical result of previous competitive struggles, and therefore inherently influenced by competition. The intensity of these struggles may be measured by the following evolution: in 1923, 689 American cities had two or more dailies, in 1968, 45 were in this situation, in 1990, only 21 (Cayrol, 1991: 308; Owers, 1993: 31). So, the remaining "non-competitive" newspapers are the successful competitors of previous struggles, or as Robert Park put in 1923 already, the "surviving species" of a "struggle for existence" (Park, 1923: 274).

The second design consists in comparing texts employing different standards, such as accuracy, objectivity, or quality of language. Such studies are almost as old as the mediatic discourse itself. In 1893, Speed analysed the *yellow journalism* of the 1880s by looking at the content of four New York newspapers. Driven to sensationalism and scandalism by a circulation war, he concluded that they sacrificed "quality for quantity" (Holsti, 1969: 54). Another example is given by Matthews, who analysed, in 1910, a New York newspaper using four categories: "trivial", "demoralizing", "unwholesome" and "worthwhile". He concluded that only 40 per cent of the newspaper was "worthwhile" (Holsti, 1969: 54).

This is the most widespread design, because the measurement of journalists' degree of subjectivity, representing hundreds of studies, can be located under this heading. In this case, the standard with which journalists' production is confronted is objectivity. This is also known as the «bias argument», journalists being accused of being «biased» when reporting facts and events. American moralists, who were not themselves content analysts, were probably the first to address this type of critique to journalists. Walter Lippmann was among the most passionate of them, and the bias critique appeared in many of his essays. For instance, he concluded the chapter on journalism in his book *Public Opinion* with the hypothesis that news was biased, and that news and truth were two different things that had to be "clearly distinguished" (Lippmann, 1922: 358).

After World War II, content analysts examined newspapers to track journalists' subjectivity and detect in their texts traces of partiality. A classic study was conducted by Klein and Maccoby (1954). In a quantitative research, whose goals were the "refinement of methodology and the testing for the existence of bias" (1954: 287-288), the authors monitored eight newspapers during the Eisenhower versus Stevenson American presidential campaign of 1952. Taking as a definition of bias any kind of support for any of the candidates, it is not surprising that they provided "considerable evidence of reportorial bias during the recent campaign" (1954: 295), as four of the newspapers supported Eisenhower, the rest Stevenson. A problem with this article is the notion of objectivity, which should be supplanted by that of neutrality. The term denotes in a better way the condition set by Klein of Maccoby for journalists' objectivity, the absence of support to either of the candidates.

Studies on racism or sexism belong to this pattern as well, since both are seen as particular types of bias. Among the first content analyses monitoring this type of bias was that conducted by a prominent analyst, Berelson. His research deals with the "unintentional but consistent discrimination against minority groups of hyphenate Americans" in popular magazine fiction (Berelson & Salter, 1946: 168). Adopting as a method the frequency of appearance of the various groups, the authors observed a discrepancy between the demographic distribution of the US population and the distribution of the characters in the stories. So, while the percentages of the distribution of the population were of 60.2 per cent of "Americans"[3], 8.8 per cent of "Anglo-Saxon & Nordic Descent", 17.6 of "Other Descent", 9.8 of "Negroes", and 3.6 per cent of "Jews", the percentages of the distribution of the characters in the stories were of, respectively, 90.8 per cent, 3.3 per cent, 2.8 per cent,

[3]The authors did not specify which ethnic group they include in this category. Probably white persons whose ethnic origins are not specified in those stories.

1.9 per cent, and 1.2 per cent (Berelson & Salter, 1946: 175). They also found that 52 per cent of "Americans" held the major roles, that 80 per cent of "Americans" were approved of by the other characters of the stories, and that the "Americans" had "more desirable occupations than the other groups" (1946: 183).

Media researchers in general and content analysts in particular focused on the question of objectivity mainly because journalists claim to be objective, or at least neutral, in the way they report facts and events. The question they attempt to answer is whether journalists are as objective as they claim to be. Quantitative content analysis is still widely employed by the researchers who attempt to demonstrate that this claim to objectivity is not justified. Contrary to what they believe however, the issue of «objectivity» goes beyond political «bias», racism, or sexism. Following Michael Schudson (1978), who was the first to raise the question, one should not simply ask *if* journalists are objective, but *why* they pretend to be so[4]. From this perspective, one has to examine the historical conditions necessary to the emergence of this claim, which is also a journalistic ideal and an occupational norm. Journalists created this norm because they needed it as agents of the mediatic field. One of these reasons is purely commercial: progressively, during the second half of the XIXth century, press owners and editors realised that readers (and then advertisers) preferred newspapers which claimed to be neutral, or apolitical, to those which recognised a political allegiance. A second reason is more complex. During this same half century, the increasing independence of modern newspapers from political parties met with a certain resistance from politicians. So, the agents of the mediatic field had to struggle against the hostility of politicians who realised that they were losing direct control over newspapers which had been the organs of their political parties. In those struggles, two important symbolic weapons of journalists have been the texts they produce and also the claim that these texts stand

[4]The following paragraph, which provides a provisory answer to positivistic philology on the bias question, anticipates concepts and themes which will be clarified and developed in subsequent chapters.

beyond, or above, struggles of social groups and social classes for control and power. Indeed, since the sole activity of the agents of this field is to produce texts, this claim to objectivity, first, gives an *aura of credibility* to what is said in these texts, second, confers on these agents a much needed *legitimacy* to write on others' behalf and to comment on others' activities (in particular on their political activities), and third, provides the *justification* for the presence in society of a relatively autonomous field whose only function is to produce texts, (a fact which is an invention of the XIXth century). So, the claim to objectivity is linked to the need for legitimacy of a relatively autonomous field of discursive production. Of course, the claim to objectivity is also employed to mask the reality that journalists are not objective, but this is not the point argued here. From a sociological perspective, it is less important to know whether journalists are objective than why they claim, and wish, to be objective.

IV

The question of the historical development of quantitativism now needs to be answered. The reason for its success does not lie in its intrinsic qualities, but rather in the actual social conditions of production of the academic and scientific discourse.

The most important external factor in research is money. The development of positivism in the social sciences, and particularly in media research, is due to the origin of most of this money. Public money (e.g. governmental agencies) and private money (e.g. companies) come from bureaucratic organisations who do not give funds away unless they can see a concrete reason why a certain piece of research should be conducted. For this reason, they themselves often define the areas of research and the type of questions to be answered. Most often, these questions are of a quantitative nature. In these conditions, positivistic methods and to do research according to their needs and criteria are the only means to attract the money from these bureaucratic organisations. An illustration of this determining influence in the field of media research was the conflict between Adorno and Lazarsfeld when the former worked part-time between 1938 and 1941 for the Radio Research Project at Lazarsfeld's Office of Radio Research (as the Bureau of Applied Social Research was still named in 1941) (Jay, 1973: 190-193; Lazarsfeld, 1941: 2-16). This is not to say that the conflict between the «critical theory» of the Frankfurt School and the «administrative research» of Lazarsfeld's institute should be reduced to a problem of funding; critical theory however requires either bureaucratic institutions which have an objective interest in social critique or a stable financial independence. Today, positivism in the social sciences is reinforced by the fact that individual researchers, departments and institutes compete to attract funds. This competition results in rivals anticipating the demands of the funding institutions.

Second, quantitativism in text analysis is one of the consequences of labour organisation in the academic field. More precisely, its development is due to the increasing division of labour in the production of sociological research[5]. As already mentioned, an advantage of quantitativism is that it can help to achieve higher coefficients of reliability in the measurement procedures: quantitative categories increase the probability that coders obtain similar results when coding the same text. This need was mentioned for instance by Dornbusch and Hickman to justify the choice of a quantitative method in their attempt to empirically test Riesman's concept of other-directedness by quantitatively deciphering advertisements (Dornbusch & Hickman, 1959: 100-101).

These economic and social factors, (together with the methodological reasons above mentioned), constitute some of the causes of the development in media research of positivistic philological methods.

[5]This paragraph is based on Mouzelis's observation of the division of labour within sociology which lead to the "separation between theory and empirical analysis" (Mouzelis, 1993: 675-676).

III: Discourse Analysis

The pieces of research presented in the last section illustrate some of the most fundamental techniques of quantitative content analysis. These techniques form the basis of contemporary studies which work on the same principles. Indeed, content analysis methods have not significantly changed during the past decades. For reasons of space, only two contemporary pieces of research may be presented in this section. Although most content analyses now are entitled «discourse analysis», they mostly employ quantitative and qualitative techniques or combine content analysis with para-linguistic methods. This is the research strategy employed by both the Glasgow University Media Group and van Dijk. The aspect of their work which relates to content analysis is briefly presented and commented on now.

I

The two studies of the Glasgow University Media Group, *Bad News* (1976) and *More Bad News* (1980), may be classified under three headings. The first is the «who question» (Davis, 1985: 47). This question refers to the analysis of the persons who have access to broadcast news. Speakers include official spokespersons, individuals representing themselves or institutions. What they noticed in the second of their studies, *More Bad News*, is that there are inequalities of treatment by the media according to the status of the speaker. One of the most visible inequalities is that the chances of access to the media are correlated with one's social status: the higher that status, the greater are the chances of being interviewed. The method used to demonstrate this assertion is a classic quantitative technique. It is the frequency account of the appearances of each interviewee (G.U.M.G., 1980: 97-115). They used this technique to show that 7.9 per cent of all interviewees were spokespersons for labour, when 9.6 per cent were speaking on management's behalf (G.U.M.G., 1976: 138). In a similar vein, they discovered, also by quantitative measurements, that interviewees come from a "narrow section of the social and political spectrum" (1980: 105). They also found some differences in news language. The lower the status of speakers, the more journalists tend to report their statements using the indirect mode of speech, without directly quoting them. Davis summarises the results as follow: the higher the status of the speaker, "the greater the relative amount of media attention", "the more direct is the presentation", and the "greater is the tendency for media personnel to endorse the speaker's assumption" (Davis, 1985: 47).

The second theme is the study of the relationship between reality and its mediatic representation. The manifest content of broadcasting news is related to a variety of external factors in industrial life. This dialectical movement between media and (industrial) reality represents the distinctive mark of the Glasgow Media Group, and constitutes the major part of their two studies. They focused on two particular cases. In the first, they compared the "contours" of broadcasting coverage of industrial life with official statistics describing different industrial sectors, structurally as well as conjecturally (G.U.M.G., 1976: chapter 5). The result of the comparison is that there is no connection between mediatic representation and the reality of industrial life. More precisely, through frequency analysis of the coverage of stoppages on television, they showed that there is no relationship between the severity of the stoppages and their coverage: an important strike might be totally ignored, while a symbolic one might receive extensive coverage. Stoppages that are the most consistently covered are those considered as disturbing for the middle-class consumer. So, the car industry, transport and communications, and public administrations are the sectors which received the dominant coverages (G.U.M.G., 1976: 202-204). Their second case study was the "social contract" between the Labour government and the trade unions (G.U.M.G. 1980: chapters 3 & 4). They demonstrated that the media's image of the debate was very restricted, and turned out to be overwhelmingly in favour of the social contract: not explicitly, but in promoting the argument that the causes of the crisis were wage-claims, not the policy of investment. Using in this case also a quantitative method (theme frequency), they observed that between January and March 1975 383 news references on television presented wages as a problem or wage restraint as a solution, while 89 statements made references to investment as a problem (G.U.M.G., 1980: 68). Rather than a discrepancy between mediatic appearance and reality, this second case study attempted to prove the constancy of the bias in favour of the dominant position.

The third theme is related to the relationship between media content and audience reception. This mostly concerns the second and third parts of the second study of the Glasgow Group, a stylistic analysis of news language (part two), and a content analysis of news imagery (part three). The method of research concerning news language could be described as para-linguistic. They characterised for instance the vocabulary of the news as being restricted and restricting, with journalists relying "heavily on a few key ideological propositions" (G.U.M.G., 1980: 189).

The third part is an attempt to understand how the continuous flow of images is structured; what is the image syntax of a news bulletin (average shot duration, opening and closing images and titles, transition from presenters to correspondents, the use of graphics, supercaptions, etc.). One of their most interesting findings, in these descriptive chapters, concerns the centrality of journalists in bulletins. Journalists dominate the scene in terms of overall duration, of average uninterrupted shot durations, and of frequency of supercaptions and hand-overs (G.U.M.G., 1980: 298).

As a conclusion to the two studies, they insist on the restrictive way news media cover industrial life in particular, and social reality in general. There is also a discrepancy between reality and its mediatic representation. In their own terms, the "ideology of «neutral» news achieves its credibility on the screen" (G.U.M.G., 1976: 268). This restricted and selective vision of reality is not fortuitous, but presents a constant ideological bias in favour of the dominant groups: "In our period of study, the news was organised and produced substantially around the views of the dominant political group in our society" (G.U.M.G. 1980: 111).

The privileged method of the Glasgow Media Group is quantitative content analysis. Davis argues however that the difference between classic content analysis and the method of his group, "critical discourse analysis", is the attempt to "view texts in their context", and to analyse them as a "manufactured artifact" (Davis, 1985: 52). His claim to originality cannot be accepted for at least three reasons. First, the text/context relationship is frequently examined in content analysis studies. Berelson's research is an illustration of a study based on this comparison (cf. preceding section). Second, the group would have innovated had they combined content analysis and para-linguistic research. The two realms however are separated, the two last parts of *More Bad News* being exclusively devoted to the stylistic analysis of the language and images of news discourse. Finally, in the content analysis section, by far the most important one, they make extensive use of quantitative techniques, such as the frequency of speakers appearances, themes, arguments, words, etc. So, the Glasgow Media Group mostly uses a classic content analysis approach, favouring quantitative techniques.

II

Teun A. van Dijk, as seen earlier, is a discourse analyst. In *Racism and the Press* however he mostly uses quantitative methods. As he explains, because of the bulk of gathered material (5,400 articles), he had to combine qualitative content analysis with quantitative analysis (van Dijk, 1991: 10). In fact, quantitative techniques are used most of the time and form the backbone of the method, while the qualitative approach, the "discourse analysis", is used to illustrate and to comment on the results of the quantitative analyses.

To substantiate the claim that the Dutch and British press reproduce racism, he does a quantitative content analysis of headlines (chapter 3), of topics (chapter 4), and of quotations in the press (chapter 6). Table 3.1 for example shows that the most frequent word in the headlines of British newspapers was "police" (Dijk, 1991: 54). Tables of this kind are multiplied, and by comparing the quantitative content of headlines of 1985 and 1989, he establishes that the press was less racist in 1989 than in 1985 (1991: 70). The chapter on subjects and topics is a quantitative analysis of the frequency of ethnic minority issues in the press. 791 articles on immigration for instance were published in 1985 in the Dutch press (1991: 112). The fifth chapter attempts to mix qualitative and quantitative procedures. For instance, he comments on the diverse positions that the newspapers took on different racial problems (riots, demos, etc.), and compares the position of the *Guardian* with that of *The Times*. The qualitative method is used to comment upon the articles in a very descriptive way: who said what, where and when. Chapters 7 and 8 analyse the rhetoric of the press on race relations, with the help of some concepts taken, mostly, from modern rhetoric and stylistics, such as metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, comparison, alliteration, or rhyme. Like the Glasgow Media Group, he concludes a primarily quantitative content analysis study with a para-linguistic decipherment of the English and Dutch press, where he demonstrates that ethnic minorities suffer from constant bias in the press.

Teun van Dijk however claims to employ a "multidisciplinary approach" that would integrate no less than nine disciplines (ethnology, poetics, mass communication, history, etc.), and "other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences interested in the analysis of text or talk" (1991: 44-45). As far as his study on racism is concerned, the claim to multidisciplinarity, (even if we assume that the approach was suitable), is exaggerated.

II

So, there are few methodological differences between content analysis and scholars who describe their work as «discourse analysis». Both van Dijk and the Glasgow Media Group structure their research on, and get their findings from, purely quantitative techniques. They may however provide original insights into the use they make of these techniques and the commentaries they drew on the results obtained by them.

Both forms of discourse analysis, like other traditional content analyses, suffer from common philological insufficiencies. First, they reduce the news to a problem of ideology. But news as a specific type of discourse cannot be reduced to dichotomic categories such as pro-middle classes vs. pro-trade unions, racist vs. non-racist. Second, they do not explain the production of this ideology. Being confined to the decipherment of mediatic texts and images, they do not possess enough distance to analyse the field of news production. Such an analysis would explain some of the internal mechanisms which produce this ideology or which mean that this ideology takes a particular form. Third, although they analyse «discourses», and not «content», «discourse» functions in their research not as an autonomous concept but as a word which designates their respective area of study. By «discourse», van Dijk refers to a news article, while the Glasgow Media Group uses the term to refer to broadcast news. Finally, the fact that news is ideologically biased does not define the mediatic discourse in its specificity, since ideological bias is a characteristic that it shares with other discourses produced by other fields. In other words, one has to know whether one studies ideologies in the media, or the mediatic discourse itself. It is the task of the media analyst however to differentiate the mediatic discourse from other types of discourse and to outline its specificity among other symbolic forms.

IV: Linguistics, Content Analysis, and the Sociology of Discourse

In anticipation of the next chapter, notwithstanding the fact that the philological procedure of sociology has yet to be explained, the relationships between content analysis and the sociology of discourse on the one hand, and linguistic disciplines and sociology on the other, needs to be spelled out.

Content analysis has been presented because it is the official hermeneutic method of the social sciences, and the one with which sociologists decipher mediatic texts. In contrast to linguistic disciplines however, content analysis does not constitute a real problem for the sociology of discourse. The fact that content analysis is not epistemologically autonomous, but constitutes a set of techniques used by social scientists, means that there can be no conflict of paradigm between content analysis and sociology.

This is not the case with the linguistic disciplines with which sociology of discourse has to enter in direct conflict. Semiologists occupy today the dominant position in the sphere of commentaries on the mediatic discourse. Semiologists who write on the mediatic discourse do not even need to argue against other disciplines, since sociologists for instance either attempt to integrate semiological concepts to their own theoretical apparatus, or, because of the prestige of these sciences, do not dare criticise the hermeneutic assumptions of semiologists.

The success of the linguistic paradigm in contemporary hermeneutics is undeniable, and its concepts are unchallenged. If semiologists were using linguistic concepts and sociologists sociological concepts, the problem would be different. It would be, at worst, a conflict of perspective, both semiologists and sociologists debating on the virtues of their respective concepts and the superiority of their approach. Such a debate does not exist, and because the linguistic disciplines are too prestigious and too glamorous, too many sociologists have attempted to integrate linguistic concepts into their sociology. These concepts however prevent them from sociologically apprehending a discourse. The linguistic hegemony creates two serious problems for sociology.

First, sociologists still do not possess a properly sociological hermeneutic method. The method employed by semiology, which consists in deciphering the meaning of a text by and within the limits of its linguistic dimension, is, from a sociological viewpoint, an absurdity. For sociology, contrary to internal readings, neither a text nor a discourse make sense by themselves. Their sense is given by the social relationships which produce these texts and which are expressed in these texts. Sociologically, the sense of a discourse is not internal, but external to the texts which compose it.

Correlatively, the semiological definition of discourse cannot but damage the sociological paradigm. Defining discourse as a language, semiology locates the question of meaning within the linguistic realm. Sociologists who tried to apply the notion of sign to the mediatic discourse (e.g. Hall, 1977, 1980) did not realise that they were pushed into an area - language - which is far from sociological territory. Sociologists should choose between the science of linguistic exchanges and the science of social exchanges, between the theory of linguistic relations and the theory of social relations. Together they are incompatible, and those who venture to unite them *via* their respective concepts are confronted by a series of contradictions which derive from the fact that structural linguistics constituted its scientific object, language, by abstracting it from social and psychological reality. Contrary to other sciences, such as physics, whose object is unconnected to that of sociology, the object of linguistics has been extracted from the social realm. This schism meant that, from the beginning, linguistics apprehended language from the opposite perspective to that of sociology. In other words, the linguistic apprehension of language, like its apprehension of other objects such as sport, fashion or discourse, is, from a sociological viewpoint, a heresy. Criticising jurists and economists who see in money a mere sign, Marx explained: "The fact that money can, in certain functions, be replaced by mere signs [*Zeichen*] of itself, gave rise to another mistaken notion, that it is itself a mere sign. ... But if it is declared that the *social characters* assumed by things, or the *material characters* assumed by the social determinations of labour on the basis of a particular mode of production, are mere signs, it is in the same breath also declared that these characters are arbitrary fictions sanctioned by the so-called universal consent of mankind" (Marx, 1890: 56-57 & 1965a: 627-628, my emphasis, my translation[6]). This remark summarises the conflict between two sciences. For sociology, language is neither a system of signs, nor is discourse a language. The following chapter aims, first, to provide sociology with a non-linguistic definition of discourse. The second aim is to provide sociology with a properly sociological hermeneutic method. A method which locates the meaning of a discourse neither in the prison of language, nor in the content, but in its social conditions of its emergence and existence.

Finally, although it goes beyond the immediate scope of this research, it may be added that semiology constitutes the main methodological and epistemological matrix of postmodern theories. Nicos Mouzelis already established the connection between structural linguistics and postmodern theories. In linguistics, the arbitrariness of the sign makes the relation between signifiers more important than the relation between signifieds and empirical referents. This lead "to the postmodern idea of society as language, as text, or rather a network of texts, whose only referents are other texts" (Mouzelis, 1993: 687). Similarly, at a philological level, many postmodernists, from a semiological reading of media based on concepts such as the linguistic sign, went to see the mediatic discourse as a sign of postmodernity. In *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe*, (1972: 200-228), Baudrillard still operated a «classic» semiological reading of media. Later on, in texts such as

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[6] In English texts (e.g. Marx, 1976: 185-186), *Zeichen* is translated by symbol, whereas, *das Zeichen* stands for sign, and *das Symbol* for symbol. By the same token, when the French philosophers (Montesquieu and Le Trosne) quoted by Marx use the word *signe*, the word is translated by symbol, whereas, in French as well, *le signe* stands for sign, and *le symbole* for symbol. This is an important mistake.

Simulacres et simulations (1981) or *Amérique* (1986), the postmodern vision prevails, in which it is not the media which is interpreted anymore, but society which is interpreted through media. Similarly, in the economy of Vattimo's postmodern argument, the media is used to demonstrate the general aesthetisation of life (Vattimo, 1989: 7-23). Implicit in this thesis is not only the semiological vision of the media, but the methodology with which this vision is sustained. If semiologists interpreted the mediatic discourse through its signs, for postmodernists this discourse itself becomes a sign through which society is interpreted. So, the postmodern vision of society is only possible from certain methodological premises. To oppose the semiological reading of the media with a sociological approach is also to criticise the methodological roots of a reading of society which is methodologically and politically dubious.

PART II
SOCIOLOGY OF DISCOURSE: EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER III
DISCOURSE AS A DISCOURSE

The central part of the thesis is based on Nicholas Garnham's conviction that "one cannot avoid, in any discussion of the fields of media and cultural studies today, the questions of the status of the text and its interpretation" (Garnham, 1990: 14). So, the first chapter examines the question of the text, and the second chapter, its interpretation. From this perspective, the objective of this chapter is to metamorphose the concept of discourse, to transform it from a linguistic notion into a sociological category. In order to relocate the concept from one area to another, so that it no longer designates a system of signs but a collection of texts, necessitates a chapter of definitions and clarifications.

As a prelude to the application of the concept to the mediatic reality, the chapter begins with a statement on the necessity for sociologists to construct their scientific objects. Then, section II.1 proposes an epistemological condition for the use of «discourse» in sociology. Once, with the help of this condition, discourse is distinguished from language, section II.2 examines the relationship between discourse and producer. It is in distinguishing «discourse» defined as a text and «discourse» as a *class of texts* (section II.3) that the sociological definition of discourse is presented. In this section, the intertextual dimension of the sociological definition of discourse is discussed. Section II.3 concludes with a comparative table of the definitions of the concept given by several disciplines. Sections III and IV pursue the differentiation between language, text, discourse, and ideology. Section IV.1 presents the positive dimension of discourse, and the chapter ends with the notion of *discourse-noumenon*.

I: The Sociological Construction of the Object

For different reasons, many sociologists argue for the necessity to sociologically construct the object. One reason is advanced by Durkheim. In the *Rules*, he specified that the construction of a social fact is the *sine qua non* of the scientific approach. Correlative with the need to consider social facts as things, sociologists must define the things they treat: "since this initial definition determines the very subject matter of science, this subject matter will or will not be a thing, depending on the nature of the definition" (Durkheim, 1938: 34-35). For Durkheim, the definition of an object is part of the process of construction of a social fact, and the validity of a sociological theory depends, in sum, on the way sociologists define and construct their object of study.

Bourdieu says that sociologists who do not construct their object operate a "spontaneous sociology" whose characteristic is to say scientifically what common sense says ordinarily. The epistemological process must be done in three steps: the object must be conquered, then constructed, and finally ascertained. "Every distinctively scientific object, he says, must be consciously and methodologically constructed" (Bourdieu, 1991a: 49). Without these steps, sociological research cannot realise the rupture with common sense, and sociology cannot be a science. This rupture is particularly difficult to achieve in sociology, because of the proximity of sociology to every day life. Without entering into details, "spontaneous sociology" constitutes for Bourdieu a serious shortcoming for which he exhorts an "epistemological vigilance": "The sociologist's struggle with spontaneous sociology is never finally won, and he must conduct unending polemics against the blinding self-evidences which all too easily provide the illusion of immediate knowledge and its insuperable wealth" (Bourdieu, 1991a: 13). Significantly, one of the targets of this warning is the sociology of the media (1991a: 34, 47-48). Because it is a current topic in every day discussion, heavily ideologically charged, it becomes even more difficult for the sociologist to avoid the themes imposed upon it and integrated within it by common sense. Indeed, because the media is something which is particularly familiar to us, some sociologists have a tendency to take the concept for granted. Indeed, when one reads the commentaries on the media written by some «media theorists» or the speculations made on the same subject by some sociologists, one is sometimes reminded of Hegel's observation which summarises Bourdieu's argument: "What is «familiarly known» is not properly known, just for the reason that it is «familiar». When engaged in the process of knowing, it is the commonest form of self-deception, and a deception of other people as well, to assume something to be familiar, and give assent to it on that very account. Knowledge of that sort, with all its talk, never gets from the spot, but has no idea that this is the case" (Hegel, 1949: 92).

If, for the reasons mentioned, sociologists must construct the object, they should avoid considering the term «media» as a concept. This term refers, in fact, to two distinct social realities. Media may be apprehended, sociologically, either as a *field*, or as a *discourse*. Media, therefore, must be conceptualised either on the basis of the concept of *mediatic field*, or of *mediatic discourse*. When sociologists study the media from the institutional or organisational point of view, they may study the media as a field, (its history, its structure, its regularities, its institutions, its agents, etc.), without being concerned with the discursive production of the field. From the perspective of the sociology of discourse however, the media as a field is a matter of concern since it is necessary to comprehend the mediatic discourse. In this case, both concepts should be used. As a couple, they open a new space for knowledge by creating an interplay between them, the mediatic discourse having to be explained by the other term of the couple:

$$\text{media} \quad = \quad \frac{\text{mediatic discourse}}{\text{mediatic field}}$$

Many sociologists comment on «media» while they study the mediatic discourse. Put in other words, they study the mediatic discourse without defining the object of research, without being conscious that what they study is a discourse, and not the «media». So, when they refer to the production of the mediatic field, they refer to the "media outcome", or the "message", using any concept they find in the scientific literature on media, without paying attention to where these concepts come from. This explains why and how the semiological sign, the systemic outcome or the cybernetic message are used without due consideration by some sociologists. Being unconscious of their object of study, they are not in the epistemological position to realise that these concepts move them away from the sociological paradigm. If sociologists of the media who interpret journalists' discursive production were properly conscious of their object of study, as discourse, they would then realise that they could analyse this discourse with the help of concepts taken from sociological studies of other cultural fields which also produce texts. This is the case with the literary field, the academic field, or the religious field. Instead of this, they lose themselves in a pseudo inter-disciplinary approach whose conceptual eclecticism has the effect, not only of adding the mistakes of one discipline to the imprecisions of another one, but also of losing sight of the historicity of the social world.

The sociological definition of the concept of discourse, which helps, *via* the concept of mediatic discourse, in the sociological construction of the mediatic reality, should solve two problems. First, such a definition would create a concept apart from the linguistic sphere, which helps to avoid the intrusion of linguistic concepts and linguistic methods into the sociology of the media. Second, it could maybe convince some sociologists that the mediatic reality is composed, sociologically, of two distinct components (the mediatic field and the mediatic discourse), and that the term «media» cannot be used in sociology as a concept.

II: Discourse as a Class of Texts

II.1: The Condition of Unique Concreteness

As it will be specified in section II.3, sociology defines discourse as a class of texts. The epistemological condition which underlies the use of the concept as a class of texts is that a discourse, in this case, is a *unique* and *concrete entity*. It means that when analysing, or referring to, a class of texts, the reference must designate a *concrete, specific* and *limited* object. To summarise these three qualities in a single meta-quality, a discourse is a *historical* category. This condition of *unique concreteness* helps to differentiate the sociological discourse from the linguistic definition of the concept since such a condition cannot be applied to texts apprehended with a linguistic methodology. From such a perspective, texts are apprehended «beyond» themselves, being analysed as manifestations of language. As such, they are not historical entities, but linguistic units which are as much deciphered through linguistic rules as examined because they reveal and explain some of these rules. This epistemological relationship of semiology to texts stems from the relationship of linguistics to speech-acts. Linguists cannot, because of the nature of their object, analyse *per se* a speech-act that has been uttered on a precise day in a specific place by concrete people. Because of the extreme dispersion of this object in reality, language analysis never comprehends a speech-act for itself. It could be argued that structural linguistics could precisely become a science because Saussure decided to eject the individual manifestations from his object of study. The distinction between *langue* and *parole* was simply the most radical solution to solve the problem of the fluidity of language. For structural linguistics as for other disciplines having language as their object, a specific speech-act always illustrates a linguistic phenomenon which goes beyond this specific *parole*.

When linguists study the intention which a speech-act expresses (Searle, 1969), they may select some speech-acts which have really been pronounced, but they may also invent them. For example, if a linguist uses a phrase such as "I am eating a pineapple" to illustrate a theoretical point, he or she does not refer to a specific sentence, pronounced by a particular person, at a particular time, in a particular and specific social situation. Even if this phrase was actually pronounced by the linguist's child, the fact that this phrase has really been pronounced is not relevant. It could have been uttered by anyone, anytime, anywhere. It is not because it has been performed that the linguist mentions it. It is because it is *imaginable*. Potentially, this sentence can be pronounced, and that probability is enough for linguists. It is the same when linguists explain performative statements. To illustrate this condition, a linguist can use a statement such as "I declare the academic year open", but by using this sentence which the linguist might have heard last October, he or she does not talk about this specific meeting, or about the dean of the university, or even about academic life in general. This performative statement illustrates what a performative statement is. Studies of language games (e.g. Wittgenstein, 1958) apprehend linguistic facts in this same epistemological relation. A concrete example of this relation is given by Ducrot. Examining the relationship between the word, the sentence, and the statement, he believes that: "Whether it is about the semantics of words or about sentences, the linguist must consider text analysis as a necessary instrument - ... whether they are texts of speeches really pronounced, or texts of imaginary speeches (speeches we imagine in a situation which makes them plausible)" (Ducrot, 1980: 9, my translation). In logic, it is not even necessary for an object to be imaginable. Peirce specified in a definition of the sign: "The word Sign will be used to denote an Object perceptible, or only imaginable, or even unimaginable in one sense - for the word «fast», which is a Sign, is not imaginable, since it is not *this word itself* that can be set down on paper or pronounced, but only *an instance* of it" (2.230).

This relationship to linguistic performances is not due to the linguistic disciplines, but to the nature of language. The social context of the use of language may be taken into account in the study of language, the speech-acts Sacks used to illustrate his theory are not studied as a specific and concrete object. When Sacks deconstructed a telephone communication, his aim was to find a general model of the sequential organisation of the patterns of communication. The telephone communications he studied play the role of case studies. By no means was Sacks interested *per se* by a specific telephone communication between two living persons (Sacks, 1974). Even when power relations are reintroduced into language analysis, as in Bourdieu, the linguistic performances he mentions are not quoted for themselves, but to show how power relations permeate linguistic interactions. (He illustrates a specific type of strategy for symbolic profit (strategy of condescension) with the allocution of a mayor in a French village who addresses the audience not in French, the official language, but in its regional dialect (Bourdieu, 1991b: 67-70).)

These linguistic performances, therefore, are mentioned by language analysts because their heuristic value resides in their power of illustration. Even when real, they are not analysed for themselves, but in their ideal form, not because of their existence, but because of their possibility of existence. In fact, those linguistic manifestations do not possess an intrinsic significance which would justify a particular study. It is not argued, of course, that linguists should study speech-acts for themselves. The problem is not linguistic and does not concern language, but the relationship to texts that a linguistically defined concept of discourse implies. The point is that this impossibility of apprehending speech-acts in themselves is reproduced at a philological level by philologists, semiologists or sociologists, who assimilate discourse to language and use para-linguistic concepts to apprehend texts or classes of texts. When doing so, they reproduce in philology the relationship of linguistics to speech-acts, and are unable to apprehend a discourse, a class of texts, *in se* and *per se*. This tendency is illustrated by Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myths. The anthropologist never studied a particular mythic text to understand the particular tribe or culture which created it, but to establish laws of similarity between texts, between variants of myths. What Lévi-Strauss wanted to understand was the relationships (the laws of similarity) between the units of a system, not the system itself (the class of texts), and even less the units (the texts) which form it.

So, the condition of unique concreteness cannot be applied to language, and therefore to discourse as language. The epistemological condition of unique concreteness which is introduced here proposes, first, that a discourse is referred to because it is a class of texts which is historically unique and which concretely exists. Unlike linguists who can imagine that a sign exists, or semiologists that a text exists, a sociologist who uses the word «discourse» should refer to a specific *historical being*. Second, this epistemological quality also proposes that this class of texts must be apprehended for itself, as if a linguist could analyse a speech-act for itself.

II.2: Discourse as a Singular Object

So, the condition which is associated with the use of the concept «discourse» is intended to provide an epistemological support for the definition of discourse as a class of texts. First, it affirms that the concept of discourse cannot be assimilated with the concept of language. It enables the concept of discourse as a textual class to become a category of thought epistemologically autonomous from the linguistic sphere. It also provides the possibility for discourse to become a distinctive object of science. The concept of discourse may now designate something «in particular» in social reality, a singular object. Finally, it introduces the possibility of analysing a discourse as a *positive fact, produced by real agents, in concrete socio-historical conditions.*

The uncomfortable epistemological position of linguistic methodology when applied by semiologists or sociologists to a concrete discourse now becomes apparent. Linguistics is a science, according to Saussure, whose "true and unique object" is "language studied in and for itself" (Saussure, 1966: 232). Now, it must be demonstrated that if this methodology, possibly appropriate for language, is employed for another purpose, discourse analysis, a discourse is denied its unique concreteness. A French semiologist illustrates this mechanism. Jacques Durand applied the distinction *langue/parole* to rhetoric, whose object would be the *parole*. A rhetorical *figure* would then be a simulated transgression of a social or moral norm. When a woman says "I married a bear" meaning that her husband is as savage as a bear, she linguistically transgresses a social norm, because it is forbidden to marry a bear. Linguistic rhetoric has to study the way a figure transgresses a norm, that is, how individuals, in their speech-acts, feign to violate a norm (Durand J., 1970: 70-71). So, like other semiologists, he applied this linguistic rule, which concerns language, to another object, concrete texts: he decided that an advertisement is formed by a multiplicity of rhetorical figures. The rhetorician must study the way the advertisement simulates a break in social norms.

It could be argued that texts are precisely made of language. The linguistic dimension of texts cannot be denied, but texts are not only made of language, and this dimension is not the only one which exists in texts. Texts are more than language. With semiologists, texts only exist through this dimension, and as linguistic units, they lose their historical character. It is obvious that Durand could have employed an actual example. It is revealing however that he can explain his methodology using fictive illustrations. The unfortunate woman who married a bear may not exist. She *can* be real: she is imaginable. Similarly with the panel of advertisements which he studied: from being historical they become imaginable. Because these advertisements are apprehended with a methodology which does not assume their actuality, because they become the illustration of ahistorical linguistic rules which transcend these texts, they lose the historicity that their empirical existence confers upon them. They become, in Marx's words, arbitrary fictions.

Linguistic disciplines appropriate for themselves a concrete object with a methodology which does not include in its epistemology the historicity of this object. Linguistic disciplines, when dealing with a text or a class of texts, transform into a phantasmagoria a concrete object. This effect of linguistic methodology is not as speculative as it might appear, and there exists some evidence, in the semiological approach, of such a de-realisation of texts, and, more generally, of the reality semiologists refer to. The last sentence of *Mythologies* is revealing: "And nevertheless, this is what we have to look for: *a reconciliation between men and reality*, between description and explanation, between the object and knowledge" (Barthes, 1957: 247, my translation). This wish may be interpreted as the consequence of the epistemological problems generated by the methodological transposition that semiologists are confronted with when they decipher texts and reality. In this particular case, because Barthes deciphered social and discursive aspects of France in the 1950s with a methodology which did not allow him to grasp this reality in its empirical existence, in its historical certainty, he consequently wished to "reconcile" individuals with reality. But semiology has few chances of improving the relationship between individuals and reality, and the origin of this need of reconciliation was Barthes's own feeling of alienation.

The first step, to overcome the shortcomings of the relationship of semiology to texts is to propose another definition of discourse which implies this condition of unique concreteness.

II.3: The Sociological Intertextuality

The distinction between the notions of text and discourse is simple. «Discourse» designates an empirical reality wider than a text: a *class of texts*. From this perspective, a «text» is a text, and a «discourse» a discourse, as both terms refer to two different realities: one is textual, the second multitextual: *intertextual*. From this discursive standpoint, what is a text? First, the text is the basic unit of a *textual class*: it is a *discursive unit*. Second, a text is the *material manifestation* of a discourse. As will be argued later on, discourse is a concrete but not material entity. As an *entirety of texts*, a discourse is not as tangible as its components, as the texts, which constitute its material basis. This being said, two things need to be clarified. The first is the relationship between text, class of texts, and producer. The second is the notion itself of intertextuality.

I

To comprehend the relationship between discourse and producer on the one hand, and text and producer on the other, the question to be answered is twofold. First, to what extent is the producer of a text different from the producer of a textual class? Second, what is the nature of the relationship between a text and its producer?

It is almost self-evident that a textual class is a collective work: the producer of a textual class is a field of discursive production. Concerning texts however, things are not as simple. As it will be specified with the second principle of external hermeneutics (chapter IV), each text shares some of the characteristics of the textual class this text belongs to. In this sense, not only a discourse but also a text is a collective work, the product of a field. A text written by a journalist owes many of its philological properties to the history and the structure of the field of discursive production to which the journalist belongs. The simple fact of belonging to a particular field of discursive production creates certain regularities in the set of discursive practices of an agent. What is described as «newspaper articles» refers to a certain *textual type* that can be differentiated from another one. A textual type is the product of these regularities created by the logic of a field of discursive production.

How is it possible to claim that not only a textual class but also a text is a collective work? The answer depends on how relationship between a text and its producer is conceived, which itself depends on the way to conceive the text producer. Phenomenologists conceptualise text, if not from the point of view of the «subject» (Merleau-Ponty), at least in relation to the subject (Ricoeur). They think that between subjects and texts, there is nothing, and that, consequently, a text is the objectivation of a pure subjectivity. The properties of a text are entirely those of its producer. This perspective however is too subjectivist, and the relationship text/producer needs to be reconstructed from the sociological agent, instead of the phenomenological subject. Between agents and the texts they produce there is the field to which these agents belong and which determines in many ways the nature of their discursive production. First, the simple fact of belonging to a field determines most of the properties of the texts produced by agents. It is the forces at play in a field which condition the set of discursive practices productive and formative of a textual class. Second, as it is well known, the position an agent occupies in a field, the position the agent wishes to reach, the capital he or she possesses, determines the use of certain strategies. These strategies, in fields of discursive production such as the mediatic field, are discursive, and are inscribed in the texts agents write. It is more the field than the subjectivity of the agent which determines the nature of these discursive strategies, since these strategies are themselves determined by the position the agent occupies in the field and above all the regularities of the field of discursive production. In a text, the personal role of an agent is limited to the fact that the position he or she occupies in a field is partly determined by his or her habitus. But «personal» does not mean «subjective», since the habitus is itself, partly, a socio-historical product. In other words, *agents are not sovereign in their texts*, and their discursive production is not «their» production. Even from the point of view of the agent, of the person who materially «holds the pen», the real producer of a text is the field. The point is not to deny to the «pen holder» any creative impulse, but to demonstrate that this impulse is canalised and ultimately determined by the internal rules of the field the pen holder belongs to. One of the aims of the empirical research which follows is to substantiate this claim. For instance, the *discursive phenomena* (a specific type of social phenomena) which characterise a discourse are intertextual and therefore involve more than one article, more than one journalist. The sensationalism of the press is not the fact of one single journalist, (or even of one newspaper), even if each journalist has his or her own way to sensationalise an event. This is the reason why texts and discourse should not be conceptualised in relation to the «subject», but in relation to the real determining forces which condition the properties and the existence of the texts agents produce.

II

To clarify the intertextual aspect of the sociological discourse, its intertextuality is first compared to the semiological intertextuality, then to the archeological intertextuality. Finally, an analogy is drawn between a class of texts and a class of individuals.

The intertextuality of a textual class must be distinguished from the way semiologists use and define the concept in their philological task. Unlike Russian formalists, who conceived literature as a system, and whose approach to texts was inherently intertextual, semiology has the natural tendency to abstract texts not only from their social «context», but also from their discursive «context». Some semiologists however have attempted to modify this and it is in this sense that one can refer to a semiological intertextuality. An example of such an attempt is given by Riffaterre. By «intertextuality», the semiologist means that, within a text, there is an implicit reference to another one. This reference is intertextual for the reason that it sends the reader to another text. This intertextuality however is in fact «intratextual», as it is located, concretely, within one text. The term "ghost text" for instance that he uses (Riffaterre 1984: 91) clearly shows that this intertextuality only makes sense at the interpretative level. A pun may be intertextual if its principle of explanation is given by another text (1984: 82). Riffaterre's intertextuality designates a textual characteristic, not a textual class, and this intertextuality is a textual, not discursive, category. So, in spite of this notion, in Riffaterre's work, as in semiology in general, a text remains a *monad*. Riffaterre states with much clarity that his "basic principle" consists in regarding the text as a "special finite context", as a "closed entity" (1984: 2). It is the natural status of the texts analysed by semiologists, not only to be detached from their conditions of production, but to be autonomised from the textual class they belong to.

The sociological intertextuality is closer to the archeological one. For Foucault, a discourse would be a *group of discursive statements*. Both notions aim to designate an intertextual category wider than the text[7]. Within this similarity, there are two internal differences.

The first difference comes from the fact that for Foucault discourse is both a concrete and material category, whereas for sociology it is concrete without being material. This difference, which is of some consequence both for the definition of discourse and the way texts are apprehended, originates in a certain trait of the philological nature of archeology itself.

Archeology is at the same time the least internal and the most sophisticated of the internally oriented hermeneutic methods. Because the apologists and critics compare archeology to what Foucault criticises, i.e. linguistic methods and history of science, they think that Foucault revolutionised philology. If archeology is compared to what Foucault feigns to ignore, classic philological

[7]It will be seen that Foucault used the concept of discourse in an ambiguous way, designating either a single discursive statement or a group of discursive statements. It is in its second meaning that the concept is understood in the following pages.

techniques, his hermeneutics becomes more familiar. The archeological task constitutes, in fact, an important part of the philological work of a hermeneutist who must decipher a text whose readability or originality has been spoilt. In philology, this aspect is referred to as «text archeology». Archeology designates the task of restoring the «letter of the text», of re-establishing the text to its original form. This task of hermeneutics is the one which attempts to correct centuries of manipulation and transformation of ancient texts. The philologist who deciphers deteriorated texts, such as Greek philosophical fragments, or Shakespeare's plays, has to determine the exogenous symbolic elements which have accumulated through time. A philologist distinguishes the parts of a text which are original, those which have been added, and those (when the philologist re-finds the original manuscript) which have been removed. Then, the philologist tries to identify the origins and explain the reasons for these manipulations. His or her task is to re-establish the original text, to purify it from the post-manipulations it has been subjected to. In other words, to restore its original meaning.

Contemporary Spinozists for example, have been comparing different manuscripts of Spinoza's *Tractacus Politicus* to detect the words and sentences that have been removed, and those which have been added, by the early Dutch publishers. As the *Tractacus Politicus* was a nearly explicit critique of the political regime of his country, a monarchy, his manuscript was wisely «revised» by a cautious publisher. So, the original Dutch edition, the *Nagelate Schriften,* is not only incomplete, (the most dangerous passages having been removed, notably Spinoza's praise of democracy), but transformed, as the mysterious hand attempted to change the meaning of the text by adding titles and subtitles. Moreover, as the *Tractacus Politicus* was published posthumously, the publisher had to decipher Spinoza's hand-writing, and this decipherment produced some incoherences that the contemporary Spinozists attempted to eradicate.

Some archeological problems are purely material. Critical editions of Nietzsche mobilise a considerable amount of erudition trying to publish floating fragments in a coherent order. Two of Nietzsche's commentators, Colli and Montinari, attempted to demonstrate that the "Law against Christianity" fragment should be attached to *Antichrist*, and the "War Declaration" to *Ecce Homo*. They put forwards six plausible reasons for this. One of them was the type of paper on which Nietzsche wrote one of these fragments and the glue he used to paste the fragment to another sheet (Nietzsche, 1974: 264-269).

When Foucault made reference to the discursive statement as an object - a material object - that subjects "produce, manipulate, use, transform, exchange, combine, decompose and recompose, and possibly destroy" (Foucault, 1989b: 105), he was obviously thinking of these internal and archeological philological procedures. In sum, not that Foucault's archeology is itself a purely internal method, but it is an implicit reference to the technical and material aspects of these philological procedures. It is from these elements that the materiality of the archeological discursive statement stems. The materiality of the statement is relevant to the extent that it reappears when Foucault defines discourse as a group of statements. Indeed, he reproduced the materiality of the statement in his *last* series of definitions of discourse. Discourse is inserted in a series of concepts which ranges from the sentence to the discursive formation: a sentence is a group of signs, a statement a group of sentences, a discourse a group of statements, and a discursive formation a group of discourses. So, a "discourse is constituted by a group of sequences of signs, in so far that these sequences are statements, that is, in so far they can be assigned particular modalities of existence" (Foucault, 1989b: 107).

Because of the philological assumptions of archeology, Foucault must conceptualise discourse from the perspective of the statement as a material object. If, therefore, the statement is material, the discourse is concrete and material. A discourse is concrete because as a group of statements it is not a mere text. It is also material however since Foucault does not create a qualitative rupture between the statement and the discourse. So, the first difference between the archeological and the sociological definitions of the concept lies in the materiality that archeology confers upon discourse *via* the concept of statement. The archeological discourse, as a group of statements is concrete *and* material, whereas the sociological discourse is concrete *but not* material. The two assertions oppose each other: archeology states that if a discourse is concrete, it is also material, whereas it is stated here that if a discourse is concrete, it is not material. The opposition between the two conceptions needs to be justified.

This incompatibility may be grasped by comparing the concept of sociological discourse to that of social class. By saying that a discourse is a class of texts (a textual class), it implies that a class is a group of texts, but also that a class is *more* than a group of texts. It is from this more that the opposition between the qualities of concreteness and materiality originates. A social class, such as the small bourgeoisie, is something specific, concrete, and historical. But a social class is not material. The materialisations of a social class are the men and women who form this class, but the social class is not by itself material. In the same sense that a social class is more than a group of individuals, a discourse is more than a group of texts. A class is something which stands for itself: it has its own origins, own history, own fate, own interests. So is a discourse. Its existence as a concrete entity cannot be reduced to its components. Its independent reality, as an entity, means that it develops *sui generis* qualities which are relatively autonomous from the qualities of the elements which compose it. In the same way that a social class may be studied for itself, without reference, except for examples, to the individuals who form it, so a discourse may be analysed for itself, without making reference, except for examples, to the texts which belong to it. (Or at least, texts may be interpreted in terms of the textual class to which they belong.) In fact, a discourse is a *social fact*, in the sense that this symbolic form exists "in its own right independent of its individual manifestations" (Durkheim, 1937: 13). It does not mean that a discourse is independent of its producer, but that a discourse exists beyond the texts which compose it. As a social fact, a discourse is not a material entity. It is concrete however, since it corresponds to a historical and social reality.

In the same way that criteria are needed to determine the social class to which an individual belongs, criteria are also employed to discriminate texts. These criteria, and more precisely their location, constitute the second difference between the archeological and sociological intertextuality. According to Foucault, what defines a group of statements as a discourse is external to the archeological discourse, but internal to the discursive formation. The categories which delineate several discursive statements - the archeological discourse - belonging to the same discursive formation are *internal* to the discursive formation: several statements must share the same modalities of existence, i.e. the same "objects", "modalities of enunciation", "concepts", and "strategies" (Foucault, 1989b: 31-70). In other words, these modalities of existence, external to the discourse (the group of statements), are internal to the discursive formation, to the discursive sphere. It is to these internal modalities that Foucault refers in his last definition of discourse: "We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation; it does not form a rhetorical or formal unity, endlessly repeatable, whose appearance or use in history might be indicated (and, if necessary, explained); it is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined" (1989b: 117).

While for Foucault a discourse is a group of statements which belong to the same discursive formation for discursive reasons, for sociology, on the contrary, texts belong to the same textual class for sociological reasons: for the sociology of discourse, the criteria that discriminate between texts and place them in different discourses are external to the discourse or even to the discursive realm. A discourse is defined by the external - external because social - conditions of formation and production that make of a class of texts a coherent and constructed sociological object. And what allows us to designate different texts under a single category entitled «discourse» is the bundle of external relations and social conditions that make of them a coherent sociological object. For the sociology of discourse, several texts belong to the same discourse as long as the same *social rules of production* condition the set of discursive practices productive of a particular class of texts.

It becomes possible now to summarise the actual situation. This table attempts to indicate the way the following disciplines define language, text, and discourse. (The case of phenomenology was difficult to solve, since the concepts of *parole,* text and discourse are particularly interwoven in the phenomenological conception.)

	Language	*Text*	*Discourse*
Linguistic disciplines	as a *langue*	as a language	
Phenomenology	as a *parole*	as a written *parole*	as a *parole* as a text
Content analysis	/	as a text	
Archeology	/	as a discursive statement	as a group of statements
Sociology of discourse	/	as a discursive unit	as a textual class

III: Text, Discourse, and Ideology

Although ideology has never been taken for a synonym of discourse, the relationship between the two concepts needs to be specified. With the same quality of concreteness, discourse and ideology may be differentiated. Ideology, as a concept, is neither material nor concrete:

	Text	*Discourse*	*Ideology*
Concreteness	yes	yes	no
Materiality	yes	no	no

The main weakness of the concept of ideology lies in its lack of a concrete and material basis. Whether one locates the origin of ideology in the unsatisfied social existence of agents (Marx & Engels, 1965b), or materialises it in attributing to it an almost material force of coercion, (Gramsci (1971), Marcuse (1964), and Debord (1983)), it is impossible to designate a concrete entity with this concept. Lefort for instance refers to the "invisible" bourgeois ideology which reigns in the media or in the educational system (Lefort, 1978: 278). The difficulties social scientists have found in defining the concept stem from the inherent idealism of the notion. Because of its lack of material basis, a clear definition is almost impossible to provide. Consequently, ideology has been conceptualised in opposite ways along two distinct axes, as a positively or negatively connoted concept, and as a subjectively or objectively connoted notion. Then, what the term refers to is always vague, and two sociologists rarely refer to the same reality when using the term. Durkheimian or Marxist uses of the concept have few things in common. So, the range of meanings that this concept covers is so large that Larrain, defining the notion, wrote that "ideology is perhaps the most equivocal and elusive concepts one can find in the social sciences" (Larrain, 1979: 13). In sum, the concept generated more problems than solutions.

The aim of the concept of discourse is not to supplant the concept of ideology. Theoretically, it is intended to fill the gap between the notions of text and ideology. The concept offers the possibility of connecting the materiality of the text with the abstract character of the ideology. In the same way that a discourse is materialised in texts, an ideology is materialised in classes of texts.

Classes of texts change in *their forms and contents the conscious and unconscious mental representations of a social agent or a group of agents.* An illustration of this influence is given by scientific discourse. The influence of a class of scientific texts on the mental representations is called the *effect of theory*. Psychoanalysis for instance (although some doubt the scientificity of this discipline) changed the representations individuals have of their sexuality, and the perception they have of some of their acts. Similarly, the effect the mediatic discourse has on the individual and collective representations of reality should be called the *effect of ideology* (or ideological effect). This notion refers to the fact that by representing reality, mediatic texts influence the representations that the social agents have of reality, especially if they do not have an empirical experience with the described reality. Since mediatic texts embody a particular ideology, the way they influence these representations is induced by the ideology they materialise. So, the influence of mediatic texts on representations is the effect of the ideology they embody.

An example of an ideological effect of the mediatic discourse is the contention about the way the media legitimises the actual social and economic order. Champagne argues that the vision which the dominated have of themselves always owes something to the representations that the dominant have of the dominated, and that peasants partly see themselves in the way journalists depict them (Champagne, 1990: 9). Another supposed effect of the mediatic discourse is suggested by Debord, who wrote that the *spectacle* masks the truth of class relations (Debord, 1983: 17). Whatever are the effects of mediatic texts on individual and collective representations, the hypothesis is that mediatic texts influence representations and that this influence is particular to the ideology which is embodied in these texts.

When applied to a specific class of texts, the triad - ideology - discourse - text - will have the advantage to re-historicise the concept of ideology by giving it a concrete basis on which it may be grounded. What is examined is not an ideology in itself but the way it is concretised in texts, the way it permeates a discourse. With this triad, the sociology of discourse hopes to avoid the micro-analyses of textualism and the vagueness of some ideology critiques.

IV: Discourse and Language

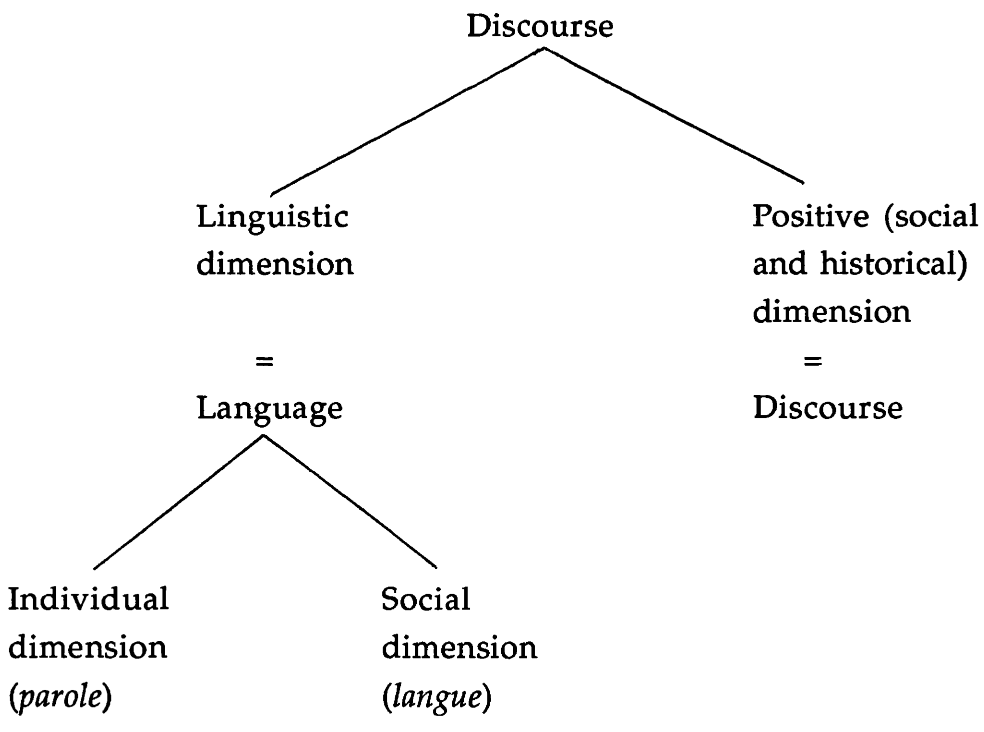
The preceding sections delimited the concept of discourse in opposition to the linguistic and textual spheres. We penetrate now within the concept itself. The fact that discourse is a class of texts does not mean that discourse, being a symbolic form, has no linguistic dimension. One (but only one) of the discursive dimensions is linguistic, and so it must be specified where, within discourse, this dimension is located. The extrication of discourse out of language is analogous in intention to the project of Foucault's archeology. Another difference between archeology and the sociology of discourse resides in the method of extrication.

The first thirteen chapters of the *Archeology of Knowledge* (1989b: 3-131) constitute his attempt to remove from the discursive realm linguistic methods of interpretation, and from the definition of discourse, linguistic concepts. The most central of the linguistic concepts is that of the sign. Discourse is still for Foucault an "entirety of signs", but it is also an "event" that can be "described" as such, without reference to its linguistic aspect (1989b: 27). As an event, a discourse cannot be reduced to a series of signs, and the limitations of language analysis need therefore to be overcome: "A task that consists of not - no longer - treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this «more» that we must reveal and describe" (1989b: 49). This constitutes one of the most important of Foucault's assertions concerning the relationship between language and texts (discourse). He concretised this "more" by surrounding the traditional linguistic notions with a series of concepts, such as unit, statement, discourse, or discursive formation. Foucault did not attack the linguistic reality of discourse: why should he have denied something obvious? Instead of reducing discourse to its linguistic dimension, he reduced this dimension. Instead of reducing discourse to its visible element - the sign - he reduced the visibleness of the sign. The sign becomes a residual element, an "irrelevant raw material", removed from the core of the theory (1989b: 84). It becomes a souvenir which adorns a mantelpiece and that people no longer notice; present, but discreet, visible, but unseen. End of a long reign.

Foucault's solution, to elevate texts (discourse) *above* language, constitutes one way to get rid of the sovereignty of the sign. But there exists another alternative, more radical, to define the relationship between language and a class of texts.

IV.1: The Positive Dimension of Discourse

For archeology as for sociology, discourse cannot be reduced to its linguistic dimension. But if archeology elevates discourse above language, the sociology of discourse defines language as being one of two dimensions of discourse. In the same way that Saussure divided language into two different dimensions (the individual (*parole*) and the social (*langue*)), to form a suitable object for linguistics; so also sociology, in order to create a properly sociological object, has to divide discourse into two different dimensions: a linguistic and a positive one:



In the same way that Saussure focused on the social aspect of language, sociology must bypass the linguistic dimension of discourse and concentrate on its positive dimension. The point is not to deny the linguistic dimension of discourse, but to shift the focus from one dimension to another. As Saussure put it, the point of view creates the object. Indeed, not only must the sociology of discourse overcome the linguistic element of discourse; the sociology of discourse is possible only if it does so. The identification of the positive dimension of a class of texts reduces its linguistic element to a more proportionate role; relative, not absolute. The positive dimension dissociates, from within, discourse from language. Indeed, the positive character of a discourse deconstructs this notion as a linguistic concept and suggests that a class of text is also a sociological object, since it possesses a socio-historical dimension which needs to be analysed with appropriate concepts.

From a sociological viewpoint, what is the status of the linguistic dimension within a textual class? Since the linguistic dimension of discourse is not in the field of study of sociology, it is only the symbolic element which the linguistic dimension confers upon discourse which is relevant for sociology, and the only aspect of linguistic signs which is pertinent is that they are symbols. So, from a sociological point of view, language is pertinent insofar as the texts which compose a discourse are made of symbols. So, discourse is a sociological object which is a *symbolic form*. Not because a discourse is itself made of symbols, but because the basic unit of a textual class, the text, is made of symbols. This fact has some importance. For instance, a discourse is a socio-historical entity whose *force,* or *efficacy,* is purely symbolic. By contrast, the force of a state for example also resides in the materiality of the means with which it can impose its will. So, a characteristic of discourse, as a sociological object, is the symbolic aspect of its efficacy. Many sociological objects also have a symbolic dimension, but few have an efficacy which is purely symbolic.

IV.2: The Discourse-Noumenon

We may now conclude the chapter. A class of texts exists independently from the texts which materialise it. So, discourse, as an intertextual category, as an entity independent of its textual materialisations, becomes a concept on its own. Discourse, defined as a class of texts, designates a discursive reality which is specific to this word: in this sense, discourse becomes a thing in itself. In the same way, the concept also becomes a concept for itself. Some concepts exist for themselves, some others do not. Discourse never stood for itself, but either for text or language. But because discourse designates a specific intertextual reality, we become conscious of the existence of an epistemologically autonomous concept.

For the reason that discourse sociologically stands for itself, this series of definitions which conceptualises discourse as a distinctive object may be summarised by saying that sociology defines discourse as a discourse. This tautology only underlines the necessity to think of discourse as a distinctive and autonomous category of thought, and raises the awareness of its existence as a particular object. This awareness is possible not only because the concept of discourse now designates a specific intertextual reality, but also because of the awareness of the socio-historical reality of a textual class. This movement may be compared to the way philosophers and sociologists apprehend the human being. The sociality of the human being was perceived at the origins of philosophy by Aristotle, and has since never been lost sight of. Ibn Khaldûn (Lahbabi, 1987: 23), Spinoza (1954: 930), and Marx, are three examples of philosophers who considered the human being to be a social animal. Marx's anthropology and sociology for instance are based on the sociality of the human being: For Marx the human being is a "social animal" whose existence and mode of existence are based on the social organisation of life and labour (Marx & Engels, 1965b: 27-48). He also wrote: "It is above all necessary to avoid postulating «society» once again as an abstraction confronting the individual. The individual *is* the *social being*" (Bottomore, 1963: 158).

Similar to this philosophical tradition, sociology apprehends the human being as a sociological object. For sociologists, the human being is an actor, an agent. For instance, the French sociological school, from Durkheim to Bourdieu, has convincingly demonstrated that the cognitive structures of the individual are internalised social structures. What sociologists did, as far as the individual is concerned, is to construct a heuristic category: the *Homo sociologicus*. So, if the social aspect of the human being is a well established fact, the social aspect of discourse has never been identified. Even sociologists, (their use of linguistically related concepts and methods is revealing), do not perceive discourse as a social phenomenon.

Because the linguistic dimension is the *only apparent dimension* of a discourse, this led semiologists to reduce discourse to its linguistic dimension, and sociologists not to distinguish between language and discourse. Both apprehend a socio-historical entity as a purely linguistic phenomenon and ignore the positive dimension of a textual class. Language is the means by which discourse appears, by which discourse manifests itself. For this reason, the linguistic facet of discourse has masked its socio-historical dimension. It is only in considering discourse as a two-dimensional sociological object that the linguistic dimension can be understood for what it is - the only visible element of discourse - whose function must be relativised by the socio-historical dimension of a class of texts. Language gives us discourse «as it appears»: it is the *discourse-phenomenon*. The positive dimension however reveals the discourse «as it is»: the *discourse-noumenon*. It is only as *noumenon* that discourse can be apprehended *in its own dimension and in all its dimensions*.

CHAPTER IV
THE THREE METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF EXTERNAL HERMENEUTICS

The aim of this chapter is twofold. The first is to expose the methodology of the sociology of discourse, its philological procedure. This methodology rests on three principles: externality (section I), coherence (section II), and specificity (section III). The second objective is to link the theory and methodology of the sociology of discourse with the empirical research. This is the reason why the exposition of each principle is followed by the explanation of its application to the mediatic reality. The principle of externality is followed, in the same section, by an explanation of the general hypothesis which guides this empirical research. The principle of coherence is followed by a brief exposition of the distinction between public and mediatic discourse. This distinction includes an overview of the process of commercialisation of the British press during the second half of the XIXth century. The principle of specificity is followed by a sub-section, Capitalism and Specificity (III.1), which articulates, through the principle of competition, the mediatic discourse and the market economy.

This chapter, in sum, attempts to establish the formal link between theory and reality. Because of its formalism, some transitions between the two elements are sometimes abrupt. It must be said, finally, that although the process of exposition of this thesis separates theory and reality, the theory and methodology of the sociology of discourse have been constructed in a constant dialectical movement between sociology and reality.

I: First Methodological Principle: Externality

I

This first methodological principle raises the question of meaning, more specifically, where does the meaning of a text lie? The central assertion of the established philological traditions, including phenomenology, is that the meaning of a text resides within the text itself. What differentiates these philological methods is the issue of where, within the text, its sense is to be found. It can be in its content, or structure, or language, three possibilities which allow for an infinite number of variations and combinations, of which a few could only be mentioned. They not only hold that the meaning of a text is internal to the text, but also that it is implicit, latent, lying in between the signs, words, sentences, or any other internal textual stratum. The function of the philologist therefore is to dive into the text, go deep into it and re-emerge at its surface, with, in his hands, its meaning.

There exist two major contemporary exceptions to this rule, Foucault's archeology and Bourdieu's science of cultural works. The intertextuality of Foucault's hermeneutics introduced a new dimension to this fundamental philological question. Within a group of texts, the meaning of a text can reside within a text, outside of it, or in between the texts which compose this group. Foucault opted for the third solution. To understand Foucault's position on this question it must be recognised that he used the concept of discourse in an ambivalent way, designating both by this term a discursive statement and a group of discursive statements. (He also used it sometimes as a synonym of discursive formation.) Knowing this, it becomes clear (as it was already suggested when commenting on the archeological intertextuality (chapter III - section II.4)), that the philological principle of exteriority means that the sense of a discursive statement resides in the discursive formation it belongs to (Foucault, 1971: 55). This methodological rule implies that, instead of looking at the sense of a text within the text itself, the philologist goes from this text to the discursive formation to which it belongs. The signification of a discursive statement, in other words, is external to the statement, but internal to the discursive realm. With this principle of exteriority, the meaning circulates within a discursive formation and the reading is internal to the discursive sphere. So, this rule of exteriority confirms the internality of the archeological principles which govern the configuration of a discursive formation (Foucault, 1989b: 31-70).

Archeology is a reproduction, within the discursive sphere, of Peirce's semiotics. By the abstraction and logicality of his system, but also, more directly, by concepts such as the thought-sign, Peirce succeeded in creating an infinite semiotic chain in which a sign sends back to another sign, which sends back to another one, etc. (5.284). The reason for this infinite regression is that he attempted to build a logical system of signs. Logical, that is, abstract, autonomous. The abstraction from concrete history of the discursive formation and more generally of Foucault's philology is made clear and manifest when Foucault read a particular formation, political economy (1989a). It is this process of abstraction from historical reality which allows Foucault's disguised idealism to read political economists as if the science of economic interests was without economic interests. There might be some common points between the political economy of Adam Smith and linguistics, (Smith was himself author of a linguistic study), as Foucault argued, but the class interests Smith purposively promoted in his economy are infinitely more significant in comprehending the *Wealth of Nations* than the economist's linguistic work. It is not the place for a close reading of the *Wealth of Nations*, but the judgement that Sir Robert Peel (Tory Prime Minister until 1846) made on 18 April 1848 in a Commons debate constitutes an alternative: "I must say that I hope the working classes of this country will not be deluded by the doctrines which are held on subjects which intimately concern their labour and employment. If the doctrines there maintained be true - if there be indeed an antagonism between capital and labour ... then ... all the science of the last 150 years have existed in vain. Let us in that case burn the works of Turgot, of Say, and of Adam Smith..." (Maccoby, 1935: 283).

The class interests that are articulated in his political economy are concrete, historical, and particular to a fraction of a social class. Smith's economy, along with the work of other political economists, forms therefore a textual class whose emergence and principles of enunciation are explained by factors external to the discursive sphere, lying in the reality of the political and economic need of a class or fraction of class. A reading from texts to texts *only*, from linguistics to political economy and from political economy to linguistics for instance, reveals, at best, a fraction of the meaning of the texts of political economy. It is thereby not being argued that political economy may be reduced to the interests of a social class, or that a social class should be the *deus ex machina* of any philological procedure. It is simply being held that political economy, as any other group of texts, should not be explained exclusively by the relationships between texts, as Foucault did, but also by their relationship to concrete history. The conventions of abstract reading idealist philosophers use in their philology is what makes them so popular with the bourgeoisie: as long as they are able to disguise their idealism behind piles of words and concepts, they can be used to mask the crude reality of power struggles in which the bourgeoisie is continuously involved, and which, without an idealistic and poetic vision of the world, would become too apparent.

When Bourdieu claims that his "science of cultural works" is neither internalist nor externalist, he is being ambiguous on this delicate question of the location of meaning. He sees himself beyond the antinomy by claiming an homology between the space of cultural works apprehended in relation to each other and defined by their symbolic content, and the space of field positions that produced them (Bourdieu, 1992b: 289). The mode of analysis that Bourdieu proposes would be beyond the internal/external antinomy since cultural works are at the same time internally comprehended by the differences between them at the level of the cultural space (this latter being defined as a system of differential intervals between cultural works), and externally explained by their relation to the positions of the field of production. In spite of this statement, however, it can be said that his mode of analysis is mostly external. Theoretically, he can hardly produce a more externalist statement than when he explains that his science of cultural works consists of a triple operation: the analysis of the position of the field of cultural production within the field of power, the analysis of the internal structure of the field, and the analysis of the genesis of the habitus of the occupants of positions within the field (1992b: 298). Moreover, as it is constant in his empirical studies, it is in the field of production that he seeks the sense of a cultural work. The relationship that he establishes between the field of cultural production and cultural works means that his deciphering practice is externally oriented.

The principle of externality in the sociology of discourse holds that the meaning of the texts which compose a discourse needs to be explained by the external conditions which produce these texts. This externalism needs to be qualified. It does not imply that texts are not read. It means that the movement of reading, instead of plunging into texts, moves in two directions. The first movement, similar to the archeological one, runs from texts to texts within a discursive class whose outline is progressively defined by these readings. Texts are related to each other in order to observe discursive phenomena. In order to identify in a text general and intertextual discursive phenomena, this text must be related to other texts. This intertextual reading is common to archeology and sociology. The second movement of reading proposed by sociology however prevents the abstraction from social reality of a textual class by relating, in a dialectical movement, the texts which compose this discourse to their conditions of production. If the social determinants (the social conditions) creating and determining the set of discursive practices formative of a textual class explain the presence and the meaning of a text, it is also necessary to know the possible meanings of a text in order to apprehend the discursive practices which produce a text.

This is the sociological version of the *hermeneutic circle*, whose one pole is discursive, the other one social. It states that to explain the meaning of a text, its social determiners must be known, and that a text must also be read to discover these determiners. The externality of the sociology of discourse therefore is a dialectical reading which attempts to challenge the internalist tradition of too many philological disciplines.

II

To operationalise, very partially and for the time being, the principle of externality, a supplementary notion whose value resides in its simplicity may be suggested. The material conditions which cause the emergence of a set of discursive practices are the *social conditions of emergence*, and those which maintain its existence are the *social conditions of existence.*

Marxism, according to Foucault, is not capable of explaining the conditions of emergence of a discourse, for the reason that the conditions of appearance of a system of thought "never resides in the existence of the group" (Foucault, 1989a: 200)[8]. Referring to the XVIIIth century debate between physiocrats and utilitarians, he claimed that a Marxist interpretation would be able to establish the link between the different theories and social groups, that is, how merchants defended their interests through utilitarianism, and landowners through physiocratism; but it would never be able to explain why the debate took this particular form, why at this epoch physiocratism and utilitarianism were the two, and only two, possible choices, and how it has been possible to conceive specifically either of these two doctrines (Foucault, 1989a: 199-200).

[8]Even though the Marxists Foucault had in mind when writing the *Order of Things* (1966) were probably more Stalinist than Marxist, his remark, may, because of its generality, be extended to the interpretative mode of the sociology of discourse. Sartre, criticising a caricature and imaginary pseudo-Marxist interpretation of Flaubert made a similar comment (Sartre, 1985: 54). To establish the mode of interpretation of the sociology of discourse, I found however Weber's sociology of religion more inspiring than Marx's historical materialism. Explaining religious phenomena by the social and economic factors which gave them their specificity, Weber treated religion from an external (sociological) point of view.

It is perfectly possible, however, to demonstrate that the conditions for the emergence of some particular texts, if indeed they are not necessarily linked to a specific social group, are at least social (external), and not purely conceptual (intra-discursive), as Foucault tends to believe. The emergence of texts and classes of texts are provoked by social factors which determine their emergence and condition their existence. A discourse is not eternal, and each epoch privileges some textual forms. While some disappear, some others emerge, integrating with some elements of the old ones. The epic disappeared in the middle ages, the tragedy with the beginning of modernity. The novel knew its period of apogee during the early phases of modernity. All these literary forms correspond to the social conditions of a given period in a given society. According to Goldmann, the problematic hero of the novel, (problematic because he is seeking authentic values lost or denied by society), is the transposition on to the literary plane of the degradation of these authentic values in our own society. In other words, the conditions for the emergence of the problematic hero is the "individualistic society created by the production for the market", individualism being the characteristic of the liberal phase of capitalism (Goldmann, 1964a: 36, my translation).

There exists another example showing that the conditions for the appearance and development of a discourse are not uniquely ideal. Habermas on this point has a theory of his own. He thought that the birth of the press was linked to the creation of a public sphere in the second half of the XVIIIth century, and that the evolution of the discourse of the press is correlated with the evolution of the social structure of the public sphere. When the public sphere fell apart, the press, "the public sphere's preeminent institution", changed also (Habermas, 1992: 181). Its discourse, originally based on and constructed around the principles of argumentation and discussion of the bourgeois public sphere became, because of this process of disaggregation, manipulative and seductive, seeking approbation and acclamation with emotional means rather than with rational arguments (1992: 181-211). What he analysed are the social conditions that favoured the emergence, and those which provoked the disappearance, of the principle of publicity, the plinth on which the discourse of the press was originally based. Habermas's method is close to a «social archeology». With this method he could examine some of the social conditions which determined not only the structure of the public sphere, but also and correlatively the nature of the discourse of the press.

Goldmann and Habermas illustrate the social character of the conditions of emergence of a textual class. They also indicate that the analysis of the *genesis* of a class of texts should be part of the philological tasks of the sociologist. The critiques which focus internally on the ideology of a text cannot apprehend a discourse in its external form of existence[9]. The usual, and often Marxist, ideological critique of the press (e.g. its bourgeois bias) does not explain why, for instance, when the British population reached the highest rate of literacy of its history (at the outset of this century and after half-a-century of educational progress punctuated by several education acts), the daily press became at the same moment increasingly illustrated (*Daily Mirror, Daily Graphic* or *Daily Sketch*). Without the correct explicative variable, the 1900s present the paradox that, when the great majority became literate, the image began to supplant the word as a means to represent the world people lived in and the society they worked in. The analysis of the signs which compose an image or of the ideology which underlies it does not explain the emergence and the preeminence of the image in the mediatic discourse.

This example underlines the task of a genetic philology. It illustrates the fact that unless philologists take into account the social conditions of the emergence and existence of a discourse in their analysis, the meaning of its texts remain obscure, because not only do these conditions determine the existence of a textual class,

[9]It should be noted that it is not because a text is related to what it describes, (a procedure often used by content analysts), that the method is external. It is so when the meaning of a text, in the last instance, is extracted from the social conditions which externally determine the production of this text.

but they also penetrate into each of its texts. To be credible, the demonstration of the penetration of the «context» into texts and the determination of their meaning by the external conditions of emergence and existence have to be concretely demonstrated with real texts. For now, the general principle that governs the reading of the mediatic discourse and the texts which compose it may be stated. The discursive phenomena that are observed in the texts which compose the mediatic class of texts are apprehended through the following hypothesis: *the social conditions of emergence and of existence of the mediatic discourse is the capitalist market economy.* More precisely, it is argued that most of the philological characteristics of the texts which compose this discourse are discovered if and only if these texts are apprehended in relation to the *relations of production* of which they are the product and expression: *competitive struggles induced by the market economy*[10]. The emergence of the mediatic discourse, and the nature of mediatic texts, are determined by these *competitive struggles* which prevail between producers of mediatic texts who struggle for a market. This is the hypothesis which is implemented in this research.

I.1: Externality and the Social Origins of Internalism

To conclude on externalism, two remarks on its relationship with traditional hermeneutics may be made. First, externalism is not about the «context» of texts. The sociology of discourse does not propose a division of tasks between semiologists analysing texts, and sociologists analysing their «context». Sociologists must refuse, as Swingewood argues, the role of "*secondary* inquiry restricted to the external domains of literary production" to which the enemies of sociology would like to see it confined in the field of discourse analysis (Swingewood, 1986: 3). In fact, it may be argued that the

[10]What might have been considered as complementary conditions of emergence, such as technical progress, is in fact subordinated to the rise of market economy and its principles of functioning (cf. chapter VI - section II).

relationship between text and context should be revised. What must be thought again, more precisely, is the division itself between text and context. In a similar way the «individual» is not the limit at which «society» stops; there are no boundaries between a text, even more a class of texts, and their «context», their conditions of existence. In the same way that agents' cognitive structures are embodied social structures, so also a text, and a discourse, are *symbolised «contexts»*, that is, social structures put into symbols. There is no relationship between text and context, but one entirety text/context. Not only is the «context» in the text, in the sense that the social conditions of existence of a text are fully reflected in the text, but the text «is» «context», because it is entirely made of contexts. In a certain sense, therefore, *il n'y a pas de texte.*

Second, it must be acknowledged that the externalism of the sociology of discourse is directly opposed to the internalism of hermeneutists. Why such a hostility? The reason why hermeneutists hold that the truth of a text lies in its depths is less philological and more prosaic than might appear at first sight. What this assumption reveals is indeed less a philological necessity rather than the interests of a position. As professional decipherers, often appointed by the state in educational institutions, hermeneutists have to create the competence which justifies their appointment, that is, their wages. A means to achieve this end is to spread the belief that to «discover» the «hidden» sense of a text is an extraordinarily difficult task that only highly qualified persons who possess the necessary technique and knowledge are able to perform. In other words, they have to create an aura of technicality and to present their tasks as being as complex as possible in order to legitimate the existence of their specialisation. For instance, to establish this point is so vital for them that Riffaterre opened his *Semiotics of Poetry* with a statement whose only function is to legitimate his own social function. He did it by establishing, as early as the first sentence, and repeated several times in the book, a radical distinction between "the most unsophisticated reader", and himself (1984: 1).

So, since their legitimacy, ultimately their wages, depend upon the degree to which they can spread the belief of the complexity of a deciphering method, hermeneutists, oriented by their interests, transform texts into mysteries. The less students understand their methods, and the texts they decipher with them, the more they can appear as prophets, and the more they can legitimate their usurpation. The more sophisticated the reading, the more successful the operation. On the other hand, to make texts more opaque than they really are is not the aim of the sociology of discourse. Against the usurpation by these prophets who use knowledge as a title of property to obtain privileges, sociology must offer a method as simple as possible which can be used by the greatest number. In this perspective, the task of the sociology of discourse is to help people, in default of re-appropriating the media themselves, to re-appropriate the meaning of the texts journalists produce.

II: Second Methodological Principle: Coherence

I

The principle of coherence concerns any epistemologically constructed sociological concept. The main utility of a concept is to group or regroup under one notion an entirety of disparate phenomena. In the case of the sociology of discourse, a text is the phenomenon and discourse the concept which regroups different texts in a single class. The entirety of the social phenomena included under a specific concept, must have, in common, certain characteristics that allow the scientist to group these phenomena under the concept. From this perspective, what a concept explains has less to do with the phenomena themselves than the nature of the relationships between them. The principle of coherence concerns this aspect of concepts, that is, the fact that concepts explicate more the nature and the properties of the relationships between different events than the events themselves. In the case of the sociology of discourse, the emphasis is more on the relationships between different texts, and less the texts themselves. This methodological principle is employed by two sociologists, Durkheim and Bourdieu, and two philologists, Spinoza and Goldmann.

The second rule of the *Rules* coincides with the second methodological principle of the sociology of discourse: "The subject matter of every sociological study, explained Durkheim, should comprise a group of phenomena defined in advance by certain common external characteristics, and all phenomena so defined should be included within this group" (1938: 35). This rule speaks for itself, and means, for the sociology of discourse, that the texts which belong to the same discourse should have in common certain *external* characteristics.

The principle of coherence includes the idea of homogeneity. Homogeneity implies that sociologists must construct a concept which covers a homogeneous reality. It also suggests, conversely, that the components of reality which compose the concept must form a homogeneous object. This principle is the methodological basis of the concept of *habitus*, the concept upon which Bourdieu constructs his notion of social class. In the following statement, Bourdieu emphasises the homogeneity of the elements which form a category: "So it is necessary to reconstruct what has been taken apart, ... To do this, one must return to the practice-unifying and practice-generating principle, i.e., class habitus, the internalised form of class condition and of the conditionings it entails. One must, therefore, construct the *objective class*, the set of agents who are placed in homogeneous conditions of existence imposing homogeneous conditionings and producing homogeneous systems of dispositions capable of generating similar practices; ..." (Bourdieu, 1984b: 101). Bourdieu, with the concept of habitus, redistributes individuals within social classes, and so reconstructs these classes. He sociologically reunites what common sense separates, and separates what common sense gathers together. The notions with which a textual class is qualified, *public* and *mediatic*, can be understood in the same way. They are intended to reunite texts which have been separated into disparate entities (such as the division of the actual mediatic discourse in different types of discourse), and to break apart what has been, due to faulty methods and inappropriate notions, assembled in one idea, such as the one of a continuous and uninterrupted history of the press. This division will be clarified once the principle of coherence in Goldmann and Spinoza has been presented.

The rule of coherence is one of the principles which underpins Goldmann's research on the tragic consciousness of the classical age. The principle of coherence is the base of Goldmann's world vision. It is the world vision - the (collective) consciousness of a social group of an epoch - which gives its *external coherence* to different types of thought of the same period. It is the world vision of one social group however which reveals the *internal coherence* of a piece of work written by a supra-conscious member of the group. On the surface of texts, nothing could reveal a connection between the critical philosophy of Kant, the Jansenist ideology of Pascal, and the tragedies of Racine. Goldmann was able nevertheless to establish their common essence, the tragic vision. This interpretation was possible because as a means and result of explanation, Goldmann had a *unifying* principle, and thus could construct a *coherent* object: the tragic vision, or the world vision that was common to certain but distinct social groups being in a declining phase of their respective history and whose members could not perceive a positive collective fate (Goldmann, 1964b: 3-21).

One of the main contributions of Spinoza to philology has been to demonstrate that the choice of the canonical texts which form the Old Testament, and the way they have been organised, is, philologically, arbitrary. The first part of the Old Testament is constituted by the five books of the *Pentateuch*, which includes *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*. During the middle ages, it was taken for granted by exegetists that all five books were written by Moses. The numerous historical incoherences, the divergences in the description of the same event, the contradictions, the anachronisms, the differences of style, as well as the different general purpose of each of these texts, made Spinoza think that these books are a collection of disparate texts written by different authors in different periods, which were gathered by a prophet several centuries after the events described in them[11]. Esdras, the prophet, contented to collect these texts, to copy and to transmit them for posterity (Spinoza, 1989: 161-175). Conversely, Spinoza also put in question the dispersion of several books of prophets in the Old Testament. Among these books, scattered in different parts of the Old Testament, four should be put together since they were written by the same (unknown) author. (These of Daniel, Esdras, Esther and Nehemiah) (1989: 187-191).

An important rule of Spinoza's interpretation of the Bible seems therefore to be the principle of coherence. Spinoza showed that the texts which form the *Pentateuch* (a group of religious texts) are not as homogeneous as the medieval exegetists thought, and, conversely, that four books of prophets could have been reassembled because written by the same author. Spinoza attempted to demonstrate the arbitrariness and the incoherence of the selection of texts of the Pharisees who succeeded in imposing the canon of the sacred books. Doing so in 1670, he de-mythicised and de-mystified the Old Testament, at least as a philologically coherent collection of texts. His last comments on the Old Testament are the logical conclusion of his research: "Therefore those who propose to prove the authority of the Holy Scripture are required to prove the authority of each separate book" (Spinoza, 1989: 195). Although the criteria chosen by Spinoza to contest the Old Testament as an homogeneous entirety of texts are different from those chosen here, his method illustrates well the principle of coherence. Texts, to form an homogeneous entirety, must possess some philological qualities in common.

[11]Although Spinoza classified these texts on the basis of internal criteria, what is relevant, in this context, is the purpose and result of the analysis, that is, the fact that he contested the philological coherence of certain textual groupings in the Old Testament.

The way this principle functions in sociology may be explained by the way it differentiates the concept of discourse from the semiological notion of the message. In a work describing the way the French media have dealt with the nuclear accident of *Three Mile Island*, Veron, a semiologist, enumerates several kinds of discourse in the media: "There exist, to begin with, several types of discourse. From advertising to variety shows, from political speeches to comics, from series to interviews, and from children's programmes to talk shows, a number of languages intersect and combine themselves" (Veron, 1981: 169, my translation). «Discourse» here has the meaning of message. Taking the *appearance* of the message (the discourse-phenomenon) as the referential point of the analysis, he divides the mediatic discourse into several messages independently of their social and historical conditions of production. As semiology cannot but ignore the mode of production of a text, it deconstructs the mediatic discourse at the level of its phenomenon, and creates different types of messages whose limits are semiotically defined.

For sociology, on the contrary, two texts belong to the same discourse as long as they obey the same *external* rules of production. News or a programme for children may be the product of a similar discursive practice. Or two interviews may belong to two different textual classes (i.e. mediatic or scientific). A programme for children and a news bulletin, if they are produced with the same external rules, belong to the same textual class. As long as texts are the products of a similar set of discursive practices governed by similar rules of production, they form a homogeneous class of texts. It is on the basis of this principle of coherence that a discourse is formed, that its limits are defined, and that texts are said to belong or not to a concrete and particular entirety. The limits of a discourse however can only be empirically defined, and it is one of the main tasks of this research to differentiate two textual classes, to attempt to define their boundaries. In the following pages, some indications of the distinction are given. Because these pages attempt to establish the connection between the principle of coherence and the research, they anticipate some themes that are empirically treated in the third part of the thesis.

II

It is in virtue of the principle of coherence that, historically, two types of generally undifferentiated discourse may be distinguished: the *public discourse* and the *mediatic discourse.* It is the role of the last part of the research to empirically explain the differences between the two classes of texts, the historical emergence of the mediatic discourse, and the specificity of the mediatic discourse in contrast to the public discourse. A few preliminary indications are nevertheless necessary to explicitly articulate epistemology, methodology, and concrete history.

The distinction between two distinctive textual classes represents a philological translation of the historical evolution of the press during the XIXth century. Progressively, during the last century, the nature of the discourse of the press was metamorphosed by the increasing commercialisation of this field. The commercialisation of the press, observed in the United States, in England, and in France, is a phenomenon which has been commented on by most historians of the British press. Lee, for example, located the emergence of the commercial press during the Victorian period, and examined the changes in the production of newspapers, i.e., the increasing industrialisation of this sector (Lee, 1976).

If the motives of newspaper proprietors, up to the end of the 1880s, were mainly political, the way press barons (a figure that emerged in England in the first decades of this century) managed their empires indicate that their main concern was not politics; notwithstanding the fact that they had (or claimed to have had) political influence. Their decisions were more determined by the constraints of commerce than the logic of politics. The circulation wars that the four greatest press conglomerates were involved in between the 1920s and 1930s marked the end of more than half a century of transformation that made of the press one of the most competitive fields of industry. Conglomerates employed more canvassers than journalists, spent millions to attract readers through competitions, promotional games, and advertising. They struggled to beat competitors in driving the price of the paper down as low as possible, in printing more pages, with more recent news, more illustrations, bolder headlines, in multiplying daily editions, and sending newspapers as quickly as possible to news-stands. In order to maintain readerships of several millions, they had to transform the content of their newspapers, and to make them as attractive as possible. As a whole, a newspaper ceased to be an organ of opinion and became a commodity, journalism ceased to be a profession and became a trade, the editorship was no longer a political activity but an economic one.

Such accounts will be substantiated with facts and figures, but there is too much historical evidence to question the general trend, however it is interpreted. What has to be justified now is the introduction of the idea of rupture as opposed to the concept of evolution in distinguishing two textual classes. The reason is because the discursive practices productive of the public and mediatic discourses are radically different: that of the public discourse is politically determined and oriented, while that one of the mediatic discourse is externally determined by market rules. The commercialisation of the press led to a *commodification* of the discourse produced by the press, and it is this economic evolution which transformed the public discourse into a mediatic discourse. To illustrate the nature of the rupture between the two discursive practices, a superficial manifestation of this evolution may be taken as a provisional example: the content of the discourse of the press, which, as has been observed by most media students for more than a century, is decreasingly, in substance as well as in intention, politically inspired.

The commercialisation of the press transformed the nature of newspapers. From *organs of publicity* for combatants of the political field they became the instruments of industry and became increasingly detached from the public sphere. *The discourse of the* *press was public as long as the press was a constituent of a public sphere,* either bourgeois, or, as it had existed between the 1830s and 1860s in England, a self-organised and spontaneous proletarian public sphere[12]. For the political public, either bourgeois or proletarian, which constituted its first audience, the public press had two functions: it was an *political forum* and a *medium of information.*

First, the public press was a channel for explicit political opinions, publicising the political opinion of a fraction of a class, forming its ideology and channelling its political action. A newspaper was the avowed organ of a social group, its *public voice.* Before its commercialisation, the press was in the public domain with the function of speaking for the members of a specific social group and helping it in its political struggles. A *publicist*, in opposition to a *journalist,* was a *political animal* whose function was to gather the individuals of a social class and to unite them behind a single banner. He had to argue and debate in the newspaper's leaders the interests he represented, to defend the political interests of a class fraction, and to formulate policies and programmes of these interests.

Second, the public press was a medium of information. In this role, the bourgeois and the proletarian public press differed. Between 1800 and 1855, the illegal popular papers, the unstampeds, were almost exclusively dedicated to politics[13]. Information transmitted by the bourgeois press however was not exclusively political, the bourgeois paper also fulfilling an important commercial function. Politically, the bourgeoisie needed a full account of the latest proceedings of parliament, as well as the

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[12]The concept of proletarian public sphere reappears a few times in this chapter. It could not be examined because the focus must be on the evolution of the discourse of the press. It designates the autonomous political sphere of certain fractions of the proletariat during some decades of the XIXth century. They had their own newspapers and own debating clubs, purveying specific values and beliefs. The unstampeds, or the illegal working class newspapers examined in chapter V - section II.2.2 are only the discursive aspect of this proletarian public sphere.

[13]Illegal newspapers were called the «unstampeds» because, evading the newspaper stamp duty, they were not marked, like the legal papers, by a red stamp at the top right hand corner of each sheet.

official position on current political issues of their respective political party or fraction of party. Ensor, relatively close to this evolution described, in 1936, the role of political publicity of the bourgeois newspaper of the pre-industrialisation era: "But the staple was politics, especially speeches, and proceedings in parliament were reported and read all over the country at full length. The way in which the news-matter was handled would today be thought incredibly dull and matter-of-fact. Headlines were few and paragraphs long" (Ensor, 1992: 144). Ensor simply related the type of newspaper the preceding generations were used to read few decades earlier. Besides political information, the press conveyed a range of more pragmatic information. Bourgeois and businessmen needed to be informed on business affairs, and, each day, a few pages were dedicated to economic, commercial, and financial news. (Today, a part of the daily press still fulfils this commercial function.)

The change between a public and a mediatic discourse is more marked with the press reaching popular audiences than with bourgeois newspapers. Before the disappearance of the proletarian public press during the second half of the XIXth century, the English working classes possessed a wide range of newspapers responding to the political needs of several of its fractions. A press of debates, slogans, and arguments: a public discourse linked to a self-conscious and combative proletarian public sphere. During the second half of the XIXth century, the proletariat lost the control of its press. The press became a field of economic struggles in which only the persons with a large amount of capital could compete with powerful rival newspapers. The proletarian newspapers, characterised by their lack of capital, could not sustain the rhythm of investment, and slowly disappeared. Since the beginning of this century, the popular press became the commercial press, and the working class public discourse disappeared behind the mass of mediatic texts. The modern popular press is called popular not because of its politics but for its readership. Its texts are characterised by discursive trends and phenomena such as sensationalism and emotionalism. Unlike public texts, they do not communicate opinions, distribute information rationally or educate, but amuse and entertain. (The contemporary tabloids are the historical outcome of this secular evolution.)

In England, it was between 1880 and 1920 that the content of newspapers began to be subordinated to the need to seduce readers and attract advertisers. Along with the industrialisation of the press, its subordination to market laws and systematic search for profits, the 1880s witnessed the appearance of the *new journalism;* degenerating, in the case of a circulation war between two or more newspapers, into *yellow journalism.* The main journalistic trend of this period was the *depoliticisation* of the content of newspapers[14]. New journalism invented a proper journalistic approach to politics. This new approach is a mixture of opportunism, demagogism, pseudo-neutralism, and cynicism. Although there exist several counter-examples to this assertion, most successful journalists, editors, or press barons, used discursive strategies, consciously or not, which could be described by either of these terms. New journalism also introduced sport, comics, trivial news, and topics of general interests, especially aimed at women, since then part of the «target market» of press conglomerates by virtue of their purchasing power. The content of newspapers became increasingly irrational, with less political news and more titbits, gossips, scoops and specials. Discursive phenomena such as scandal, sensationalism and emotionalism began to appear as well. Private lives of public men, for instance, began to be a matter of interest for journalists. As soon as the technique was mastered by the daily press, newspapers were printed with more illustrations and images. Articles were shorter

[14]The process of depoliticisation of the mediatic discourse which is mentioned here should not be confused with de-ideologisation. First, the phenomenon of depoliticisation refers to a discursive fact at the manifest level of texts. For instance, an increase in the proportion of sport news is considered as indicative of a process of depoliticisation of a textual class, whatever the ideologies materialised in the sport pages of a newspaper. Less politics does not mean less ideology. Second, it refers to the specific relationship to politics that many newspapers developed during the second half of the XIXth century. But it is not asserted that these newspapers were apolitical or politically neutral.

and special sections to attract advertisers, such as fashion and travel, were created. Typographically, layouts became more flashy, bold headlines on four columns and one page display commercials appeared. Another important aspect of new journalism was its claim to speak for the «public opinion» in general. The publicists of the XIXth century openly conceived their role as the propagandist of a specific social group or fraction of a class. This is not the case with new journalists. They claimed to be «neutral» and «objective», and to represent public opinion *in-toto*. Their discourse was presented as universally valid and their ideology representative of the «general» public. These discursive changes were perceptible enough for the first critics of journalism to appear. In 1887, Matthew Arnold wrote: "It [new journalism] has much to recommend it; it is full of ability, novelty, variety, sensation, sympathy, generous instincts; its one great fault is that it is *feather-brained*. It throws out assertions at a venture because it wishes them true; does not correct either them or itself, if they are false; and to get at the state of things as they truly are seems to feel no concern whatever" (Arnold, 1887: 638). These discursive changes represent discursive phenomena which define a particular textual class. For this reason, the mediatic discourse can be contrasted to public texts.

A last illustration of the opposition of the two textual classes, is given by the short and anachronistic history of a Parisian newspaper, *Libération*. It was launched in April 1973 by three men, one of whom was Jean-Paul Sartre. It started as a Maoist newspaper, made, according to Sartre, "by the people and for the people" (Bellanger, 1976: 411). With modest production costs and the help of voluntary workers, it escaped market constraints for a while. The discursive production of its journalists was comparable to public texts in the sense that these journalists did not belong to the mediatic field and wrote with the explicit intention of propagating a dissident political point of view. Facing financial difficulties in the late 1970s, the daily was relaunched in May 1981. Since this date the tone of the paper changed, and *Libération* became what it is today: a middle class tabloid either privileging sensational information, such as trials, crimes and sex scandals, or adopting a sensational approach for more consequential news. Two decades were enough for *Libération* to be completely transformed, for its Maoists to become journalists, and to produce mediatic texts. The transformation was due to market constraints, more precisely, to the economic constraints created by competitive economic relationships. The rapidity of this change indicates how much market conditions influence the production of the discourse produced by journalists, and how much, therefore, it is important to relate this discourse to its conditions of production if this discourse is to be appropriately interpreted.

III

At this stage, it becomes necessary to clarify some terminology. It may be noted that the «mediatic discourse» could also be called the «journalistic discourse». The qualifying adjective, «mediatic» rather than «journalistic», affords the possibility of laying emphasis on the conditions of production rather than on the producers of the mediatic textual class, the journalists. It underlines the fact that the dynamic of economic struggles within the mediatic field is extremely present in journalistic labour. Journalists are, among cultural producers, those whose discursive production is the most restricted and oriented by the economic constraints of the field to which they belong. Because of this, «mediatic» expresses, better than «journalistic», the importance of the field as a force determining journalists' discursive production.

A second clarification concerns the term «discourse». Since this thesis focuses on the press, it could be asked why it is necessary to call the «mediatic press» the «mediatic discourse». «Discourse» rather than «press» underlines the fact that the mediatic discourse concerns all media[15]. This statement needs however to be qualified. On the one hand, the social and economic conditions of production

[15]The difference between the concepts mediatic discourse and media was treated in chapter III - section I. The term «media» is used here to refer to the press, the radio, and the television. It designates the three main media of the mediatic field.

are similar for the three main media (press, radio and television). Indeed, the constraints of competition for a readership or an audience are the same, and this implies that the basic economic rules of production are similar for the press and broadcasting media. This explains that most discursive phenomena which characterised the mediatic discourse as produced by the press before 1922 may also be observed in other media during the subsequent period. On the other hand, the technical specificity of each medium and their different time of entry into the mediatic field means that each of these media evolve in different legislative environments. These particular legislative environments modify the way market forces determine the journalistic labour in certain areas of the mediatic field. So, if it remains true that it is not technique but the nature of the relations of production which determine the boundaries and nature of the mediatic discourse, the discursive production of journalists may nevertheless differ in some aspects as a consequence of the medium in which they work. The transformation of the public discourse into the mediatic one, however, occurred when the press was the only existing medium, and it is on this period that this thesis focuses. The spatial and temporal limits of this research, however, are not those of the mediatic discourse, which could be examined, geographically and historically, in a broader perspective.

IV

Market economy, and more precisely the development of competitive relationships generated by this historical mode of organisation of social and economic exchanges, modified agents' discursive practices. These conditions of emergence and of existence of the mediatic textual class have been examined in the framework of the first methodological principle, externality. From the perspective of this principle, coherence, these economic constraints constitute the general rules of production which tend to homogenise journalists' discursive production and which transform the texts they produce into a homogeneous sociological entity - a discourse - different from the texts which formed the public textual class. The mediatic texts form a coherent class because they are produced by agents whose discursive practices are relatively homogeneous, being determined by the same rules of production. As long as publicists had a function in political life, as long as the press was a part of the public sphere, they produced public texts. Publicists modified their discursive practices (and became journalists) when they (and the newspapers they wrote for) lost their primary political function. The public newspaper was a *medium* of diffusion of the political line of the social group/social class. Progressively however, mediatic production became an economic-oriented practice, and texts became *commodities* for their producers, for whom their *exchange value* became more important than their *use value. It was this subordination of discursive practices to economic exchange which transformed the function of the discursive production of the press, at first a purely political one, into an economic one; which metamorphosed the public discourse and created a new textual class.* Many properties of the mediatic discourse may be comprehended from the fact that the texts which compose it are commodities produced by an industry. The economic status of the mediatic discourse does not prevent its texts from being heavily ideological, or, whatever their degree of ideologisation, from having strong ideological effects. It is simply argued that mediatic texts, independently of the political ideologies their producers support, cannot be defined according to their political role. This is because this function ceased to be at the same time the ultimate objective of journalists' discursive production and to constitute the rules of production of their texts. The mediatic discourse is produced in a schema - money - commodity (newspaper) - money - and this situation created discursive phenomena which are proper to this textual class.

To conclude on the principle of coherence, the fluidity of the empirical line between the two textual classes has to be underlined. As concrete entities sociologically defined, these two textual classes cannot be materially divided. It cannot be said, for instance, that before 1880 the press was public, and after that mediatic only. It is always difficult to define the limits of concepts which designate a class of phenomena. These concepts, in spite of the fluidity of the line of demarcation between them, attempt nevertheless to convey the idea of a rupture against that of a historical continuity. In the same way that the fluidity of the limit between childhood and adulthood does not mean that children never become adult, similarly, just because the division between the two textual classes is not as neat as between two material units, it does not mean that these two classes are not distinct and internally coherent.

III: Third Methodological Principle: Specificity

I

Finally, a discourse must be apprehended in its *specificity*. In many ways, this principle is common to the sociological discipline as a whole. Durkheim was careful to outline the specific characteristics of the social facts he described. In his study on primitive religion, he took care to define religion and to distinguish it from other adjacent religious phenomena (cult, rite, religious beliefs, and magic) (Durkheim, 1915: 47). It is from this definition that he criticised other theories of religion, and that he attempted to understand the function of religion in society (Durkheim, 1915: 48). From this principle he made a general and abstract methodological rule: "For a positive social science to exist", explained Durkheim, the "distinctive characteristics of sociological facts" must be discovered (Durkheim, 1975: 38, my translation).

If the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* is regarded as an pioneering piece of sociological research, it may be because Weber was able to outline the historical specificity of capitalism, or because he was successful in his attempt to "explain genetically the special peculiarity of [modern] Occidental rationalism" (Weber, 1985: 26). Weber realised that the distinctive capitalist characteristics were not the greed for gain, or even the pursuit of profit, but rather the "rational tempering of this irrational impulse" (1985: 17), the economic exchange based on the "peaceful chances of profit" (1985: 17) and the "certainty of calculations" (1985: 25). He outlined the origin of the capitalist organisation of an economy (money considered as a transcendence by the Protestant ethic), and its consequences: the "rational organization of free labour" (1985: 24), and the progressive and increasing rationalisation of an economy in general.

Structuralists have been the heirs of this principle, and it is common to Saussure, Barthes, Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, and Bourdieu. An aspect of the structuralist method consists in the search for the differences between the related terms which form a structure: in understanding what makes a term different from the other terms of the structure, a scientist is able to outline the specificity of this term. Everything depends on where these differences are located. Saussure placed them between signs of language, Barthes between signs of a message, Lévi-Strauss between different myths, Foucault between different discourses (texts) belonging to a same discursive formation, and Bourdieu between social classes, and more precisely between their respective aesthetic, the cultural difference, or distinction.

If the need to explain a social fact in its specificity is easily understandable, the method to achieve this goal is more problematic. To this debate, the answer of the sociology of discourse is that it is in the historicity of a textual class (historicity due to the historical character of the social relationships that its texts reflect and are the product of) that the specificity of this textual class is to be found.

II

The first step to be taken in order to discover the distinctive elements of a textual class is to see the texts which compose it as social and symbolic constructions. This idea is today well accepted concerning news, printed or broadcast, but it does not seem to have a real effect on the economy of the scientific discourse on media. If taken seriously, this assumption means that the explanation of the meaning of a text resides out of the text.

If a text is a socially constructed object, the analysis of the mediatic discourse must be based on the *social and material origins* of these texts on the one hand, and on the other, on the *symbolic materialisation* of these origins within the texts. It means that the basis of the philological analysis is the mode of production (of construction) of a text at these two successive levels. The background assumption of the link between the methodological principle of specificity and the analysis of the mode of production is that, to describe a textual class in its specificity, its texts must be related to *the singularity of the historical and social situation in which they are produced*. The concepts with which texts are analysed should not, therefore, autonomise texts from concrete history, as it is constantly the case in semiology and content analysis. The specific properties of a text or of a class of texts are lost sight of if philologists forget that they are products of history. One example may illustrate this methodological necessity.

The example is an article of McQuail (1977). Examining the "effectiveness" of a political campaign, he divided the factors that influence its success into three categories: the factors that have to do with the "audience", those to do with the "message", and those relating to the "system of distribution". In the second set of factors, McQuail distinguished five qualities of the message that make a campaign successful. First, the message should be "unambiguous and relevant to its audience" (McQuail, 1977: 79). Second, an "informative campaign seems more likely to be successful than the campaign to change attitudes or opinions" (1977: 79). Third, "subject matter which is more distant and more novel, least subject to prior definitions and outside immediate experience, responds best to treatment by the campaign" (1977: 79-80). Fourth, the campaign which allows "some immediate response in action is most likely to be effective" (1977: 80). Fifth, "repetition can be mentioned as a probable contributor to effect" (1977: 80).

These statements are, *mutatis mutandis,* acceptable for all types of human communication. Indeed, "campaign" (or "message") can be supplanted with «order», and "audience" may be supplanted with «dog», and McQuail's theory still remains valid. It is true that a dog obeys better when it receives a clear and "unambiguous" order. Second, it is also true that it is rather difficult to change the attitudes of an animal. Third, the absence of "outside immediate experience" of a dog to the order of its master is what characterises this type of relationship, and what makes the happiness of the owner. Fourth, it is obvious that the dog must be able to give an "immediate response" to the order. Finally, to repeat an order to a dog can as a matter of fact increase the probability of answer. Thus, McQuail's contribution is as pertinent for dog owners as for sociologists of media. Nothing, in his comment, is specific to the mediatic discourse, and its distinctive elements remain unknown. It is these elements which must be discovered however if the mediatic discourse is to be properly understood. How can we remedy this lack of specificity in the analysis?

The cause of this lack of specificity is due to the fact that the concepts McQuail uses abstract the mediatic discourse from concrete history. A text however is *his-story,* in the double sense that it is the product of the history of a field and that the story that narrates a text is also the story of the history of its producer in this field. Indeed, both the regularities of the field of production and the specificity of the position of the producer in the field determine the properties of his or her text. At an intertextual level, the history and the structure of a field only are important to understand the philological properties of the class of texts itself.

The specificity of the mediatic textual class is largely due to the emergence during the second half of the XIXth century of a *cast* of professional writers specialised in the daily transmission of information. At an intertextual level, it is fundamental to realise that this cast is organised as a *field* of discursive production. At a textual level, the field itself is important, and one must also bear in mind that the individual characteristics of a journalist are less important than the fact that he or she is a journalist; that he or she is an agent who occupies a specific position in the mediatic field.

III

It may be useful, therefore, to explain which aspects of the concept of field are used in this research. Bourdieu's main source of inspiration for this concept is Weber (Bourdieu, 1987: 63). It is however from a Marxist perspective that the concept is here applied to describe this new cast. There are indeed at least two common points between Marx's descriptions of a social class and Bourdieu's explanations of a social field. Marx set two conditions to the constitution of a social class, and these two conditions help to understand four of the common properties of fields.

First, to form a social class individuals living in the same economic conditions must be linked by various relationships, must form a community, and must organise themselves politically. The French peasantry of the 1850s for instance, being far from fulfilling these conditions, were thus unable to represent themselves politically, and elected Bonaparte on 10 December 1848 (Marx, 1979: 186-187). Individuals form a class if and only if there is a common struggle to concretely unite them. This first rule is re-conducted at the level of the field, and implies two of its sociological characteristics that are of particular interest for the mediatic field. These characteristics are the defence of collective interests and the collective definition of stakes in struggles. These two characteristics of a field concern the interrelation between different fields.

I.1) Agents are often, explicitly or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously, engaged in a defence or promotion of their collective interests as member of a field. Members of a field need to protect the interests of the field they belong to, and this often implies that they have to enter into conflict with other adjacent social fields. The history of the advertising field over the past four decades constitutes a good illustration of this phenomenon. Although advertisers are in competition with each other to attract clients, collectively, they fought on several battlefields. Advertisers had to prove the efficiency of an advertising campaign among reticent industrials; to establish its economic utility to the business and financial field; to demonstrate to a hostile part of public opinion that advertising was more than a means to sell, but an art which was worthy of admiration; and finally, to protect its interests by lobbying parliaments (not always successfully) when a government legislated to restrict the scope of advertising for certain products (alcohol or tobacco). Over these last forty years, advertisers have been developing an impressive range of arguments and strategies to impose themselves and advertising on society.

The defence of field interests is more apparent during the *heroic phase* of the social history of a field. The struggles for power and recognition of the mediatic field provoked violent conflicts with other fields, in particular the political one. The purely *journalistic invention* of the press as a fourth estate, i.e. as an autonomous source of power, had a central function in promoting the interests of the mediatic field. For this reason, it met for several decades after its appearance, in the 1850s, the hostility of politicians. They judged as pretentious journalists' claims to power and independence. The notion of a fourth estate first appeared as the title of a history of the press published by an editor of the *Daily News* in 1850 (Hunt, 1850). Two years later, the notion became even more public with two leaders of *The Times* articulating the idea on two axes. The first was the strategy of attributing to the state and the fourth estate two different roles: "The purpose and the duties of the two powers are constantly separate, generally independent, sometimes diametrically opposite" (*The Times*, 6 February 1852). More specifically, the journalist, contrary to the statesman, has neither a practical function nor an executive duty. Without this constraint, his role becomes "the same as that of the historian": to "seek out truth" (7 February 1852). To the dignity of the function of guardian of truth, *The Times* added the claim to possess political power. Indeed, the writer of these leaders claimed for the press a certain political influence, with the «duty» not only to inform but to form public opinion: "Destined, as we believe the press to be, to occupy a position of continually increasing importance, and to exercise a power over the formation of public opinion compared with which its present influence is but slight, ..." (7 February 1852). If *The Times* could declare its independence, it is because, in the 1850s, it had enough revenue from sales and advertisements and did not need, as few years before, governmental bribes and political party's subventions. So, this notion of fourth estate was used by the new cast of professional writers seeking not simply a legitimate basis for their cultural activities but an official recognition of the existence of the new emerging field. In sum, the hostility that the notion of fourth estate met with and the early appearance in the history of the mediatic field of the equation it represents («fourth estate = autonomy + power») demonstrate its central position in the defence of the collective interests of the field.

I.2) Once the struggle is engaged in against other fields, the agents of the same field attempt, collectively, to define the *stakes* at play in the inter-field struggles and also attempt to define the boundary marks within which these struggles should evolve. Collectively, the agents of a field strive to create a symbolic representation of these struggles. When Bourdieu writes that the stakes of struggles reside in the definitions of the legitimate stakes, he makes reference to the symbolic struggles which try to predeterminate the outcome of the conflict (Bourdieu, 1984b: 244-252). The symbolic defence of the mediatic field in which journalists are collectively involved, and the symbolic efficacy of this symbolic defence, should not be underestimated. As a whole, the mediatic field has been successful in fixing the boundaries within which the debate on media took place. Journalists for instance influenced the scientific discourse on media. Many sociologists, such as content analysts, oriented their research on journalism on the basis of the terms chosen by the mediatic field. This is notably the case in the bias question; the degree of objectivity/subjectivity of journalists. Who else but journalists claim that their discourse is objective? So, with the bias debate, not only did sociologists make considerable efforts to discuss the claims journalists made about their own discursive production, but they made them in journalists' terms. Whether sociologists agree with these claims is not the issue: journalists have largely defined the limits and the terms of the debate. Sociologists who attempt to criticise journalists on the ground of subjectivity remain within the limits of the debate as defined by the mediatic field. As already suggested (chapter II - section II), the concept of field allows us to understand the notion of objectivity as being itself socially produced by the mediatic field, and allows us to examine the social production of this notion. Within the framework of the symbolic defence of a field, with the notion of field, sociologists can attempt to comprehend why the agents of a field need to pretend that they write objectively or neutrally by claiming to be above or beside particular interests; why they find many advantages in defining the stakes at play in these terms.

The second characteristic of a class which is common to a field is internal to the class or field. It is the existence of competitive struggles between members of the same class. At the same time, wrote Marx, "separate individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class, ... they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors" (Marx & Engels, 1965b: 68-69). In a field, the notion of competition is enlarged to the one of struggle. These struggles between agents also create a second internal characteristic of fields, the *illusio.*

II.1) Transposed to the notion of field, these competitive relationships become internal struggles for recognition, legitimacy, prestige, privilege, or power, between agents or groups of agents within the field. Agents also compete against each other to maintain their position or to take a position. These agents, in struggles, employ different strategies as a function of the amount of cultural, social, or economic capital they possess, as a function of the position they occupy and the one they want to reach, and as a function of the rules of the field. In one sentence, a field is a permanent *universe of* *struggles* where battles occur in a network of positions, strategies, interests, stakes and capitals.

II.2) The internal struggles in which the members of a field are engaged constitute one of the reasons for which, within each field, there is a state of *connivance*: "All people who are engaged in a field have in common a certain number of fundamental interests, i.e., everything which is linked to the existence itself of the field: from this results an objective complicity which is implicit to all antagonisms. ... Those who participate in the struggle contribute to the reproduction of the game by contributing, more or less, depending on the field, to the belief in the value of the stakes" (Bourdieu, 1984a: 115, my translation). This connivance is almost similar to the *illusio*, or the fact that the agents of a field, while participating in a game and investing time and money in it also tacitly recognise the game itself, its rules, its stakes and its utility (Bourdieu, 1992b: 137-145, 316-321)

III.1: Capitalism and Specificity

I

From the standpoint of the sociology of discourse, the mode of production of a text and of a class of texts is a matter of interest as long as it contributes to explain the sense of the texts which compose a particular textual class. From this perspective, the concept of field has the advantage, compared to those of apparatus and system, of providing a satisfactory framework for the central hypothesis of this research, i.e. that the discursive phenomena which characterise mediatic texts are caused by economic competition between text producers.

Within the mediatic field, struggles occur at three different levels. First, agents struggle for positions within the same institution (several journalists within a newspaper hope to become news-editor). Second, collective producers compete against each others within a same market (competition between quality papers, between tabloids). Third, there are also competitive struggles between different types of producer (between tabloids and television). Struggles between agents are relatively autonomous from economic stakes. At the market level however, struggles are reduced to their economic dimension. They become *competitive struggles,* in which the main force is economic capital and the main stake economic profit. Dominant and dominated positions within the same market, e.g. the popular market, may be rated in economic terms, such as the percentage of market shares. Personal rivalries within an institution are important at a textual level. From a historical perspective however, i.e., in an analysis whose objective is to compare two different textual classes, the public and mediatic one, the economic aspect of these struggles is the chief determinant factor. What is pertinent, at an intertextual level, and what differentiates the mediatic textual class from other discourses, is that its texts are the product of *conflictual relations of production. Economic competition* between collective agents within the mediatic field, a specific form of struggle, is what determined and determines the *being-in-itself* (*Ansichsein*) of the mediatic textual class.

It is this dynamic which the concept of field incorporates, and which makes it philologically more useful than the concepts of apparatus or system (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992a: 102-104). What is achieved with these concepts is the reification of the mediatic reality. The "communications Ideological State Apparatuses (press, radio and television, etc.)" (Althusser, 1984: 17) is a notion which reduces the mediatic discourse to its ideology and makes impossible an analysis of the production of this ideology. Texts are weapons that agents use in their strategies in different struggles. It is the particularity of these strategies which continuously create and recreate *intertextual discursive phenomena* that form the specificity of a textual class. With the notion of apparatus, it is impossible to examine how texts (ideology for Althusser) are produced, because the concept does not allow the introduction, into the analysis of discourse, of the agents and their struggles.

Althusser's structuralism is as ahistorical as the technicism of McLuhan or the systemism of the American functionalism. Although Althusser would ideologically disagree with either technicists or functionalists, they end with the same reification of the media. This is because in these abstract models there is no room for the concrete historical relationships in which agents produce their texts. Both the «message» (a concept used by both technicists and functionalists) and the structural ideology belong to theoretical models which evacuate historical agents from mediatic discursive production. From their perspective, the media is a no man's land. The concept of economic struggle, on the contrary, gives a role to agents since they are involved in these struggles. It is with this notion that the mediatic production may be understood historically since this concept designates a concrete and historical form of relationship of production generated by a historically located mode of production. Competitive relations of production are historical inasmuch these relations of production are specific to capitalism. Unlike the economy of a modern market, it cannot be said for instance that the economy of a medieval fief is characterised by relationships of competition. Economic competition is the *motor of evolution* of capitalist societies. It is when Marx analysed competition that, for the first time, in 1845, he used the term of *Überbau* (superstructure): "The great revolution of society brought about by competition, which transformed relations of the bourgeois to one another and to the proletarians into purely monetary relations, and converted all the above-named «sanctified goods» into articles of trade, and which destroyed for the proletarians all naturally derived and traditional relations, e.g., family and political relations, together with their entire ideological superstructure - this mighty revolution did not, of course, come from Germany" (Marx & Engels, 1965b: 406).

Accumulation of capital and concentration of the means of production, monopolies and globalisation, are some of the historical outcomes of competition. Another consequence is the appearance, during the XIXth century, of increasingly autonomous fields of production. Many fields have been formed through the economic struggles to sell commodities in a market. The intensity of these struggles forced the producers into an increasing rationalisation of their process of production. This rationalisation of the process of production involves several of the mechanisms which create fields. Among them, there is the fact that to gain shares in a market agents must invest a great amount of energy and capital. The level of investment necessary to gain shares continuously increases because competitors, to gain a productive advantage over their rivals, or to improve the product they offer to consumers, incessantly improve the tools of production. For this reason, the productive tasks become increasingly difficult to perform and the products delivered to the market increasingly sophisticated. After a certain period, different for each field, the limits of the field are defined by a) those who can sustain the necessary amount of investment to pursue the struggle b) those who are able to perform complex tasks and deliver sophisticated products. The evolution of the process of production of a daily newspaper is a good illustration. By the end of the XIXth century, the production of a daily newspaper was much more complex than half a century earlier. More information had to be gathered by reporters, journalists, special correspondents, more pages and more copies had to be printed. What a handful of men could produce in the 1830s required, by the 1890s, several hundreds employees.

Because the mediatic field is determined by economic struggles it does not mean that it is not autonomous. On the contrary, its autonomy increases with the intensity of the struggles between agents and institutions (newspapers) for a market. The process of autonomisation may be further illustrated by analogy with a school of small fish. If two slices of bread are thrown at a school of fish, two movements may be observed. The first is that the school divides itself as the fishes are attracted by the slices of bread. The second is that these two groups of fish are much more dense than the school previously was. The school is metamorphosed into two compact balls of fish striving to have a bite of bread. These two movements illustrate the process of autonomisation of the fields because of the struggles that animate them. The intensity of competition for a market (the slice of bread) creates a concentration of forces and energies which agents employ to gain market shares.

From an economic and reductive perspective therefore, a field is constituted by the specialists who produce a certain type of goods, such as newspapers, for a certain market, such as England. Struggles for domination, or more simply for life within these fields, is the motor of their transformation and the reason of their autonomisation. In a similar way the fishes struggling for bread formed two balls, because of the forces and the particular logic of their internal struggles, fields follow their own and specific rules of evolution.

So, the fact which distinguishes the mediatic discourse from other textual classes and which defines its historical specificity is that, for the first time, a discourse, is a product of economically determined relationships. To focus, as Marxists and some content analysts do, on the ideology of mediatic discourse, is to mistake the nature of this textual class. Bourgeois ideology is not what defines the specificity of the mediatic discourse, even though the mediatic discourse is, indeed, pervaded by bourgeois ideology. As will be developed in the next chapter, the texts of the public discourse were more class «biased», more ideologically aggressive, and more politically determined than those of the mediatic textual class. This latter obeys market laws more than the dynamic of class conflicts, even though class struggles are also mediated by market principles[16]. As it will be shown in the chapter on the genesis of the mediatic discourse (chapter VII), the discursive phenomena which characterise the texts which compose this textual class will not be explained if they are not related to competitive struggles. *Felix potuit rerum causas cognoscere*: economic competition, not a pure will to

[16]This runs counter to Habermas's argument for whom, in capitalism, the "market also serves the function of stabilizing class relations" (Habermas, 1987: 169). My statement is substantiated in chapter VII - section I.3 (*Discourse, Labour and Capital*).

indoctrination, is the cause of the philological properties of the texts which form the mediatic textual class. It is economic competition which explains the essence of the mediatic discourse and the sense of its texts. If the fact that the mediatic discourse is a product of economic competitive relationships is forgotten, if the *great transformation* is not taken into account in the analysis of the texts of this discourse, this discourse cannot be understood in its specificity.

II

Although it is argued that the mediatic discourse cannot be apprehended from the concept of ideology, one of the defining elements of the mediatic discourse is nevertheless the ideologies its texts embody. Too much research on media, however, has focused on ideology, and has therefore failed to recognise that this theoretical perspective is not adequate to comprehend the nature of mediatic texts. Ideologists cannot comprehend the mediatic discourse in its being-in-itself, in the entirety of its properties. There are two reasons for this. First, the mediatic discourse, as any textual class, cannot be reduced to the ideology its texts convey. There are other things in these texts than mere ideology. There are discursive phenomena for instance which also need to be examined. Second, the mediatic discourse is not the only materialisation that the dominant ideology can take. Marxist analysts for instance do not explain how bourgeois ideology is specifically articulated in the mediatic discourse. The ideology of the bourgeoisie is conveyed in many ways, and in many places: "The press is the most dynamic part of this ideological structure, but not the only one. Everything which influences or is able to influence public opinion, directly or indirectly, belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds, even architecture and the layout and names of streets" (Gramsci, 1985: 389).

What must be examined, therefore, is the specific way the ideology of the dominant class is materialised in the mediatic discourse. The first element of the answer is the fact that journalists and other agents of the mediatic field, (except the journalistic and managerial elite of the field), by their social origins, by their educational background, and by their incomes, three classic sociological indicators, belong to the small and middle bourgeoisie. The first of these independent variables, the social origins, may be taken as an illustration. Since a field exists before individuals take the decision to enter it, individuals have an image of the field that can be either attractive or repulsive. In other words, once the field exists, some individuals choose to enter it according to the opinion, realistic or not, that they have of the field. The individuals who have the wider probability of having a positive image of the field and so of deciding to enter the field are those whose dispositions are as close as possible to the values of the field. That is, journalists are recruited among the members of the social class who feel an affinity between themselves and the values proposed by the field. So, it has been established by survey in 1970 that "over half" the students of the two largest journalist training centres came from "lower-middle and upper-middle white-collar backgrounds" (Classes II and III), and 9 per cent from "senior executive/managerial/professional backgrounds" (Class I) (Boyd-Barrett, 1970: 187). The following percentages on the social origins of journalists (profession of the father) are more recent but concern French journalists (Cayrol, 1991: 192):

Farmers	3.5%
Workers, employees	21.2%
Intermediate professions	15.1%
Industrials, businessmen	18.1%
Executive managers, liberal professions, journalists	42.1%

These statistics, whose categories are far from perfect, are dynamically confirmed, in principle, by Bourdieu. Explaining the transformations of social space, he mentions that the children of the bourgeoisie who, by their lack of diploma, are threatened with social decline, guide themselves towards newer, less determined, less rigid professions, such as the artistic and cultural professions. Advertising, marketing, media, are the fields of predilection of those who, by these reconversion strategies, strive to "escape downclassing and to return to their class trajectory" (Bourdieu, 1984b: 147).

This social origin of journalists lead some sociologists to see in mediatic texts the reflection of the ideology of the new small and middle bourgeoisie. Beaud's research is a typical example of sociological research taking as a starting point the social class to which media producers belong (1984). His central hypothesis is that the media is a middle class institution, corresponding to the entry of the new petty bourgeoisie into the public sphere. He relates this hypothesis to the question of media effects. Media power, for Beaud, consists in the capacity to define the social and political situation, to delimit the legitimate questions and ideas, in one word, to define reality. The mediatic representation of reality is that of the new small bourgeoisie, who, by this means, achieve influence over the political decisions affecting its own social needs. The characteristics of this representation are that it dissimulates the political stakes by depoliticising them, and establishes a political consensus by using the apparent neutrality of the cultural sphere. The symbolic power accorded to the small bourgeoisie - an "intermediary elite" - is only a power of delegation, since this class largely speaks on behalf of the bourgeoisie as well. So, since the bourgeois representation of reality contributes to transform the world in the way the bourgeoisie want it, "one has to talk about the words as class stakes", about media as a "dynamic of social legitimation" (Beaud, 1984: 293, my translation).

Beaud belongs to the contemporary Marxist tradition, and stands close to sociologists such as Mills (1951; 1967: 577-598) or Habermas (1992), who attempted to conceptualise the symbolic means of legitimation of the actual social order, and the different strategies pursued by collective actors to protect or reinforce their positions within capitalist society. Paul Beaud, similar to these sociologists, insists on the social class which control mediatic institutions, on the ideological aspect of the texts their agents produce, and the political influence they may have. Although these authors have successfully demonstrated that media plays an important role in the legitimation of class power, two main problems may be identified in this research tradition.

1) There is a missing variable without which they are unable to examine the peculiar way the media legitimates this class power. The bourgeois representation of the world is mediated by the specific forces of the mediatic field. The arbitrariness of this social class is mediated by the dynamic and internal logic of the field, which has as much influence on the discursive production of the agents of the field as the class they belong to. So, both the regularities of the mediatic field, and the fact that most agents of this field belong to some strata of the bourgeoisie, are important in understanding the ideological aspect of the mediatic discourse. One of the tasks of the empirical research is to examine how the political and cultural arbitrariness of the bourgeoisie is specifically articulated in the mediatic discourse[17]. The *political* arbitrariness of the mediatic discourse designates the fact that mediatic texts depict the world and report facts and events politically from, and for, a bourgeois point of view. The *cultural* arbitrariness is a concept which refers to the fact that the bourgeoisie, and the fractions of the social class who possess the monopoly of expression in the media, impose their own world vision, life style, or collective existential preoccupations, upon other social groups, notably the most dominated ones. The term *ideological arbitrariness* could be used sometimes as a synonym for ideology. It would refer to both the cultural and political arbitrariness of mediatic texts.

2) However important this ideological arbitrariness is, it is not the cause of the evolution of the mediatic textual class, but the outcome of the relative positions that agents occupy in the social structure. This also explains why the concept of ideology cannot explain either why or how bourgeois ideology materialises into a specific symbolic form, the mediatic discourse. For this reason, to apprehend the mediatic discourse *via* the ideology its texts convey

[17]Arbitrariness is used here in the sense defined by Bourdieu. Cf. for example Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990: XIX-XXII, 5-11.

prevents sociologists from understanding the specificity of this textual class. Both the notions of field and economic competition are necessary to accomplish this task, since these economic struggles are the most determining influence of the nature of the texts the agents of the mediatic field produce. It is these struggles which give its historicity to this textual class, which differentiates it from other discourses. Unlike the neo-Marxist research tradition, or the American empiricists (e.g. Lazarsfeld, 1948), who focus on the presumed effects of the mediatic discourse, the sociology of discourse attempts to comprehend this class of texts from a causal perspective. It is necessary to examine the causes of phenomena to understand their nature and eventually their effects. Conversely however, a teleological explanation cannot deduce, from the effects, either the cause or the nature itself of phenomena. This being said, we may now attempt to go through the history of the British press from the perspective of the «motor» of its evolution.

PART III
THE MEDIATIC DISCOURSE

CHAPTER V
THE FALL OF THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE

These last chapters attempt to explain the media in terms which have been previously defined. With the principle of coherence, a rupture can be created in the history of the press between the public and mediatic discourses. This chapter briefly examines some of the economic, social and legal aspects of the conditions of production of the public discourse. It should be observed that the main purpose of the presentation of this class of texts is to provide a point of comparison with the mediatic discourse. So, the public discourse is analysed as briefly as possible. For instance, neither the genesis of the public textual class nor its relationship to either the proletarian or middle class public sphere can be examined at sufficient length. This being said, this chapter is organised in the following way:

The first section (I - I.1.3) deals with the taxes levied on newspapers. I.1.3 concerns the effect they had on the press, namely, that they prevented agents from engaging in economic struggles, and created an illegal press evading the taxes. The second section (II - II.2) describes the philological characteristics of the class of texts - the public discourse - publicists produced before economic competition determined the discursive production of journalists. What is idiosyncratic about this discourse is the fact that the texts which compose it are governed by *the principle of publicity*. Public texts have the purpose either to propagate, intentionally and explicitly, political ideologies, this is the *ideological* aspect of their function of publicity (II.1), or to make public facts and information relevant to public life, and this is the *practical* aspect of the same function (II.2).

The title of the chapter anticipates the fate of this class of texts, whose slow decline started in the 1850s, when these taxes were repealed.

I: The Pre-Market Press

The pre-capitalist period of the press is characterised by direct governmental restraints. Libel laws and heavy duties were the two major forms of control (I.1.1). The «taxes on knowledge», first raised in 1712 but maintained for one hundred and fifty years, were intended to make pamphlets and newspapers too expensive for the large majority of people (I.1.2). Because the newspaper was a commodity over-taxed and therefore unable to reach its natural price, this prevented the formation of a market of readers for which press-owners would had had to compete (I.1.3.).

I.1: The Taxes on Knowledge

I.1.1: The Taxes on Knowledge and the Freedom of the Press

Following the general settlement of 1688, the pre-censorship era of the press ceased in 1695. For two decades, public opinion enjoyed a relative freedom of expression, and the habit of newspaper reading began to become widespread. Faced with an increasing flow of critics stemming from the press, itself growing in importance, the government had to find new means to coerce it. Queen Anne's Tory ministers soon found the solution by levying several taxes on newspapers, pamphlets and books. These taxes, along with other measures, such as libel laws and security deposits, were maintained by successive governments, with the intention of restricting and controlling the activities of publicists.

The fact that coercion constitutes the political objective of these taxes was illustrated by the repressive Six Acts of 1819 (60 Geo. III cap. 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 & 9). These acts, promulgated in the aftermath of the Peterloo massacre (on 16 August 1819 in St. Peter's Fields) formed the legal ground on which the suppression of revolts was intensified in the early 1820s. Two of these acts concerned public writings. 60 Geo. III. cap. 8 aimed at the "more effectual prevention and punishment of blasphemous [religious] and seditious [political] libels". Sentences included banishment from the British Empire, or, if the banished was still within the dominions forty days after the sentence, transportation. 60 Geo. III. cap. 9 fortified the tax-system imposed upon newspapers. Moreover, it also strengthened the security system. The deposits that publishers had to give to the Baron of the Exchequer to register their publications were increased by £100, to reach £200 out of London, and £300 within twenty miles of the capital. The preamble to the act, using terms similar to chapter 8, made clear the intentions of the legislator; to suppress pamphlets and papers, which, "containing observations upon public events and occurrences, tending to excite hatred and contempt of the government ... have lately been published in great numbers, and at very small prices".

If both acts had a similar objective, the means were different. Libel laws were aimed at the repression of the «abuses» of freedom of expression. Whereas taxes on knowledge were an attempt to limit the source of these abuses. By transforming newspapers into luxuries, they prevented the development of the press, greatly checked newspapers circulation, and distributed press freedom along class lines, in the sense that only a minority of people could afford to read, every day or every week, papers containing «news, intelligence, or occurrences».

I.1.2: The Origin of the Taxes on Knowledge

The XIXth century notion of «taxes on knowledge» refers to four different taxes, all created in 1712 by the government of Queen Anne. The first of these taxes which the 10 Anne cap. 19 levied was the *Newspaper Stamp Duty*. This duty, 1*d*. per sheet, was fixed at 1 1/2*d*. at the time of the American Revolution (1776). Pitt's government raised it by 1/2*d*. to make it 2*d*. in the year of the French

Revolution, 1789 (29 Geo. III cap. 50). In 1797 the duty was augmented by 75 per cent, and set at 3 1/2*d*. This augmentation led to a decline in circulation. In 1796, the net revenue from newspaper stamps was £152,161, and rose only to £180,240 in 1798 (Aspinall, 1949: 19). If the circulation had remained the same, with a 75 per cent increase in the duty, the revenue should have risen to £266,281. In 1815, (55 Geo. III cap. 185), the newspaper duty was increased for the last time. Fixed at 4*d*, it yielded the same year £383,695, £405,547 in 1819, and £476,501 in 1825 (Collet, 1933: 15). Putting the price of a stamped paper at 7*d*., it became definitively out of reach of the vast majority. The 1819 act did not modify the price of the duty, which remained the same up to 1836. The 60 Geo. III cap. 9, however, reinforced the act of 1815 by extending previous constraints and making subterfuges more difficult. One of the added points was a considerable extension of the notion of newspaper, including henceforth all periodicals appearing more frequently than once every twenty-six days. By this means, the 4*d*. tax could be imposed on all kinds of periodicals. After an epic battle in which, for the last time in the XIXth century, working and middle classes joined forces, the stamp was reduced in 1836 to 1*d*., before it was repealed altogether in June 1855.

The second tax was the *Pamphlet Duty*. Fixed at 2s. per sheet for pamphlets of less than six sheets in 1712, it did not increase until 1815, when it rose to 3s. per sheet. Collecting an insignificant amount of money after the 1819 extension of the newspaper duty to all periodicals, it was the first tax to be repealed in 1833.

The third tax was the *Advertisement Duty*. It was imposed on each advertisement published in a newspaper. The tax was 1*s*. per advertisement in 1712, 2*s*. in 1757, 2*s*. 6*d*. in 1780, 3*s*. in 1789, to reach 3*s*. 6*d*. in 1815 (Aspinall, 1949: 16). The tax was repealed in August 1853.

The fourth tax, of a different nature, was the *Excise Duty on Paper*. 34 varieties of paper were taxed by the 10 Anne cap. 19, and the duties varied from 2 to 15*s*. the ream according to quality. The strength of this tax is that it could not be easily evaded, since it was collected before the retailer sold the paper to newspapermen. This tax would have increased the cost of production of books, pamphlets and newspapers by 30 per cent. In spite of the 50 per cent reduction consented by the Melbourne government in 1836, it brought in more than a million pounds a year in revenue by the 1850s (Collet, 1933: 179-181). It is probably for this reason that is was the last duty to be repealed, in June 1861.

I.1.3: The Effects of the Taxes on the Press

I

These taxes had two consequences. The first was to retard the development of the press in England. Newspapers being sold at *7d.*, were out of reach of the bulk of the population. The law, in making freedom of public expression a privilege of merchants and landowners, restrained the press market to the tiny elite who reserved for themselves stamped papers. One may monitor in two ways the restrictive effects of these duties.

First, the number of dailies in London decreased during the five decades preceding the reduction in 1836 of the newspaper stamp from 4*d*. to 1*d*. In 1790, London numbered fourteen daily newspapers, in 1792, thirteen, and in 1795, fourteen (Andrews, 1859: 236). The year of the tax reduction, 1836, eleven dailies only, five morning and six evening newspapers, were numbered in London (Crawfurd, 1836: 27). While, therefore, the population was growing, the number of papers was declining.

Second, England may be compared with countries which did not levy taxes on newspapers. In the 1830s, London, with 1,500,000 inhabitants, had 11 dailies. Brussels, a capital of 70,000 people in a State of 4 millions, published 17 dailies. Paris, with 800,000 inhabitants, half the population of London, had 34 daily newspapers (Crawfurd, 1836: 28)[18]. The comparison with the United States is

[18]Since Crawfurd was an opponent of the taxes, the figures he provides have been checked with the other sources mentioned below.

interesting, as, precisely, one of the American grievances in the early 1770s was the newspaper duties. Charles Knight, a middle class publisher, claimed, in 1836, that American newspapers had a combined yearly circulation of 64 millions, compared to 28 for Great Britain, which had a much larger population at that time (Wiener, 1969: 8). In the latter country, 1 1/2 newspapers were published *per capita,* as against 6 in the United States (Wiener, 1969: 8). In 1775, there were 37 newspapers in the Thirteen Colonies. In 1810, when the population amounted to 6 millions, the number of newspapers increased tenfold, to reach 359. In 1828, it came to 851, and in 1834, to 1265[19] (Crawfurd, 1836: 29). So, when the number of dailies published in London between 1792 and 1836 decreased, the number of papers (dailies and weeklies) was multiplied by 34 in the United States between 1775 and 1834. Between 1810 and 1834, the total number of copies published in Great Britain in a year increased by 28 per cent, passing from 23,979,561 to 30,724,221[20], while during the same period, the total circulation of American papers went from 22,222,200 to 75,000,000 (Crawfurd, 1836: 29).

Comparison between the two countries focusing on dailies also produces some evidence of the negative effect of taxes on the development of the British press. London was, up to the 1840s, the only city in England to have dailies. In 1836, there were 16 daily papers in the United Kingdom, in comparison with 130 in America[21] (Crawfurd, 1836: 30). With a population of nearly 2 millions, there were 21 newspapers in New York State, compared with 11 in London, with a population of 1 million and a half. Manchester and New York were two cities of about the same size. Manchester had no papers published more often than once a week, and New York had, according to Crawfurd, ten (1836: 30). When James Gordon Bennett, however, launched his *Morning Herald,* in May 1835, he gave a list of fifteen other daily journals that the city then possessed (Seitz, 1928:

[19]Montgomery, writing his *Taxation of the British Empire* in 1833, counted 850 papers prior that year (Wiener, 1969: 8).
[20]Collet gave 33,050,000 stamped papers for 1829 (Collet, 1933: 28).
[21]Schudson numbers 65 dailies in America in 1830 and 138 in 1840 (Schudson, 1978: 13).

42). In 1836 therefore, the city of New York had almost the same number of dailies as the whole United Kingdom, Dublin included, where the taxes were half the English rate.

The advertisement duty also checked the development of the press. Since the price of advertisements in a newspaper were fixed at a prohibitive rate, this duty limited for most newspapers an important source of revenue. According to its opponents, this tax represented one of the most severe burdens on the development of commerce in general and of the press in particular. In the *Scotsman*, in 1828, a series of articles was published in which its author claimed that the "twelve New York daily newspapers published about 50 per cent more advertisements annually than all 244 newspapers in the United Kingdom" (Wiener, 1969: 12). The Scottish paper was probably not far from truth. In 1833, when the duty was reduced to 1*s*. 6*d*., the number of advertisements immediately increased by 35 per cent (Aspinall, 1950: 223).

Moreover, it was not simply the fact that the tax restricted the total number of advertisements. Since the few advertisements concentrated on the main papers, it increased the inequality in the distribution of revenue among newspapers. Between 1815 and 1818 (the data being similar for the two precedent decades), there were in London 78 newspapers, mostly weeklies, paying the advertisement duty. In 1818, of these 78 papers, 27 papers paid less than £50, 28 paid less than £100, 18 paid less than £500 pounds, and 7 newspapers paid duties between £899 (*Morning Advertiser*) and £1703 (*The Times*). The *Bell's Weekly Messenger* paid £938, the *Morning Post* £973, the *Morning Chronicle* £987, the *Traveller* £1,237 and the *Day* £1,558 (Aspinall, 1950: 233-234). So, the group of 55 newspapers paid a total amount of £1,585, and the 7 richest newspapers £8,295. In other words, when 70.5 per cent of newspapers paid 10 per cent of the total duty, 9 per cent of the journals paid 52 per cent of the advertisement duty.

II

The second consequence of the newspaper duties, indirect and unintended, was the creation of an illegal press evading the imposts: *the unstampeds*. The rise of the unstampeds was linked to the rise of the proletarian public sphere[22]. The industrial mode of production began to create a class of men and women whose relationship to this mode of production was so similar that they started, in the 1810s, to realise that they had common interests in spite of the differences between the trades they worked in. So, since the stamps deprived of a public pulpit the class who most needed one, the rising working classes developed a press of their own between the 1800s and the 1830s. The pauper press had two peaks. The first was in the early 1820s, the second between 1830 and 1836.

After 1836 however, when the reduction of the newspaper duty from 4 to 1*d*. created the popular Sunday market, the movement started to decrease. Between 1836 and 1855, the year of the repeal, the last penny stamp on newspapers kept dailies too expensive for most, but created, by the 1840s, the 3*d*. Sunday market. Political weeklies, therefore, lost the competitive advantage that the evasion of the 4*d*. stamp had given them, and had to compete with better edited newspapers which, although described as politically «radical» did not have a specific political calling and which intended, above all, to distract and amuse the working classes. It was during this nineteen year period that Sundays such as the *Illustrated London News*, 1842, the *Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper*, 1842, and the *News of the World*, 1843, were founded. Against such rivals, working class unstampeds could not compete, and many unstampeds, such as the *Twopenny Dispatch*, and the *Weekly Herald*, collapsed in 1836 (Bourne, 1887: 119-126; Maccoby, 1935: 419-420).

The unstampeds were not a marginal and alternative movement. Both for the variety of the titles and for their individual and aggregate circulation, the unstampeds constitute an impressive social and discursive phenomenon.

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[22]Some aspects of the proletarian public sphere are described in *The Making of the English Working Class* (Thompson E. P., 1991).

During the 1830s, more than two hundred unstampeds were published. The most extensive classification has been made by Hollis (1970: 318-328). Out of 212 unstampeds, 104 had politics as their main if not exclusive topic, and treated the subject from a working class («ultra-radical») point of view. Amongst the 15 most prominent, were Carlile's *Cosmopolite* (Mar. 1832 - Nov. 1834) and *Gauntlet* (Feb. 1833 - Mar. 1834), O'Brien's and Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian* (July 1831 - Dec. 1835) and *Destructive* (Feb. 1833 - Sept. 1836), Carpenter's *Political Letters* (Oct. 1830 - May 1831), Cleave's and Watson's *Working Man's Friend* (Dec. 1832 - Aug. 1833), and Roebuck's *Pamphlets for the People* (June 1835 - Feb. 1836). 12 unstampeds focused on religion, and had consequently «blasphemous» titles: *Slap at the Church* (Carpenter, Jan. 1832 - Nov. 1832), *Christian Corrector* (Parkins, Apr. 1831 - May 1832), *Antichrist* (Smith, 1832-33), or *Devil's Pulpit* (Revd. Taylor and Carlile, Mar. 1831 - Jan. 1832). 12 were trade unionists, or organs of a working class organisation, such as the *Advocate of Artizans and Labourers Friend* (Feb. 1833 - Apr. 1833), Doherty's *Herald of the Rights of Industry* (Feb. 1834 - May 1834), or Morrison's *Pioneer* (Sept. 1834 - July 1835). 6 unstampeds were Owenite, such as Owen's *Crisis* (Apr. 1832 - Aug. 1834), or the *New Moral World and Manual of Science* (Nov. 1834 - July 1837). Although most unstampeds opened their columns to co-operatives, they had 3 papers on their own, such as the *Magazine of Useful Knowledge and Co-operative Miscellany* (Oct. 1830 - Nov. 1832). 32 unstampeds were published by middle class educationists in the hope of diverting the working classes from «seditious» and «blasphemous» literature. The most important were Knight's *Penny Magazine* (Mar. 1832 - Dec. 1836) and the *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* (Feb. 1832 - 1854). 26 papers were labelled "humorous", but 17 of them were also classified "radical". None of the remaining ones, however, had the reputation of being Tory. Examples include *Punch in London* (Jan. 1832 - Apr. 1832), or *Figaro in London* (Dec. 1831 - 1839). Some unstampeds had literature or theatre as their main subject, and many of them were labelled radical. There was for example the *Literary Guardian* (Oct. 1831 - July 1832), or the *Tatler*

(Sept. 1830 - Oct. 1832). Finally, 3 unstampeds were crime reporters: *Annals of crime,* (Aug. 1833 - Sept. 1834), or *London Policeman* (Aug. 1836 - Feb. 1837).

During the 1830s, working class publishers printed and diffused unstamped papers which in circulation overtook the legal press (Hollis, 1970: 116-124). The sales of the fifteen to twenty most prominent unstampeds fluctuated between 3,000 to 8,000, with peaks at 10,000 or beyond for a few of them and for short periods of time. Carlile's *Gauntlet* and *Cosmopolite* sold around 3,5000, sometimes 5,000. Cleave's *Working Man's Friend* had a similar circulation. Between 12,000 and 15,000 copies were sold of the *Poor Man's Guardian* each Saturday for two years (1832 - 1833), but then the sales dropped to 7,000. Lee's *Man* was sold between 5,000 and 7,000.

These figures make the leading unstampeds the greatest papers of their time. A contemporary analysis of the stamp return counted an average daily sale, between June 1833 and June 1835, of 25,798 Tory and 18,915 Whig dailies (Maccoby, 1935: 141). (The total of 44,713 is close to the 40,700 total circulation of the 9 main dailies given by Howe for 1837 (Howe, 1943: 13).) These figures must be compared to a conservative estimate of the leading unstampeds at 100,000, and of the total unstamped circulation at 200,000 (Maccoby, 1935: 141). In 1836, the 6 main unstampeds alone would have reached a weekly circulation of 200,000, and it was claimed that when some of these unstampeds turned broadsheets, each of their papers sold more in a day than *The Times* in a week, or than the *Morning Chronicle* in a month (Hollis, 1969: XXIII).

Most of the unstampeds were printed in London and in the major cities, but they were sold and read all over the country. For the most important London unstampeds, one half to two thirds of the production was sent to the provinces. For example, out of 14,000 copies of *Chambers Edinburgh Journal* printed in London, 7,000 were sold locally, 2,000 in Manchester, 1,400 in Liverpool, 700 in Leeds, 375 in Birmingham, 250 in Hull and Nottingham, 175 in Norwich, 75 in Bath and Derby, and 50 in Bristol and York (Hollis, 1970: 120). An unstamped, the *Weekly Herald*, alleged in 1836 that a stamped paper was regarded as a curiosity in Bath, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Hull, and Portsmouth (Hollis, 1969: XXIII). Whatever the accuracy of these statements, it is most probable that unstampeds constituted, for a period of time, the exclusive source of information for the working classes.

The sales of the unstampeds, however, were erratic. The presses could be seized, unstampeds caught on their way to the provinces could be destroyed, and vendors or publishers arrested. Prosecutions, however, were circulation boosters. When Hetherington was arrested, the sales of the *Poor Man's Guardian* jumped from 3,000 to 10,000 during the subsequent weeks (Hollis, 1969: XVII). Similarly, Carlile's prosecutions quadrupled the sales of the *Republican*, which rose on such occasions to 15,000 (Wickwar, 1928: 94, 207).

The actual readership of these unstampeds is estimated at twenty to thirty times superior to their sales. Unstampeds were read, discussed and debated, in working class public sphere institutions such taverns, coffee shops, public houses, reading rooms, and mechanics institutes (Webb, 1955: 33-35; Lee, 1976: 35-41). The most prestigious of these working class institutions was the Rotunda, a debating club and meeting centre founded by Carlile in 1830 (Harrison, 1974: 66). They were also read aloud in offices and workshops. Cobbett's reference to his "readers or hearers", in his *Political Register* (Wickwar, 1928: 54), shows how the reading of unstampeds was an activity that working class persons performed as member of a public sphere.

III

The overall result of these taxes, therefore, was to prevent the formation of an economic field organised and structured by the competitive struggles in which its agents were engaged.

Concerning stamped papers, there was the double effect of the advertisement duty and the newspaper stamp. The first tax concentrated advertisements in few newspapers, and reinforced the phenomenon of monopoly that the newspaper duty already created by shrinking the number of readers, and therefore the number of newspapers needed to satisfy the limited demand of a proto-market. The effect of protection of these taxes for the already established newspapers, particularly for *The Times*, meant that they vehemently protested at each repeal or reduction of these duties (Bourne, 1887: 66, 223). Among established papers, moreover, competition was limited by the fact that proprietors knew that the total number of readers was positively limited by the price of 7*d*. a copy, (5*d*. with the stamp priced one penny between 1836 and 1855). Since both prices were much beyond what the great majority could afford to pay for a newspaper, they prevented the creation of a market, and the production of texts along market principles. The intensity of the competitive struggles, therefore, was checked by the expensive price of newspapers, and no discursive strategies were used to expand readerships. In other words, these duties, whose goal was to put political information and opinions out of reach of the working classes, had the subsidiary effect of preventing competition by impeding the formation of a market of newspaper buyers for which proprietors and journalists would have had to fight.

For the unstamped press, repression made economic calculation impossible. Its illegal status precisely meant that unstamped publishers, whatever their intentions, could not compete on economic grounds against each other. For the proletariat, these taxes transformed the formation of public opinion into an illegal activity, and the newspaper business into a dangerous one. Publishers, editors and printers, faced severe prosecutions, their presses were seized, their stocks destroyed, and they themselves put in jail for months, and sometimes years. The distribution of unstampeds was also difficult. Since news-vendors and booksellers refused to distribute unstampeds, working class publicists had to organise from top to bottom their own network of distribution, at first confined to London, then extended to the provinces. Entirely undercover, the distribution system relied upon tricks and stratagems to avoid seizure and arrest. Cleave used coffins to distribute his publications, (the ruse was discovered by the police the day a neighbour called them by fear of an epidemic) (Grant, 1871: 306-309), and Hetherington had to disguise himself as a Quaker to freely circulate in London (Holyoake, 1849: 3). Because the instability of the conditions of production created by the oppression made the accumulation of capital impossible, competitive relationships for profits or material advantages could not prevail between working class publishers. Government repression, on the contrary, forced them to be united in the face of a single danger, and increased their awareness of leading a common struggle against the same enemy. *Cooperation*, rather than competition, defined the relations of production between publishers of unstampeds.

In sum, these taxes meant that the press could not work on the basis of the market mechanisms which the 1836 reduction of the newspaper stamp started to introduce for weeklies, and that the 1855 repeal introduced for the daily press.

II: The Philological Properties of the Public Discourse

As long as the political conditions for the creation of a situation of economic competition between newspapers did not exist the discourse of the press was public. In other words, as long as newspapers were taxed, such a situation could not arise, since these taxes prevented the formation of a market of readers for which newspapers would have had to compete. The public discourse covers a wider and more diverse discursive reality than the period and the type of papers through which it is presented. For practical reasons, the selection of public texts is limited to the first half of the XIXth century, which represents the last period of time when public texts were the dominant form of public expression. The selection is also limited to two types of opposition papers, those published and read by the working and middle classes. This sample of public texts is nevertheless representative of the public discourse since the working and middle classes formed the two most important publics of the first half of the XIXth century. Furthermore, the two selected groups of newspapers are contrasted in many aspects. The newspapers of the first group are legal (stampeds), provincial, middle class, and published in the 1820s. Those of the second are illegal (unstampeds), working class, and published in London in the 1830s. It will be shown how these texts are part of the same discourse, that they share similar discursive properties, in spite and beyond the differences in time, space, and of relationship to the legal order. In spite, above all, of the different, and indeed, opposite, political ideologies that these two groups of newspaper conveyed. So, the selection on which the public discourse is based is not exhaustive. It is based nonetheless on a qualitatively representative sample whose objective is to present the texts of the pre-market press in their discursive principles, not in their history.

This second section starts with an ideal typical portrait of the publicist (II.1). The ideological function of middle class papers (II.2.1) and working class papers (II.2.2) is then examined, followed by a section on their practical function (II.3). The chapter concludes on the «will to struggle» which characterise these texts (II.4).

II.1: The Publicist

Pre-market press publishers were, more than journalists, *publicists*, whose discursive production was largely driven by their political convictions. Since their activities were oppositional, often illegal, economic profit could not be a motive, and publishers chose to articulate the ideology and to promulgate the interests of the class or fraction of class on whose behalf they were speaking. Those who made a profit out of their publications reinvested it to further political struggles. Above all, they were the advocates and the representatives of a specific class or fraction of class. Unlike journalists whose career evolution within the mediatic field is mostly material, publicists developed, during their life, a line of thought. They followed, in the ideological limits imposed by the position of their social class in the class structure, their own intellectual path. Publicists did not make a mystery of their partisanship. Instead of pretending to be objective, they were combative. Whatever the class they belonged to, they presented and perceived themselves, with pride and solemnity, as the advocates of principles they hoped would bring a satisfactory solution to the political problems of their time.

Opening addresses, such as the one of Alaric Watts, publisher of the *Manchester Courier* (a Tory paper founded in 1825), in which he explained that his prime objective was to fight middle class doctrines, was the norm, not the exception: "It is, in these days, not sufficient for a public writer that he be passively respectable; he must make himself actively useful in defending the principles of which he declares himself the guardian" (*Manchester Courier*, 1 January 1825, in Read, 1961: 105). Archibald Prentice, a middle class activist, was the editor of the *Manchester Gazette* from 1824 to 1828, then of the *Manchester Times* from the same year. Although he went bankrupt in 1828, he deliberately kept a line too radical to attract a large readership. Convinced that working and middle classes had common interests, he frightened away many manufacturers and their advertisements from his journal. Against the commercial principles of his social class, he declaimed that "the desire to promulgate sound opinions is quite as strong a motive with us as any mere business temptation" (*Manchester Times*, 4 January 1834, in Read, 1961: 89).

Working class publishers could not contemplate such a temptation, since they faced a sustained repression under any government, Whig or Tory. The working class unstamped movement is littered with accounts of trials and convictions of publishers, printers, shopmen and hawkers. In an interval of three years, 1819-1821, publishers faced 120 charges for seditious and blasphemous libel (Wickwar, 1928: 17). Richard Carlile for instance was sentenced in 1819 to three years of imprisonment with £2,700 in fines and securities, which, because he was unable to pay, cost him another three years in jail (Wickwar, 1928: 90-95, 243). All in all, he spent almost ten years in prison on charges of seditious libel (Wiener, 1969: 158). In the same decade, the 1820s, his 150 volunteer shopmen, correspondents, and vendors, totalled over 200 years of imprisonment (Harrison, 1974: 63). Between 1830 and 1836, there were 750 convictions related to the production and distribution of unstamped papers, most ending in jailing (Wickwar, 1928: 30; Wiener, 1969: 198). Many of these working class publicists, because of the repetitive prosecutions and imprisonments for «seditious» libel, were martyrs, that is, people suffering for adhering and promoting a political doctrine. In these conditions, the reasons that drove them to write, fight and publish are made clear by the risks they knowingly agreed to take. Carlile launched his *Journal*, in January 1830, to "test the real state of liberty of the press" (Hollis, 1970: 308). Similarly, the *Poor Man's Guardian*'s motto reveals Hetherington's drive: "Published in defiance of «law», to try the power of «might» against «right»." On the right hand-side of the title was a woodcut representing a press, on which was written *Liberty of the press*. Around the woodcut was the famous motto of working class activists: *Knowledge is Power*.

Publicists were political activists specialised in the publicity of the opinions of the political group they represented. Although a distinction could be made between their activities as publicists and their purely political activities within a political party or a union, this distinction could imply that their function as publicists was not political. Publicists were political activists when they were publicists. To write was for them a political act. Their newspapers not only reflected their political convictions but also their commitment to them. They were the instrument of their political subjectivity, the written voice of the doctrine for which they chose to struggle.

Out of the specific role as publicists in the political struggles of their respective social classes stem the philological characteristics of the public discourse. First, they formulated the ideologies and diffused the doctrines which defended the economic and political interests of their social class. This corresponds to the ideological function of this class of texts. Second, they publicised facts and events and gave to their readers the political information relevant for their political struggles. This is the practical function of public texts. Both are now successively described.

II.2: The Ideological Function: «Knowledge is Power»

The middle class ideology diffused by middle class papers is first presented (section II.2.1), followed by the working class doctrines of the unstampeds (section II.2.2). Both sections contain a short introduction, followed in each case by an outline of the economic and political themes of the newspapers of both social classes.

II.2.1: Free Trade and Laissez-Faire

I

Northern middle class papers were instrumental in publicising the founders of political economy (the middle class triumvirate Smith-Malthus-Ricardo), along with the utilitarians. They became the *medium* between the economists and philosophers on the one hand, and the public of tradesmen and manufacturers on the other. It has been shown for instance that the latter did not read the early economists in the text, but "received instruction in the new ideas mainly through the middle-class reform newspapers" (Read, 1961: 32).

Publicists however were not simply the passive diffusers of a political doctrine, but were themselves suffused with its principles. The younger Baines, editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, explained the nature of his relationship with the economists: "The press is alternatively a cause and an effect of the growth of intelligence amongst the people. Its conductors are at once learners and teachers. They are themselves operated upon by the master-spirits of the age, who bring forth in their closets the moral and intellectual discoveries which have distinguished this period; and they, in their turn, after subjecting the new opinions to the ordeal of criticism, and establishing their correctness, diffuse them by the mighty agency of the periodical press" (*Leeds Mercury*, 13 September 1823, in Read, 1961: 116). Consciously, Baines saw himself as an enlightened intermediary between the economists and his readers.

The second main source of ideas, for these self-educated educators, was utilitarianism. The middle class press stood in a symbiotic relationship with the two philosophers, James Mill and Jeremy Bentham. Diffusers of utilitarianism, the middle class publishers were also nurtured in utilitarianism. Their quotations, in leaders and articles, were only the exposed part of the iceberg. Indeed, if the manufacturers came to know the utilitarian doctrine through these papers, it also constituted for the publishers themselves a major source of reasoning as well as the ideological basis for the conduct of their lives and papers. The link between the press and the philosophers was, more than once, material. Among the founders of the *Manchester Guardian*, there were three utilitarians, Edward Baxter, Thomas and Richard Potter. Thomas Ward, editor of the *Sheffield Independent*, was a friend of Bentham's secretary, John Bowring. A great part of the work of John Stuart Mill, James Mill's son, consists in articles written for middle class periodicals, such as the *Westminster Review*. This close cooperation is illustrated by the fact that the political assertions he made in the 1860s are identical to those of the middle class press of the 1820s. His *Representative Government*, published in 1861, set the same conditions for the extension of suffrage (property and education), as has been established in the earlier period; conditions whose objective was to keep the franchise within the confines of the middle class while excluding from it the greatest part of the working classes (Mill, 1910: 276-281). He also rejected the Chartist proposition of annual parliaments; he preferred the current seven year term (1910: 312-314).

In other words, universal happiness, or the «greatest happiness for the greatest number», as the utilitarian motto had it, was not to be achieved with universal suffrage.

II

The two main economic doctrines promoted by middle class papers were free trade and economic *laissez-faire*. Manufacturers' papers fought against everything they considered as a burden upon trade and industry. They campaigned against the taxes and monopolies they judged unfavourable to the enrichment of their social class. In January 1828, the *Manchester Guardian* listed thirteen reforms which it considered important. It included the repeal of the Corn Laws, the abolition of the West India sugar monopoly and of the Canadian timber monopoly, the modification of the charter of the Bank of England, and the "introduction of severe economy into every department of the state" (*Manchester Guardian*, 5 January 1828, in Read, 1961: 137-138). Among these propositions the taxes that the landed interest imposed on imported corn to protect its revenue was a central issue for the middle classes, who saw in it a barrier to freer trade; that is, to the free exportation of their manufactured products. Because of the stakes at issue, much attention was devoted to this question by the middle class press, and each paper developed its own line of argument.

According to Baines (*Leeds Mercury*), high corn duties made high food prices, high food prices produced high wage costs, which in turn increased manufacturing costs. Thereby, the competitiveness of British manufactures was reduced, and consequently manufacturers could be tempted to leave the country. The result of this would be that the "landed classes would be left to bear the burden of taxation alone" (Read, 1961: 111). The editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, Taylor, used the «prosperity argument». The repeal of the duties on corn explained Taylor would increase the demand for labour, and therefore raise the wages of labour (*Manchester Guardian*, 23 March 1839, in Read, 1961: 148). Prentice, editor of the *Manchester Times*, took a third line of argument. He did not pretend that wages would increase if the corn laws had to be repealed, but that the operatives would benefit from the fall in the price of food. Trying to convince operatives to join the middle class in its anti-corn law campaign, Prentice argued that their efforts to organise themselves were useless "while, all the time, the corn laws are grinding down the reward for their labour on the one hand, and raising the price of food on the other" (*Manchester Times*, 14 April 1838, in Read, 1961: 165). The cause of this duty, for Prentice, was, on the one hand, the war with France and the debt it produced, and on the other, the selfishness of the aristocrats, "corn-monopolists and tax-eaters", who wanted to maintain their life style in spite of the situation (*Manchester Times*, 29 December 1829, in Read, 1961: 156). Leader, the editor of the *Sheffield Independent*, developed several arguments. In the early 1830s, he was convinced that the repeal of the duty would make possible a reduction of wages. Later on in the decade, he argued that both classes would benefit from the repeal of the corn laws: "Abolish monopolies, unfetter trade, and it will soon expand to such a degree, that the demand for labour will be ahead, and keep ahead, of the supply; and then bad trade will be no more" (*Sheffield Independent*, 11 March 1837, in Read, 1961: 175).

The middle class papers, while trying to convince the nascent proletariat to fight beside them for the repeal of the corn laws, were unanimously hostile to the ten hour factory reform. In the 1830s, the *Leeds Mercury* proposed an eleven hour movement, and, along the same line of argument, criticised the government when, in 1843, it restricted the work hours of children under thirteen to nine per day (Read, 1961: 123, 125). This restriction was unnecessary since, as the editor of this newspaper declared in the House of Commons (in 1836) there was "not a set of children in this kingdom better fed, better clothed, better lodged, and more healthy than the children in the factories" (Read, 1961: 123). In 1832, the *Manchester Guardian* thought that a reduction of children's work in factories to ten hours would lower manufacturers' competitiveness, increase export prices, and lead to a loss of foreign markets. Legislation interfering with children's rights to labour, through a limitation of their work to ten hours was, therefore, "an act of suicidal madness" (*Manchester Guardian*, 20 January 1832, in Read, 1961: 144). Prentice used the wage theory of political economy to argue against the Ten Hours Act. The political economists viewed the production process as being associated with fixed costs. Because of this, a sufficiently high level of production was necessary in order to ensure profitability of factories. Political economists (with the exception of Malthus), used this observation to argue that reducing the length of the working day to 10 hours would not enable firms to break even. According to them, if the first six hours pay for constant charges, and the following six for the variable costs, the remaining hours constitute the profit of the manufacturer. So, the longer the work time, the greater the profits, and, allegedly, the higher workers' wages could be. Anxious to convince working classes of the merits of his position, Prentice accepted the «humanitarian» motives behind the factory reform, but, repeating economists' reasoning, argued that a ten hours work time would lower the wages of the operatives by one-third: "We fear, therefore, that this measure will disappoint the anticipations of those in whose favour it professes to be framed. Most gladly would we receive evidence that we are wrong" (*Manchester Times*, 7 May 1847, in Read, 1961: 158). The editor of the *Sheffield Independent* was opposed to the bill on the grounds of free trade. Governmental interferences was not a good solution he argued, since labour should obey to the law of supply and demand. Operatives had to take the job they could find, and regretted that the "Parliament ... now ventures to prescribe how long they [the people] may work" (*Sheffield Independent*, 20 February 1847, in Read, 1961: 172).

III

As the organs of the middle class position, these journals chose two interlocutors, the government, and the working classes. They did not confine their promotion of their class's direct economic interests merely by advocating governmental reforms in their favour, they also opposed point by point the demands of labour, and were careful to avoid any political emancipation of the people they were exploiting twelve to fourteen hours a day. While campaigning endlessly, and with success, in favour of political and economic reforms that had the advantage of the manufacturer; they made the government and its «heavy taxes» the scapegoat for the proletariat's distress. Although in its fight against the landed gentry, the small bourgeoisie, through its newspapers, tried to convince the working classes that both social groups had common interests against the gentry, they were careful not to make them a single political concession. That was the case with the most fundamental political claim of the working class activists, universal suffrage.

Before the 1832 Reform Act, whose £10 householder franchise gave the vote to many middle classes but excluded the working classes from parliamentary representation, middle class publicists argued that working class men would be willing to exchange their votes against bribes. Baines, for instance, thought that universal suffrage would give "an artful, or a wealthy man, a larger share in elections than is consistent with general liberty" (*Leeds Mercury*, 26 June 1819, in Read, 1961: 114-115). Those who are "dependent", therefore, must stay "excluded from the privilege of suffrage" (*Leeds Mercury*, 3 July 1819, in Read, 1961: 115). In the 1840s, when the working classes realised that the 1832 Reform Act favoured the middle classes exclusively, and once the universal suffrage claim became the main Chartism's issue, the younger Baines became much more virulent. The main point was that working class men lacked enough education to be trusted with the franchise: "The true objects to which the attention of the working classes should be directed, and the only means by which they can ever attain either political influence or personal happiness, are these - Education, Religion, Virtue, Industry, Sobriety, Frugality. These are Six Points of a thousand times more importance than the Six of «the People's Charter». These would make them deserve the suffrage" (*Leeds Mercury*, 31 July 1847, in Read, 1961: 132). The *Manchester Guardian* was no more in favour of universal suffrage. In two editorials written in April and May 1827, Taylor and Garnett revealed what they feared the most in case of a franchise that would include working class men: an alliance between the latter and the landed aristocracy. The middle classes only, it was argued against the enlargement of the franchise, "could be trusted to respect the interests of their superiors and to provide for the needs of their inferiors at the same time as they protected their own interests" (Read, 1961: 141). During the next decade, the *Guardian* used an argument similar to the one of the *Mercury*, namely, that the working classes were too ignorant to get the franchise. They lacked both "intelligence and property" to claim the suffrage (1961: 146). Prentice was in favour of an extension of suffrage through an education franchise. Through it would be entitled to vote only those "who can read the proceedings of his representatives, and who can exercise the constitutional right of petitioning by writing his own name" (*Manchester Times*, 19 October 1839, in Read, 1961: 166). The *Sheffield Independent* adopted a similar position: "The candidate for the Suffrage shall first be required to read a few sentences, or half a page of an ordinary book; and then of himself to write a few sentences about what he has read" (*Sheffield Independent*, 9 January 1841, in Read, 1961: 174). During the 1830s and 1840s, the middle class papers were equally consistent. Of the six points of the People's Charter, the vote by ballot was the only one middle class publicists agreed with. They excluded both annual parliament (then elected for seven years), or the payment of MPs. Finally, middle class journals strongly criticised the two main working class types of organisation: trade unions and, later on, Chartism. Against these forms of proletarian self-organisation, the tone of these papers were often vehement and insulting.

It can be seen that these arguments are closely linked to the economic interests of the rising middle classes. The presence of such arguments in these newspapers demonstrate the importance of their ideological function. These publicists played the role of organic intellectuals whose function was to publicise and articulate the political ideology (namely utilitarianism, political economy and the pragmatic political arguments) that the middle classes needed in order to foster their political and economic interests.

II.2.2: Universal Suffrage and Cooperation

I

By the end of the first half of the XIXth century, the philosophical and economic middle class doctrines constituted a large body of works and theories. These doctrines began to have their first *effect of theory* in the field of political power; Sir Robert Peel, Tory Prime Minister, abolished the corn duties in 1846 against the strong and powerful opposition of the landowners. The working classes on the other hand did not possess a body of theories either as extensive or as systematic as the one of their opponents. The main reason of this inferiority was that the conceptual categories of working class theories still owed much to middle class doctrines (a particular example of the general rule that dominated classes often struggle against the dominant classes with the very same conceptual categories which are at the origin of their submission). Owenism for instance bore the mark of Benthamism. The projects of the New Lanark cotton mills, and later on of the co-operative villages, had in common with the panopticon a certain machinism by which progress or happiness could be produced in a mechanical way. Furthermore, working class economists, in the 1820s and 1830s, were unable to create an epistemological rupture with their main middle class opponent, Ricardo. Yet, in spite of these theoretical weaknesses, a distinctive working class consciousness emerged in the 1830s. This class consciousness was built and solidified by the unstampeds. They raised the political awareness of the dominated classes by drawing upon the consequences of the political experience of these years, by articulating useful ideological themes, by putting feelings into words, (and by giving words to feelings), by expressing grievances, by proposing political modes of actions and economic solutions, by giving hope (not illusions), and by organising the political activities and the political life as a whole of the working classes.

In the following presentation, it is again not the working class theories themselves, but rather the way unstampeds articulated them that matters. From the perspective of this research, furthermore, a decisive point is to demonstrate that, in the structure of the pre-market press, a dominated social class was able to own a press of their own.

II

Because of the great number of unstampeds and the great diversity of the movement, the sample concentrates on the few most prominent unstampeds, and in particular on the *Poor Man's Guardian*. To compensate for the false impression of homogeneity of the working class movement which this selection of unstampeds might give, it is useful to contextualise the selection among the rest of the unstampeds.

The working class unstampeds of the 1830s may be divided in three main ideological trends: *pragmatic*, *utopian*, and *confrontational*. The first is composed of the trade unionist papers, whose principal characteristic was a creed of pragmatism. The main representative of this trend was the *Pioneer*, which became, in 1834, the official paper of the short-lived GNCTU (Grand National Consolidated Trades Union). Mostly preoccupied by questions of trade, such as wages or benefit societies, this trend dissociated politics from matters of trade. Not that pragmatists completely excluded politics from their realm of action, but acted as though social justice and equality would be obtained through collective trade actions, such as strikes. Pragmatists saw as useless purely political struggles, such as the demand for universal suffrage.

The second trend is constituted by the Owenite papers, *Crisis* in particular, and is characterised by utopianism. Owen, like Jesus Christ, was a character who, even though he interacted with reality, fled from it rather than confronted it. Owen therefore, endeavoured to create a working class world within a bourgeois society, and refused to engage in conflict against the bourgeoisie. As Owen's authority became increasingly grounded on charisma, Owenism became even more an inner oriented ideology with fewer connections with the real world of political struggles and the real position of the working classes within this world.

The last school, whose themes are explored, was mostly conveyed by unstampeds published by Hetherington, O'Brien, Carlile, Cleave, or Watson. By no means exhaustive, the list includes the *Poor Man's Guardian*, the *Destructive*, the *Twopenny Dispatch*, the *Republican*, or the *Working Man's Friend*. These London artisans formed the vanguard of the working classes, and their unstampeds proposed the most advanced arguments and theories of their time. They were confrontational in the sense that both their acts and theories directly opposed the interests of labour to the combined political powers of the church, the monarchy, the aristocracy (or the landed interests), and the bourgeoisie (or the interests of capital).

The opposition between pragmatists and confrontationalists may be illustrated by means of a few examples from the unstampeds. The position of trade unionists was that unions should be the central body of working class struggles. Unions, thought the *Pioneer*, "are of all the other means the only mode by which universal suffrage can be safely obtained, because it is obtained by practice..." (31 May 1834). Since union members had a vote in the union, trade unions would give them universal suffrage because, progressively and by various means, they would "swallow up the whole political power", to finally become the House of Trades supplanting the House of Commons (*Pioneer*, 31 May 1834). O'Brien (a confrontationalist), on the contrary, thought that "the present objects of the trades' unions can never be attained under the existing government", because the government could maintain by means of law and violence the present form of society (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 7 December 1833). When masters, for instance, combined to dismiss from work men and women, and thereby endangering the peace of the town, the social order was protected by the mayor, the magistrates, and the Dragoon Guards. Such things, argued O'Brien, would be impossible with universal suffrage, which would "place the magistracy and Parliament, and consequently the disposal of the military and police forces in the hands of the entire body of the people" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 7 December 1833). A central argument of confrontationalists was that working classes needed a representative parliament to proclaim legislation protective of their rights and labour. While trade unionists, in sum, favoured union activism to secure suffrage, confrontationalists wanted the suffrage to protect trade unions. Such were the divisions within the working class movement. They were not, of course, absolute. Owenite unstampeds supported trade unionism, and Hetherington, publisher of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, greatly admired, until his death, Robert Owen (Holyoake, 1849: 6). These ideological conflicts enable us to contextualise the unstampeds within the working class public discourse; they also show that the constitution of a social class is a historical process which is initially formed of disparate social groups who most often resist an identification of common interests with other groups. During the XIXth century, «class» was a word mostly used in its plural form. This form, such as in «productive classes», «industrious classes», denotes the awareness of the heterogeneity of the original components of a class in formation. The most far-reaching *ideological effect* of these unstampeds has been, precisely, the ideological homogenisation of diverse social groups, diverse trades. They played the crucial role to unite these diverse groups into a common political struggle. Through this process, out of separate social groups, there emerged the fractions of a single and relatively united social class. What is briefly presented now is an episode of this process.

III

The political ideology of the confrontational unstampeds in the early 1830s was «transitional»: while owing much to Jacobinism, (e.g. Paine and Robespierre), they laid the basis for Chartism. The 1832 Reform Bill negotiated with landowners of both Houses by the Whig government on behalf of the middle classes provides a good illustration of the concrete demands of the working classes in their journey to Chartism. The efforts of publicists to arouse a stronger working-class feeling was much facilitated by the £10 qualification franchise which legally delimited the working classes, which was in general not rich enough to qualify. As clear as the situation was, however, unstampeds had nevertheless to dismiss the middle class argument about the community of interests between both classes. The first way to do so was to explain the real structure of political alliances, namely, that Whigs and Tories were in league to deny the working class their political rights. The second was to repeat, every week, the political demands, which included the extension of the franchise to all men above eighteen, the vote by secret ballot, annual parliament, and the withdrawal of pecuniary qualification for members of Parliament.

Both tasks were undertaken, for instance, by the *Poor Man's Guardian*, whose leaders between September 1831 and January 1832 mostly concerned the bill. Against middle class ideologists, who promised that once in the Commons they would be more inclined to give the vote to the working classes, Hetherington argued that the economic interests of both classes were antagonistic, as they sought to "get the benefit of their [working classes] work at the least possible price" and that, therefore, they would pass laws to protect their own interests (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 8 December 1832). Claims for universal suffrage were weekly reiterated in many forms. The *Poor Man's Guardian* calculated that the new bill would not give more than 700,000 votes, and that there were 900,000 families who lived by means of the various imposts on the "fruit of the working class" itself of about 4,600,000 families (26 November 1831). This demonstrated that the political exclusion of the working classes was linked to its economic exploitation, and that both realms, the political and the economic, were connected.

The lack of justice was underlined by depicting the government as an arbitrary class power both corrupt and repressive. The corruption theme, which runs from Jacobinism to Chartism, *via* the unstampeds of the 1820s, such as Cobbett's *Political Register*, denounced all types of state and church abuses. They include the numerous sinecures, pensions, extravagant salaries, and privileges that the government distributed among aristocrats, and which made of it an "expensive encumbrance; an impediment to the public good" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 23 November 1833). The attacks on corruption related to inequalities of access to public wealth, and those on repression pointed to the means to maintain them. Working classes and government were described, every week, as two directly antagonistic forces. The main function of government was to oppress people and to ensure the political conditions to maintain the present state of society with its hereditary privileges and exploitative factory system. The unstampeds' ideal government was: *democratic*, both Houses elected by universal suffrage; *secular*, the church was separated from state, payments to the church were not compulsory; and *republican*.

Taking as a theoretical premise that unjust powers, obtained by fraud, and maintained by force, were never given up "except to force, or to the fear of force", the inevitability of a revolution was often mentioned (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 11 April 1831). Many unstampeds included statements such as: "We will treat [laws] as mere nullities, honour them with every species of due contempt, and oppose them by every rational, and, if necessary, physical method, within our power" (*Republican*, 2 July 1831). Working class activists, however, recognised that it would be impossible for them to organise a successful uprising. It was with the aim to make it a more realistic possibility that Hetherington published abstracts of Macerone's *Defensive Instructions for the People*. An illustrated article giving advice on the advantages of the bayonet, the defence of houses and village, the construction of lances and barricades, or the use of burning acids (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 11 April 1831).

The demand for repeal of the taxes on knowledge was associated with these claims for more political equality. The agitation for repeal was at its peak in the 1830s, and the issue was constantly addressed by the unstamped press. «Taxation without representation», said the motto, is tyranny, and ought to be resisted.» All classes had an equal right to knowledge, but this right was transformed into a privilege by the 1819 Six Acts, "enacted to keep the labouring class in ignorance and delusion" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 19 November 1831). Since the very existence of these papers was produced in defiance of these laws, the *Poor Man's Guardian* set a subscription fund for the victims of the "odious" Six Acts in August 1831. It paid a small imprisonment premium per week to street-vendors. By 13 October 1832, it collected £233. All events related to the struggle for a free press were fully publicised. Arrests and prosecutions were reported, and verbatim passages of trials published. The ideal of a free press was associated with a fairer society, in which the widespread diffusion of knowledge among the working classes would give them the power to overthrow tyranny, and the moral power to make their rights prevail (*Gauntlet*, 25 August 1833). With a free press, said Cleave, "who will dare to oppress us?" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 30 July 1831).

By the 1830s, the principles of the critique of the dominant social group (landed gentry, aristocracy, church and monarchy) were long established, and this explains why the unstampeds were by now more insulting and contemptuous rather than argumentative when condemning the «parasites» of society. It was self-evident for instance for the working class public that tithes and other compulsory payments to the church had to be abolished (e.g. *Poor Man's Guardian*, 22 October 1831), or that bishops had to give up their vote at the House of Lords (e.g. *Poor Man's Guardian*, 12 November 1831). The approach to the monarchy was similar. Not much was added, except cries of despair, to the million pounds granted by the government for the repair and furnishing of Windsor castle and Buckingham palace (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 8 October 1831).

As a whole, the unstampeds had a clear and precise idea about the relative position of the social class in the social structure. They did not have to wait for Louis Althusser to develop the theory of the "four estates" which summarises the material and ideological mode of domination which subordinated the working classes (*Poor Man's*

Guardian, 14 April 1832. *Ibid.* for the following quotations). The four estates were said to "contribute equally towards holding things together in their present form" by maintaining the poor in their "present state of poverty", and the rest in "their present state of lazy enjoyment". The first of these estates was composed of the landed gentry, (the "land-stealers"), together with the merchants and manufacturers. The second was the priesthood, or the "tithe-stealers". The third estate was the government, and the last one, the stamped newspapers, the "legitimate press". The anonymous author of these lines ("one of the oppressed") insisted on the connivance between the four estates. The priesthood was connected with land-stealers, and their purpose was to frighten people with the threat of hell in order to maintain them in their submission to the landed gentry. If the priesthood was rewarded by the landed gentry with tithes, the government was rewarded with taxes. The author also developed the first critique of the dominant ideology. The stamped press, "established" by the first three estates, "mob, abuse, villify, and belie" to the extent that people neglect to demand their rights. Its role is to disguise the reality of the system of oppression, that is, to present diverse fallacious arguments which purport to explain and justify the distress of the working classes. The press masked the robbery by the dominant classes of a large proportion of working class production: when the dominant classes could not consume enough of working class produce, the press reasoned that there was no trade, that the working classes were too numerous, and that they had to emigrate. With several concrete examples, the readers were warned against the "*seductive* language and the barefaced villainy" of the fourth estate.

The editors of the *Poor Man's Guardian* wrote several articles on the stamped press. One of them concerned its opinion of the trade unions. The method they chose to analyse the stamped newspapers is external in two aspects. First, they apprehended them not from their content but from their conditions of production. This intelligent philological reflex led them to argue that the anti-union stance among journalists of the stamped press was determined by money: "there is scarcely an operative in London ... who is ignorant of the conditions under which they [the scribes of the stamped press] write. Mere automatons, they move to whatever side, and sing to whatever tune their masters prescribe. ... Fed by the villany they uphold, these prostitutes resemble Swiss mercenaries - they range themselves under whatever banner will pay them best, that being ever the best cause which has the longest purse" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 17 May 1834). The second determinant of the stamped press in this analysis was its readership, (what is today called the conditions of reception of a discourse). The readers of a journal particularly hostile to trade unions were characterised as "those beggarly employers who, from want of capital or credit, being unable to compete with their wealthier rivals, ... have no other resource than clipping the poor journeyman's wages" (*ibid.*).

During the 1830s, working class publicists began to realise that, worse than the traditional aristocratic despotism, was capitalist exploitation. The 1832 Reform Act, the 1834 Malthusian-Benthamite parliamentary reform of the Speenhamland system, and the absence of any serious piece of factory legislation that would have protected an increasing number of working classes from inhuman exploitation and great misery, lead them to shift the focus of analysis. The middle classes, and more precisely «capitalists», or «traders», were increasingly depicted as the main oppressors. This class antagonism is illustrated by the following series of statements on the "true character of the middle class": "It is this class which has made the condition of the British labourer worse than the brute beast. ... It is this class which lately demanded the re-enactment of the combination laws, and which is now secretly at work to induce government to pass a coercion bill for England similar to the Irish one. It is this class which chorusses «God save the King», at our theatres, and bawls «Britains [*sic*] never will be Slaves», while slaves the most abject that ever crawled the earth, they have made our once happy labourers. ... It is this class which two weeks ago, asked permission of Lord Melbourne to form a permanent armed association under the name of Special Constables ... in a view to aid the police and magistracy in crushing the Trades' Unions. It is this class which made the Revolution of 1789 in France, in order to seize the estates of the French Noblesse and Clergy, and afterwards destroyed that revolution to prevent the working classes from sharing its benefits" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 30 March 1833).

By 1834, the main rhetorical and theoretical efforts of the editors of the *Poor Man's Guardian* were directed against the middle classes. They were aware that the antagonism between the two classes was based on opposite economic interests. The interests of "capital and labour", of "capitalists and their workmen", were described as being "diametrically opposed" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 8 October 1834). Because they grounded this class antagonism in economy, they felt the need of a proper working class economic doctrine. The nucleus of the working class economics was the labour theory of value. Its core hypothesis is that labour is the source of value of commodities. From this perspective, trade and capital become useless, the capitalist nefarious, and the labourer the source of wealth. Since labour is the source of wealth, the sole producer of society's wealth are the «productive» classes, not the capitalist one (e.g. *Poor Man's Guardian*, 12 November 1831). The inequality in the distribution of wealth is therefore double: not only do capitalists not create any wealth (wealth being created by labour), but they appropriate the profit created by the labour of the working classes. As Carpenter stated in his "social economy": "Mere capitalists, or persons who accumulate money by purchasing the labour of others, while they perform no labour themselves, do not add anything to the wealth of the society" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 17 September 1931). What was stated, in sum, is that the labouring classes have their produce stolen so that the upper classes may consume.

Competition between workers was also blamed for distress among them. Competition between labourers resulted from mechanisation and from the legislation adapted to the economic needs of the master class. The fact that every fifth man was a pauper, and that only a proportion of labourers was fully employed showed, argued the *Poor Man's Guardian*, that, contrary to the middle class assertion, machinery did not increase employment. Organised competition was used to reduce wages, and, since there were too many labourers competing for too few jobs, many were pauperised (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 24 December 1831).

Working class publicists did not take private property for granted. They referred to it as a «system» and was also perceived as a source of many of their evils. Hetherington criticised the attempts by the *Penny Magazine* to present the "inviolability of property" as the "grand stimulant of production" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 26 January 1833). In this magazine "wherever the institution of *property* is glanced at, it is with a view to inculcate its anti-social «rights», or rather its cannibal pretensions" (*ibid.*). Cooperators and Owenites attempted to set alternative models. Owen for instance proposed a community of property based on the equitable distribution of the fruits of labour among those who pródu͏ce them (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 24 November 1832).

Such were some of the statements and opinions of some of the unstampeds of the working classes. These examples illustrate the potential of a working class public press to voice a political and economic doctrine corresponding, as they thought, to the interests of some fractions of the working classes, to propagate and construct, progressively, a world vision of their own, to publicly articulate and develop an ideology as close as possible to the needs of the political struggles in which they were engaged. Never again, in the history of this country, did they have the opportunity to spread so widely the *conscious and voluntary expression* of their political will. As working classes political and economic doctrines became more sophisticated, they also became more private.

II.3: The Practical Function: (Hear and Laughter)

Public texts also had a *practical function*. They kept readers informed on, first, the political bodies which defended their interests, second, local and national political life.

I

Public newspapers were the *organ* of a political body. Sometimes, a newspaper could be founded by a group of public men, or by a public organisation. The launching in 1801 of the *Leeds Mercury* by Baines, who was MP for seven years for the constituency of Leeds, was paid for by eleven backers, all reformers and dissenters (Read, 1961: 76). Similarly, the *Manchester Guardian* was founded in 1821 by a group of eleven Unitarians (Read, 1961: 81, 142). Another possible link between the paper and a political group was sponsorship. It could be by direct subsidies, or the regular purchase of a certain amount of copies. The most frequent and important link between public life and the newspaper, was, however, the publisher himself: middle or working class publishers belonged to political organisations.

Middle class publishers were generally political leaders of their local middle class society. Thomas Ward, first editor, between 1819 and 1829, of the *Sheffield Independent*, became chairman of the Sheffield Political Union. Robert Leader, editor of the *Independent* since 1833, was the secretary of the Sheffield Anti-Corn Law Association (Read, 1961: 169-171). Samuel Smiles, editor of the *Leeds Times* since 1839, in 1840 founded the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association. He became its secretary, and, after that, "the *Leeds Times* gave the proceedings of the association full publicity" (Read, 1961: 179). Both the Sheffield's *Register* and *Manchester Herald* were closely linked to the Constitutional Society of their respective cities. If the editorship of the *Herald* was shared by the leading members of the society, the *Register* was "formally congratulated ... on its zeal for reform" by the society of Sheffield (Read, 1961: 71).

William Carpenter was between 1828 and 1830 a discipline of William Thompson, and became prominent at the Co-operative Congresses (Hollis, 1970: 308-309). Between 1832 and 1835, he was a member of the National Union of the Working Classes (NUWC), and a council member of the National Political Union (NPU). John Cleave was active in many organisations, such as the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge (BAPCK) or the Metropolitan Political Union (Wiener, 1969: 150). During the campaign for the repeal of the newspaper duty, he emerged as a leader of the NUWC (Hollis, 1970: 309). James Watson toured the North for the co-operative movement in 1830 (1970: 315). He became a leading member of the NUWC and of the Working Men's Association. Henry Hetherington had a very active political life. Besides his activities as propagandist (organisation of meetings, tours of lecture in the Midlands and in the North), he belonged to many organisations: he helped to establish the Co-operative and Economical Society (1821), the London Mechanics' Institution, the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge (1829), the Metropolitan Political Union (1830), and, in 1831, he helped to launch the National Union of the Working Classes (Wiener, 1969: 143).

The meetings of these organisations were reported almost verbatim and commented on in their respective working or middle class newspapers. The meetings of the National Union of the Working Classes were reported at length in the *Poor Man's Guardian*. The most frequent narrative mode was the indirect speech interrupted with direct quotations: "Mr. Oshorne then presented himself, and read the first resolution, as follows: - «That this Union hail with delight the vote of the Chamber of Deputies that has abolished the hereditary peerage of France, and trust that that glorious example will be speedily imitated in every country where hereditary privileges and distinctions exist»" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 22 October 1831). The reactions of the audience were dutifully reported: «shame», «hear», «laughter», «cheers», «great cheering», «tremendous cheering», «roars of applause», etc.

Newspapers also reported the speeches of politicians, political leaders, and public activists, not necessarily connected with the paper, but whose political goals were close to those of the journal. This aspect of public newspapers is reinforced by the fact that readers' letters were extensively published in the columns of working or middle class papers. Readers exchanged opinions and ideas through these columns. These newspapers, whose editorial line was generally based on a very specific political doctrine, kept their columns open to sympathetic opponents. In other words, they also organised a political debate around their main political line.

The function of the public press, however, was not limited to coverage of events, meetings and speeches: it helped to coordinate the actions and to promote the activities of political organisations. Papers' columns were opened to members of different societies reporting on their activities or debating on their goals and strategies. Future events, meetings, publications, of these societies were announced in the last pages of papers. Unstampeds for instance were crucial in coordinating the working class movement at a national level. Unstampeds played the role of means of communication between dispersed groups in the territory. They played the very basic function of transmitting information between groups, a function that would be fulfilled later in the century by electrical means of communication, such as the telegraph or telephone. Without these electrical means of communication, unstampeds were the only way information could circulate among working class organisations dispersed around the country. Local clubs would have been completely isolated from each other if unstampeds did not keep them informed of both national events and activities of other local branches. Without the unstampeds, in other words, the working class movement could never have developed at a national level.

Between the public press and political organisations, therefore, the link was *organic*. This link is concretised by the four tasks into which the practical function of a public newspaper may be subdivided. A public newspaper *publicised* the activities of a political organisation (e.g. the reports of meetings), *transmitted* information to dispersed groups, *coordinated* these various groups and connected them with the central political organisation, and finally *promoted* these organisations by advertising their future activities. To publicise, to inform, to coordinate and to promote are the four tasks performed by these newspapers in their relationship to political organisations. These newspapers therefore did not have an autonomous existence from the field of politics. Combative and purposive, they were directly engaged in politics. Indistinguishable from this realm, these newspapers *made* political struggles more than commenting on them.

II

The second element of the practical function of public texts is that public newspapers publicised the parliamentary debates. Although public newspapers, stamped or unstamped, brought the «news of the day» (which included foreign reports and domestic trivial news, such as fires and suicide attempts), the main ambition of their editors was to keep their readers informed on political life. If political events occurring outside the Houses were not ignored, parliament proceedings, however, have been for more than a century newspapers' predominant subject. Their reports filled columns and pages of governmental, middle class and of most working class newspapers.

By itself, the publication of these reports epitomises the public character of this class of texts, and justifies the label «public» attached to the newspapers which publicised the parliamentary proceedings. The authorisation to publicise these proceedings is a landmark in the genesis of the bourgeois public sphere in England and in other European countries (Habermas, 1992). For this reason, the publicity of the parliamentary debates constitutes the most important historical task ever fulfilled by the press. During the 1770s, British political activists were the first to be granted this right in Europe (Siebert, 1965: 346-392). Since this decade, the reputation of a bourgeois paper was built on the quality of its reports of the proceedings of the Houses. Most often proceedings were published verbatim, but they were sometimes published in a quasi-verbatim form. They were rarely summarised. The first paper to gain a reputation for excellence was the *Morning Chronicle*. Founded in 1769 by William Woodfall, it was the first paper which reported in its morning issue the previous nights debates (Pendleton, 1890: 49-63). After Perry's death (second editor), in 1821, *The Times* became at its turn famous for its parliamentary columns. John Walter had nevertheless been ironic when launching the *Daily Universal Register* in January 1785 (*The Times's* original name) on the daily papers who "build their fame on the length and accuracy of parliamentary reports with a laudable zeal to please those who can spare time to read ten or twelve columns of debates" (Jones, 1919: 49). Until the 1880s, the vocation of journalist was almost synonymous of parliamentary reporter. The debates were the main «event» to be reported, and newspapers had teams of reporters at the Houses to keep up with the pace of debates.

Working class papers, whose readers were unrepresented, took care to inform them of parliamentary proceedings and decisions. Hetherington, who called the House of Commons the "few elected", and the House of Lords the "self-elected", devoted the necessary amount of space to report, in indirect style and with accurate and complete lengthy quotations, the debates of the Houses. Parliamentary proceedings were given more prominence in the *Destructive* and the *Working Man's Friend*, where they appeared on the first two pages.

II.4: The Will to Struggle

The two functions of the public discourse have been presented. Public texts, on the one hand, propagated political doctrines and articulated class-based points of view on politics; on the other, they coordinated political movements and conveyed general political information.

From these two functions stem the philological properties of the public discourse. The first property is related to publicists' aim to articulate the political subjectivity of a social class, or of one of its fractions. The public discourse conveys this subjectivity both in its intertextual structure (most public texts are about politics) and in the texts (public texts are mainly about politics). The subjectivity is concretised, in public texts, in two ways. First, publicists always express the combativeness of a political body, whose claims and demands determine the form and content of their texts. Second, publicists report facts and events and comment upon them from the point of view of a specific and explicit political viewpoint. Furthermore, among these facts, they select those which are most relevant for their interests. So, both by a political reading of the reported facts, and by a selection of those which are presented, publicists refer to reality in a way which is determined by the political struggles in which they are involved. In sum, the construction itself of reality, in public texts, is political. This is why unstampeds have been so essential in fostering working class consciousness, and so effective in contributing to uniting workers living an unrelated existence in different trades and industries into a politically coherent social class.

This political subjectivity needs to be qualified; it is collective. This *collective subjectivity* produces, philologically, an *objective subjectivity*. In a certain sense these texts are objective because the opinions they represent and the representation they give of reality correspond, or are intended to correspond, at a given time, to the *common* political needs of the members of a class or fraction of class. In this case, «objective» is taken as a synonym for «common», and is opposed to «subjective» with the meaning of personal, or individual. Public texts fulfilled the needs that individuals had in common, as members of a social group or class, with the other individuals of the same social group. Public texts are objective because they did not address readers in their subjectivity, e.g. in their personal dreams, in their intimate illusions. They only addressed readers in their social and political dimension; as members of a collectivity. So, the commonality of the subjectivity that public texts express forms the first element of objectivity of public texts. Subsequently, these texts are also objective because (as Adorno remarked about "earlier" popular culture), there exists an "equilibrium" between the "ideology" of these texts and "the actual social conditions" under which their readers lived (Adorno, 1991: 140). Publicists' political partisanship was in harmony with the political position of the class or fraction of class they spoke for. The objectivity of public texts is grounded on the *homology* between the social and political situation of a social class and the ideology of these texts. This objective subjectivity constitutes the first philological characteristic of public texts.

The second property of these texts is that they possess a *communicative substance.* This communicative substance is due not only to the primary role of publicists which is, as described, to publicise the activities of political organisations or the opinions of its members. More importantly, public texts communicate with their readers because publicists wrote with the intention of educating their public, and their public let themselves be educated by them. In between the educator and the reader occurred an *exchange* of opinions and ideas that gave the communicative substance to the symbolic interaction between them. If, on the contrary, a text is written with the intention of reflecting the prejudices of readers, the text is devoid of communicative substance. In this case, the author of a text does not write with the intention of communicating ideas or opinions to readers, but of seducing them. In order that a text possesses a communicative substance, its author must write it with the explicit intention of changing the opinions and ideas of readers.

It could be said that since public texts reflect an objective subjectivity this subjectivity corresponds to the prejudices addressed by the author who seduces readers. The first difference is that while a collective subjectivity is based on reason, prejudices are based on emotion; reason is «objective», but emotions, even when the same emotion is shared by many, are «subjective». The second difference is that the collective subjectivity does not equally exist in the minds of every reader, and not in the same way. It is the will of publicists to propagate this political subjectivity, to inculcate it in readers' minds. To do so, they may have to argue against their readers' prejudices, since they must transcend their immediate experience of life and explain things beyond their appearance. So, objective subjectivity and communicative substance form two of the philological qualities of public texts.

Finally, is it possible to assess the political effects of the public press? The notion of effect is very reductive in the case of the public press since it fulfilled several tasks whose function goes beyond the question of effects. The capacity to articulate a political doctrine and an ideology, to coordinate and to promote the activities of political organisations, to publicise speeches, meetings, or the debates of the Houses, to inform readers on political facts and events, means that the political influence of these public newspapers is guaranteed by the numerous political tasks they fulfilled. Moreover, since the press was not autonomised from the field of political struggles, the extent of its symbolic efficacy cannot be assessed with precision. What is certain is that publicists wrote with the intention of exercising an ideological effect, wrote with the will to convince and persuade their readers. Publicists, through their efforts to propagate political doctrines and diffuse political knowledge, asked people to defend their own political interests. Most important of all, however, they not only urged them *to act*, but to do so *collectively*. Publicists not only encouraged people to struggle for political ideals, but enabled them to *unite* to achieve them. If public texts had any effect, it was to arouse people's will for collective struggle.

CHAPTER VI
THE MAKING OF THE MEDIATIC FIELD

I

The texts of the public discourse were not produced by a distinctive *field of discursive production*. Publicists were constituents of either a bourgeois or proletarian public sphere, and their texts were the expression of their relative positions in these spheres. The next two chapters attempt to demonstrate how the dynamic of economic competition created a relatively autonomous field of production. These are the new relations of production within this emerging field which commodified the public discourse and provoked the appearance of a new textual class. This chapter in particular attempts to explain how competitive relationships created the mediatic field as a field of struggles relatively autonomous from the political field and following its own immanent economic laws.

Although this chapter focuses on economic struggles in the mediatic field, the intention is not to reduce the field to an internal economic determinism. It is not denied that there exist other types of struggles within the field. Neither are economic capital and economic profit the sole types of capital and profit in use and at stake in the field. What is argued are the two following. First, economic struggles are the type of struggle which autonomised the mediatic field. This process has been mentioned above and illustrated with the school of fish (Chapter IV - section III.1). The intensity of competition for a market creates a concentration of forces and energies which agents deploy to gain market shares. After a certain period of time, the limits of the field are defined by the amount of investment in economic or scientific capital necessary to struggle in the field, and the ability to perform efficiently some sophisticated tasks. The autonomy of a field therefore increases with the intensity of the struggles for a market. It is this process which is here examined. The second argument is that these economic struggles not only autonomised the mediatic field and determined its limits, but they also gave to this field its shape and its structure. This statement is mostly examined in the third section of the chapter.

The validity of these assertions is limited sociologically and historically. Sociologically, these remarks are limited to the mediatic field and may not be extended to other fields of cultural production which emerged during the second half of the XIXth century. The mediatic field is above all an *industrial field* whose production is cultural. Because its production is discursive this field may be associated with other fields of cultural production such as the literary field, but unlike other fields of cultural production the main agents in the mediatic field are industries and companies. In an industrial field, economic capital, material stakes, economic profit, and economic struggles (economic competition) prevail over other species of capital, profit or struggles. These latter do not disappear from industrial fields, but, in those fields, the rules of the game are, predominantly, defined by the economy.

Historically, these assertions are mostly valid for the initial phase of the mediatic field. This phase can be sub-divided into the *heroic age* (1855 - 1880s) and the *consolidation period* (1890s - 1922) of the field. Both phases are characterised by an intensification of the circulation of economic capital in the field. The increasing importance of economic capital, which began to circulate like blood in a living organism in the mediatic field, and in the texts its agents produce, is due to two factors. The first is that between the 1850s and the 1880s not only the mediatic field but capitalism itself was in its heroic phase. Economic capital was a new type of capital which was becoming a determining force in all aspects of life. In the press as in other fields capitalists increasingly invested their money with an expectation of profit. The force of economic capital in those fields was made even more powerful by the fact that capitalists became a dominant force in the political field. Legislation, and the absence of it, often protected the interests of capitalists against those of landowners and working classes. The second reason for this progression is the absence of direct state intervention in the mediatic field during this period. It is only with radio and television that the state becomes a key player in the mediatic field. Although the modern state is by no means an anti-capitalist force, state-owned media and legislation modify the flow of economic capital in the field. Without governmental «interference» the rules of the game were plainly and directly defined by the forces of economic capital. A weak political opposition and the absence of governmental intervention are two of the main reasons for which economic capital and capitalists have been the most determining forces of this phase of the mediatic field. This is why competitive struggles are so important in comprehending the mediatic field and its discursive production.

II

Competitive struggles have never been completely identified as the main determinant of the philological properties of the mediatic discourse. The most widespread explanation of the emergence of the «commercial press» has been, for a long time, the 1870 and 1876 Education Acts, which would have created a mass of semi-literate people whose poor intellectual abilities and bad tastes would have been pandered to by the commercial press. This hypothesis, the most fallacious but the most convenient explanation for the growth of the commercial press, has been consistently proposed by journalists such as Simonis (Simonis, 1917: 286), Ensor (Ensor, (orig. 1936) 1992: 145), Clarke (Clarke, 1950: 25-26, 36), or Francis Williams (Williams F., 1957: 129) for more than half a century. On the ground that widespread literacy among working classes was accomplished well before the 1870s, the hypothesis was challenged by Webb (Webb, 1955: 13-35). For the same reason, Raymond Williams also rejected the literacy argument (Williams R., 1961: 156-172), and put forward the industrialisation thesis. According to this hypothesis, industrialisation or concentration constitutes the basis for the development of the press (1961: 178). But to take concentration, or industrialisation, as the source of change, is to elect as a cause that which is only a symptom. Concentration of ownership is precisely the result (and the proof) of competitive struggles in the mediatic field: how could titles disappear if the mechanisms of competition did not drive out weakest competitors from the field?

Closer to the sociology of discourse are Curran and Garnham. Curran insisted on the constraints of market mechanisms, and among them on the overwhelming importance of advertising revenues for papers sold under production costs (Curran & Seaton, 1991: 106). This aspect of the mediatic field, however, is not as determining as it appears, since advertising has always been an essential source of revenues for newspapers both before and after the 1853 repeal of the advertisement duty. The press has always been dependent upon advertising, at least for its profits, and this is a constant which the introduction of market principles did not modify. By the 1720s already, newspapers' profits came entirely from advertising revenue (Harris & Lee, 1986: 19), and many newspapers were primarily advertisements sheets, as proved by 1730s titles such as the *Daily Advertiser*, the *London Advertiser*, the *General Advertiser* or the *Morning Advertiser* (Aspinall: 1948: 211). Although the duty checked the growth of advertisements in the press, the revenue from the duty was quite substantial. In an average year, 1832, it amounted to £156,858 (Aspinall, 1950: 226). Advertisements, by the end of the XVIIIth century, generally took more than half the space in newspapers such as *The Times* or the *Morning Post*, even more in papers such as the *Literary Advertiser*, the *Daily Advertiser*, or the *Sunday Advertiser*. The *Morning Advertiser* was founded in 1794 by the Society of London Licensed Victuallers for the insertion of the advertisements of its members, and so was the *Globe*, in 1803, by the booksellers (Grant, 1871: 55-57, 64-67). So, because of the importance of advertising revenue before the repeal of the taxes, advertising cannot be taken as the explanatory variable in the modification of the rules of production of the public discourse.

Although, to my knowledge, Garnham does not put forward a formal hypothesis of the emergence of the commercial press during the XIXth century, he mentions the determining influence of competitive struggles in the cultural industries. Criticising the relativism, ahistoricism and individualism of discourse analyses on the media (Garnham, 1990: 20), he explains that capitalism, (whose one of the characteristics is the "pursuit of capital accumulation through competition"), has a determining influence on the "process of cultural production" (Garnham, 1990: 10). Moreover, Garnham specified the four types of competitive struggles that prevail between cultural industries. Companies compete for "consumer income", "advertising revenue", "consumption time" and "skilled labour" (Garnham, 1990: 158). It can be said therefore that the hypothesis of the sociology of discourse is similar to the premises of Garnham's political economy of information and culture. A difference between the two disciplines would be on the way to elaborate from these premises. For instance, Garnham prefers the concept of cultural industries to the notion of field, and the orientation of the sociology of discourse is more historical than Garnham' political economy.

Parallel to Curran and Garnham, but also in a relatively different manner, the sociology of discourse proposes to analyse how the transformation of the relationships between agents who created and belonged to the emerging mediatic field into economically conflictual relationships, transformed the nature of the texts produced by the agents of this field. To know the cause of things is almost to know the thing itself. Thus the nature and the dynamic of the competitive struggles internal to the mediatic field are described in some detail. The following sections are intended to define what made competition possible, to specify the concrete forms that market struggles took in the mediatic field, and to describe how their internal logic and immanent forces autonomised and constructed the field.

I: Freedom of Competition against Freedom of Expression

I

In 1836, the main tax, the newspaper stamp duty, was reduced to 1*d*., and the series of repeals began seventeen years later: the advertisement duty was abolished in 1853, the newspaper stamp in 1855, the tax on paper in 1861 (Collet, 1933: 186).

The 1836 reduction was due to the combination of the illegal activities of the publishers of working class unstampeds and of the parliamentary pressure of the middle classes. The success of the unstampeds, and the positive effect that persecution had on their sales, helped middle class activists to convince the government that repression was becoming useless, and that other means had to be employed to extinguish the working class press.

Middle class activists had several reasons to campaign for the repeal. Some were purely commercial, some were ideological. Concerning the ideological motives (not entirely clear to the middle class activists themselves), the repeal they lobbied for was a necessary step in a comprehensive attempt at ideological legitimation of the social order. The objective of this effort was twofold. The first was to suppress the working class press whose antagonism was increasingly directed towards the middle classes and the economic system they were supporting, capitalism. So, the first reason to demand repeal was to stop the publication of working class unstampeds by more subtle means than inefficient repression. The second objective was to supplant this working class representation of the social and economic world by a middle class one. To achieve these aims, middle class publicists needed the abolition of the taxes because they wanted to be able to legally print cheap publications able to compete with the penny unstampeds. Indeed, the taxes which the working class publicists evaded gave them a competitive advantage over middle class propagandists.

Once the 1836 reduction made the working class unstampeds disappear by creating a cheap Sunday market (cf. chapter V -

section I.1.3), the argument remained the same for the Association for the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, the middle class organisation in charge of the campaign of the abolition of the taxes during the 1840s and 1850s. The abolition of the taxes, according to this association (which limited its action to the bureaucratic harassment of the concerned authorities and to parliamentary lobbying), would allow them to intensify the «instruction» of the working classes since the price of publications would become cheaper (Collet, 1933: 72-79).

If working class activists ignored the fact that it was the red stamp which protected their unstampeds from the competition of the discursive production of an economically more powerful social class which had an urgent need to legitimate the class positions, most small bourgeois ideologists were far from aware of how, precisely, the repeal would affect the press. At first, some believed that the repeal would simply facilitate the diffusion of the principles of utilitarianism and political economy among the working classes. They believed that the universal truth of utilitarianism and the persuasive force of political economy would convince the proletariat of the bourgeois point of view on the social and economic order. Provided working and middle class newspapers were sold for the same price, the proletariat would choose to read middle class newspapers because of the inherent truth of their theories. This point of view was frequently expressed by Francis Place in the *Roebuck's Pamphlets* of 1835 and 1836. A later argument was put forward by the members of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, with Lord Brougham as chairman and Charles Knight as principal publisher. They also thought that the repeal would naturally increase the circulation of their cheap magazines among working classes. The strategy of indoctrination was however more sophisticated. Knight, an active campaigner against these duties, wrote a number of pamphlets against them. A frequent argument of his was that the taxes penalised publishers "labouring for the instruction and amusement of the people" (Knight, 1851: 6). As Knight noticed their long working day made them prefer amusement to instruction, the role of his journal was to "deal with this universal desire for amusement" (Knight, 1854: 298-299). Contrary to working class newspapers, his entertainment had the advantage that it could "enfeeble the intellect, but it does not taint it" (Knight, 1854: 299; cf. also Webb, 1955: 65-82).

A few middle class activists however perceived that middle class newspapers would never gain a working class readership simply through of their middle class propaganda or sense of humour. They realised that the repeal would, above all, introduce into the field of the press competitive mechanisms which would prevent the working classes from having a press of their own: "The cheap publications of whose alleged inflammatory tendency so much complaint is made, are the off-springs of the Stamp Duties: reduce the price of journals which have some character at stake for truth and knowledge, and this fry would sink in the competition" (Fonblanque, 1837: 145). Similarly, Crawfurd argued that if individuals could invest in a "field of competition [which] will be prodigiously enlarged" by the repeal without fear of unethical competition from either rich or poor, it would lead to an "automatic improvement in the tone and quality of journalism" (Crawfurd, 1836: 59). Another way of saying that competition would check the development of the too influential working class press.

Between those who believed in the virtues of utilitarianism, of amusement, and of economic competition, history proved the third opinion right. Although the working classes were about to be amused by popular Sundays and later on popular dailies (imbued indeed with middle class ideology), the mechanism which allowed these commercial papers to flourish, to the detriment of working class newspapers, was economic competition. In other words, it is freedom of competition which restricted freedom of expression, this latter being subordinated to the ability to compete for a market. As already mentioned, the 1836 reduction of the newspaper duty from 4 to 1*d*. created the 3*d*. Sunday market and introduced the economic conditions of competition for the weekly newspapers. Political unstampeds, therefore, lost the competitive advantage that the evasion of the *4d.* stamp had given them, and had to compete with better edited newspapers which did not have a specific political calling. These newspapers were published with the sole intention of amusing their readers: "We shall be less deeply political than earnestly domestic" announced one of the new Sundays on its second issue (Bourne, 1887: 119). It was this nineteen year period which saw the foundation of Sundays such as the *Illustrated London News*, 1842, the *Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper*, 1842, and the *News of the World*, 1843. Against such rivals, with the latter two reaching the 100,000 mark at mid-century, working class unstampeds could not compete, and most unstampeds collapsed in 1836 (Bourne, 1887: 119-126; Maccoby, 1935: 419-420).

The *annus mirabilis* of the British press, however, was 1855. The repeal of the last penny of the stamp duty this year had the same effect for the daily press as the 1836 reduction, albeit on a much larger scale, had for the Sundays. It immediately created the one penny market, followed, four decades later, and thanks to cheaper means of production, by the halfpenny press. These prices made the daily newspaper affordable for most people, and greatly extended the potential market of newspaper readers. The creation of those markets lead producers to struggle for market shares.

The following sections describe the way the creation of the penny market led to economic struggles in which the stake was a share of this market. They also examine how these economic struggles created in their turn a field of discursive production pursuing its autonomous evolution according to the dynamics of its internal struggles. The competitive mechanisms introduced by the repeal produced three related phenomena: sudden growth of the total number of newspapers, (which increased the intensity of economic struggles between them), increase of the average circulation of newspapers, and limitation on the ability of newspapers to generate financial resources, since agents use pricing as a strategy to limit other competitors' revenues. The following sub-sections (I.1 - I.3) describe these mechanisms, and the third section examine how they shaped the mediatic field.

I.1: Growth of the Total Number of Newspapers

The first effect of the 1855 abolition was to significantly increase the number of newspapers in the United Kingdom. The characterisation of what may be considered an explosion depends on: (1) the period of time considered; (2) the area of sale; (3) the character of newspapers taken into account.

1) Between 1854 and 1856, Mitchell's Newspaper Directory registered an increase of 115 newspapers, class and trades included (Collet, 1933: 134). The upward trend continued until the end of the century. In England, in 1856, there were 530 newspapers, by 1895, they were 1798 (Collet, 1933: 134-135).

2) For Marx, as he noted precisely in 1855, the "revolution ... caused by the abolition of stamp duty" mostly concerned the "provincial press" (Marx, 1980: 281). Four penny dailies appeared in Glasgow, and the weeklies of Liverpool and Manchester, hitherto without one, were turned into dailies (Marx, 1980: 281). Between 1837 and 1887, and for all types of newspapers, the number of English provincial newspapers increased more than five times, passing from 264 to 1366 (Lee, 1976: 291). London however, also had its revolution. In the year following the abolition several dailies were launched, such as the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Morning News*, or the *Morning Star* (Bourne, 1887: 234-238), and numerous others were launched in the following decades. In the capital, between 1837 and 1887, for all types of newspapers, the total of newspapers increased more than twelve times, from 56 to 680 (Lee, 1976: 291).

3) The increase from 264 to 1366 in the provinces and from 56 to 680 in London concerns all types of newspaper, and includes periodicals. The increase of dailies, Mornings and Evenings, was no less significant. From 43 in 1868 the number rose to 139 in 1886. During the 1890s, the number came to 126, but, by 1900, the record of 172 dailies in England was reached (Lee, 1976: 131).

This fast and steady growth of the number of papers in the decades following the repeal helps to illuminate its effect on the press. By the 1880s, with three times more dailies than a few decades earlier, the press became an economic field where the private and commercial interests of its members began to come into conflict. These conflicts arose for an economic reason. What appears to be a contradiction between the growth of a field and the increase in conflict between its members is due to the difference between the short and long term effect of the abolition. During the decades following the repeal, lower prices created a market, dramatically increasing demand, thus resulting in revenue gains as well as rises in profit rates. Consequently the press attracted a number of producers seduced by these new levels and rates of economic profits. The market created by the one penny press however was limited and, by the 1880s, the supply started to exceed the demand. This situation created economic struggles within what was becoming, for this reason precisely, a field of struggles, since agents had to struggle for existence within the field. Since then, the existence of a newspaper became dependent on its ability to struggle to occupy a certain position in the field, at the expense of real or potential rivals. Dominant positions within the field (e.g. leadership in a market) also became object of struggles and conflicts between agents. This new environment made their economic and discursive behaviour more aggressive: *Homo homini lupus*. To survive, the production of a newspaper had to be cost efficient, its management business minded, its circulation important enough to reach the break-even point imposed by production costs. The first effects of this increasing competitive pressure were felt by the end of the XIXth century, when newspapers began to disappear. By 1910, the number of dailies was reduced to 121, a drop of 30 per cent, compared to the 172 dailies of 1900 (Lee, 1976: 131).

I.2: Increase of Average Circulation

I

There is no discursive production without the expectation of profit, either symbolic, political, or economic. Whereas the production of public texts was driven by an expectation of political profit, the repeal of the taxes on knowledge increased the field of possible profits: purely economic profit became acceptable. In fact, it is in the field of the press that for the first time texts themselves became the place of economic profit. Not that this type of profit was absent from the production of public texts, but economic profit became, after the repeal, a legitimate and autonomous motivation to write or produce texts. With the rapid development of the industry during the 1890s, Edwardian journalists and proprietors became increasingly involved in struggles whose stakes were purely economic. So, with the development of the industry, the field attracted persons who were primarily interested in the «business» aspect of the field, and for many of them, politically oriented struggles were beyond the horizon. Their capitalist ethos is reflected in mediatic texts but also in many of their statements. Among others, Symon, editor of an illustrated weekly, thought that the journalist is a "man of business", as he "trades in words, just as other men trade in dry or soft goods" (Symon, 1914: 99-100). Northcliffe, the most prominent press baron of the first two decades of the century, also illustrates the emergence of the mediatic field as an autonomous field of economic struggle when he advised newspaper proprietors against "a wide circle of acquaintance among people like politicians": "The newspaper owner should always remember that while the politicians have nothing to give him, they have much to gain from his newspaper" (Lawrence, 1903: 184-186).

The general increase in circulation of each newspaper, as the expression of the pursuit of readership for economic profit, reflects the *internalisation* of the struggles of the mediatic field. Sixteen years after the repeal, in January 1871, the *Daily Telegraph* published every day its certified average daily circulation. By the Edwardian decade, circulation figures were commented on in leaders, or became objects of competitions, such as in the *Daily Mirror*. Once, the *Daily Mail* published on the front page, as if it were a scoop, its circulation figures for each day of the four preceding years (8 February 1908). This may be opposed to the attitude of the *Morning*

Chronicle and the *Courier*, which, in 1822, vehemently protested against a governmental disclosure of their circulation figures, on the ground that the government should not be concerned with the "private concerns of individuals" in their business enterprise (Aspinall, 1949: 131).

II

The 1855 repeal created a new dynamic, as competitive laws made of newspaper production a frantic and feverish activity. In 1801, the eight main newspapers had an average circulation of 1800 copies. There was little difference between them: the highest sale was the one of *The Times*, at 2,500, the lowest the one of the *Morning Post*, at about 1,000 daily copies (Wadsworth, 1955: 7). In 1821, (with the exception of *The Times* which, by then, enjoyed a quasi-monopolistic situation because of the peculiar situation created by the taxes (cf. chapter V - section I.1.3)), other papers sold between 2,000 and 3,000 daily copies. In 1837, the average daily circulation of these eight papers was of 3,862, of 3,700 in 1846, and of 2,775 in 1850 (Howe, 1943: 13). Moreover, each newspaper knew little variation in its own circulation: the *Morning Chronicle* sold 2,000 in 1801 and 2,900 in 1850, the *Morning Herald*, 2,500 in 1801 and 3,600 in 1850.

The post-repeal situation is completely different. If between 1800 and 1850 there was little increase in the average circulation, during the next half of century the average daily circulation was multiplied by forty. From an average circulation of less than 5,000 in the 1850s, it reached more than 200,000 for the dominant papers by 1900. The average circulation steadily increased from decade to decade. In the 1870s and 1880s, the sales of the penny Mornings published in London ranged from 90,000 to 300,000 (Wadsworth, 1955: 21). In 1888, the first number of T. P. O'Connor's *Star* sold at 142,600; in 1892, the *Morning Leader* printed 201,466 copies of its first number. In the 1900s, newspapers such as the *Daily Chronicle*, *Daily Express* and *Daily News* rounded the 400,000 figure (Blumenfeld, 1933: 107).

Correlatively, the leading circulation was multiplied by 20 between the 1850s and 1900s. If *The Times*'s monopoly was condemned, when, in 1850, it reached 38,000 copies, the *Daily Mail* was selling more than 800,000 by the 1900s. The *Daily Telegraph* dominated the field in term of size of readership during the four decades following the repeal (1855 - 1896). Its circulation quickly passed *The Times*'s sales to reach 141,700 by 1861, 191,000 by 1871, and, by 1877, claiming the "largest circulation in the world", 242,000 copies (Wadsworth, 1955: 20). The next circulation leader was the *Daily Mail*, which outdid its rivals from 1896 to 1933. In 1896, the *Daily Mail* printed 395,215 of its first copy. During its first month of existence, it sold 171,000 copies. In July, it sold more than 200,000. In constant growth, it reached the million mark within five years, during the South African war (Jones, 1919: 143). From 1900 to the outbreak of World War I, the *Daily Mail* stabilised around 800,000 copies. On July 1914, for example, it certified daily sales of 814,912 copies (Wareham Smith to Viscount Northcliffe, 10 July 1914, Northcliffe Papers, Add. MSS. 62,212).

These increases in circulation and their rapid variation are symptomatic of the power struggles internal to the mediatic field. This conflictual logic was violently illustrated by the famous circulation war of the early 1930s between four papers competing for the same popular readership: *Daily Herald*, (Odhams group), *Daily Mail*, (Rothermere group), *Daily Express*, (Beaverbrook group), and *News-chronicle* (Inveresk group). During the «war», the most powerful of these papers doubled their readership in a couple of years to cross the two millions mark. If discourse was the main instrument of strategy in the conquest of readers, extra-discursive means were used to boost circulation and to buy readers, such as insurance prizes and free gifts for subscription. The *Daily Herald* multiplied competitions and its canvassers offered cameras, fountain pens, silk stockings, tea-kettles, or cutlery to new subscribers (Williams F., 1957: 200). At the peak of the war, it offered the complete work of Dickens (16 volumes) to those who subscribed to the paper for ten weeks. This economic war cost millions for those who were involved in it. Employing, altogether, 50,000 canvassers, the total cost of promotion was of £60,000 a week, or £3 million a year (Williams F., 1957: 199). By its intensity, this circulation war epitomises the economic struggles within the mediatic field, and illustrates the economic capital agents must deploy in them. As the next mechanism of competition shows, the amount of capital that agents are able to mobilise in these struggles is also, in part, determined by competition.

I.3: Limitations in Generating Financial Resources

Without the taxes, market mechanisms became the sole determining element of the price of a journal. To assess the transformation of the economic conditions, the economic logic of the post-repeal period must be compared to the one prevailing before 1855. The situation of the *Daily News* before the repeal may be contrasted with the one of the *Daily Telegraph* once the tax was abolished. At its launch, on 21 January 1846, the stamp was fixed at 1*d.* and the *Daily News* was priced 4*d.* After a catastrophic beginning with Charles Dickens as editor, Foster came to edit the paper, and Dilke, the manager, cut the price to 2 1/2*d.* In five months, the circulation rose from 4,000 to 22,000, but at 2 1/2*d.* the enterprise proved ruinous. Foster tried 3*d.*, then 5*d.*, but the paper's circulation dropped again, and attempted to re-establish it by going back to 4*d.* Meanwhile, the paper lost four times its original capital of £50,000 (Wadsworth, 1955: 10). One day before the stamp tax demise, on 29 June 1855, the *Daily Telegraph and Courier* appeared at 2*d.* It lost such sums in a month that, by September, the *Daily Telegraph* had to halve its price, and this move allowed it to dominate the market up to the launch of the *Daily Mail.* By 1862, its sales equalled those of all the other London morning papers combined (Bourne, 1887: 234-237).

The two situations reflect two different economic logics. With the penny stamp four pennies was the minimum equilibrium price for the *Daily News* (as for other newspapers). Without the stamp, for most newspapers (with the exception of *The Times*), one penny was the maximum that could be charged for a copy. To explain the different economic logics which determine these two situations two factors must be mentioned. The first is a notion which is introduced now: the *mass market*. The penny newspaper was among the first commodities to be mass produced and distributed. A low price became a possibility when the much greater size of the penny market generated such a volume of sales making possible important economies of scale which in turn reduced the production cost per copy. The second factor is economic competition. Mass production, because of economies of scale, made the one penny copy possible. Competition however made it *necessary*. For instance, both circulation leaders of their respective period, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail*, owed part of their success to their ability to set lower cover prices than rivals. If the *Daily Telegraph* was the first daily to be sold for a penny in 1855, the *Daily Mail* was the first prominent daily to be sold for half a penny in 1896. By the end of the century, the rivals of the *Daily Mail* were forced to halve their price, and, after that, popular papers became the «halfpenny press». In 1889, 46 dailies were sold for a penny, 87 for half-a-penny; in 1913, 27 were sold for a penny, 106 for half-a-penny (Wadsworth, 1955: 26).

The cover price, therefore, became a determining factor in the competitiveness of a journal on a market. Northcliffe, for example, after having tried other expedients, was forced to bring down the price of *The Times* (which he owned between 1908 and 1922) from 3 1/2*d.* to 1*d.* in order to compete with the *Daily Telegraph*. If the price change, in 1913, made *The Times* gain more than 160,000 readers, to reach a circulation of above 210,000, when it went back to 3*d.*, in 1919, it fell back to a circulation of 110,000 (Wadsworth, 1955: 34-35). Because of economic competition, a newspaper cannot set its price independently of rivals competing for the same market: a press-owner deciding to halve the price forces others either to do the same or disappear. «Sink or swim». The price becomes a weapon of struggle which can be used *against* rivals. In lowering its price, a newspaper can diminish others' revenue and therefore their ability to re-invest the necessary amount of economic capital in competitive struggles. Such strategies can also kill rivals if their production costs are higher than the level of their revenues as imposed by dominant competitors. When dominant competitors sell for a time being commodities below production costs with the intention of annihilating a competitor, this strategy is called *predatory pricing*. So, the revenue itself of a newspaper is dependent upon the evolution of struggles within the field, competitors using the price as a means to limit others' ability to generate financial resources. Concentration of ownership of newspapers is the most visible effect of this competitive mechanism.

II: Communication and Printing Techniques

Competition for a market creates a demand for more efficient means of production. At the same time, these new means of production intensify competition between the agents of a field. Competition in the mediatic field was intensified by the development of rapid means of transportation, (the distribution of newspapers), electric means of communication, (the transmission of information), and industrial printing plants. This section examines the relationship between competition and the development of railways, telegraph, and modern printing machines.

I

Rapid railways was a Victorian achievement. Before this period, newspapermen had to rely on stage coaches for the distribution of newspapers as well as for the collection of news. After the organisation of an accelerated service of coaches, in 1784, Manchester was twenty-four hours from London, Edinburgh was sixty. The coach from Waterloo took eighteen hours to bring the news to London, and that was considered an "almost miraculous journey" (Aspinall, 1949: 7). During the first half of the nineteenth century, communications were slowly improving. Shrewsbury was sixteen hours from London, Devonport was twenty-two hours, and Edinburgh forty hours (Aspinall, 1949: 7).

The first newspaper to use a special train was *The Times*, on 14 August 1845. If trains were still too slow in 1868 to reach cities such as Bristol, Birmingham or Southampton before business hours, this could be done in 1875. Since this date, W. H. Smith, the most important distributor, was running regular trains specially equipped for the distribution of newspapers (Lee, 1976: 59).

In May 1845, the first message to be transmitted by electric telegraph to a newspaper was sent to the *Morning Chronicle*. Telegraph companies were quickly created: the Electric Telegraph Company in 1846, the British Electric TC in 1850, the English and Irish Magnetic TC in 1851, and the Anglo-American TC in 1866. This latter company opened the first Atlantic cable in 1873, followed by three other in 1874, 1880, and 1894. Six cities were connected in England, two in the United States (Lee, 1976: 60). By the 1860s, the three major companies combined and the provincial press faced a monopoly demanding prohibitive prices for the use of wires. In 1868, the provincial proprietors established the Press Association to form a united front against the telegraph companies. The same year, a Select Committee was convened, and the proposal of the Post Office to establish a government monopoly was accepted. The government subsidised the press by allowing a cheap rate to newspapers (Lee, 1976: 60-62). So, the telegraph became cheap enough in the 1870s to allow its extensive use by newspapers. In 1871, the number of words transmitted to newspapers was of 21 millions, to reach 327 millions in 1881 and 451 in 1886 (Bourne, 1887: 279).

Printing techniques were a key element which had to be improved if the press was to become an industry able to produce for mass markets. From the invention by Gutenberg of the printing press around 1450, up to the beginning of the XIXth century, the printing technique was hardly improved. One of the few significant changes was introduced by Didot, who, around 1780, supplanted the wood of the table with metal. The most sophisticated versions of the hand press at the end of the XVIIIth century, such as the Stanhope's iron press (1800), or the Cope's Albion press (1823), could produce 250 to 300 sheets an hour (Symon, 1914: 122-127; following paragraph based, unless specified, on Howe, 1943: 1-43).

In the printing field, as in other industries, steam was the revolutionary factor. In less than a century, it drastically improved the printing speed, and metamorphosed a manual craft into a mechanised industry. *The Times* was the first newspaper in the world to use a steam-driven printing machine. Introduced by John Walter II in 1814, the Koenig machine was able to turn out 1,100 sheets an hour. For the following decades, the Koenig was perfected by two of *The Times*'s engineers, Cowper and Applegath. One of the improved aspects was the speed of impression, which was increased by multiplying by two, then by four, the sheet-feeding stations. From 1,200 impressions per hour in 1822, the four-feeder they built in 1827 was capable of 4,200 - 5,000 hourly. *The Times* kept two of them up to 1848, when its circulation was of more than 30,000. Although the Koenig was already using impression cylinders, the paper beneath these cylinders was on a reciprocating bed which, for each impression, had to move backwards and forwards. Since the bed of half a ton had to stop after each impression, this movement demanded a lot of energy. A major improvement was the introduction of a cylinder, instead of a plan, on which the types could be locked. Although the rotary system was invented in 1790 already, Applegath was the first engineer to build a machine upon this principle. His Vertical Printing Machine, used by *The Times* in 1848, was built with a central drum surrounded by the printing cylinders. At the same time, the American Hoe sold a more accomplished sheet-fed rotary system to the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, and to the Parisian *La Patrie*. *The Times* bought his machines ten years later, in 1857. This ten-feeder was horizontal, capable of printing 8,000 sheets per hour, and thereafter, by adding nine impression cylinders, up to 20,000. A further development, stereotyping, allowed for multiplication of the cylinders for the same page, and thus to increase the production proportionally to the number of cylinders multiplied. The mat that could be moulded from the made-up page of type could be duplicated as many time as necessary on other cylinders. It was in 1861 that the first newspaper was printed on a stereotype process (Compaine, 1980: 114).

The last important development concerns the paper feeding aspect of the machine. Presses had to be fed manually sheet by sheet. In 1865, the first web-fed press was developed in Philadelphia. In England, John Walter III was the first, in 1868, to use a web-fed rotary press, and *The Times* was once again able to double its printing capacity. The development of web-fed multiple cylinder rotary presses greatly facilitated the production of mass circulation dailies. By the 1870s, a web-fed Hoe machine was capable of printing, on both sides of the sheet, 14,000 eight-page papers an hour, the equivalent of 224,000 impressions an hour. As a whole, between a hand-press producing 200 sheets per hour and a rotary press printing 200,000, the production time per sheet decreased in less than a century by 1,000 times. Furthermore, some newspapers were using several rotaries at the same time. The *Lloyds Weekly* for instance in 1904 used seven Hoe presses, each of them with an output of 55,000 thirty-two page papers an hour (Lee, 1976: 56).

These three key technical factors, printing techniques, electric telegraph and railways, reached the critical point of their development between the 1870s and the 1880s. These technical innovations intensified the production of mass newspapers. It is only at this moment that news from almost all over the world could arrive promptly in the news room, be massively printed, and distributed in a few hours around the country. Since several newspapers could in the same city or the same country reach similar production capacities, it meant that from the 1880s onwards the supply capacity became, potentially at least, higher than the demand. More precisely, the sales of a newspaper were not limited by technique but by the size of a market and the ability of its owner to fight for a share in this market. So, technical progress intensified competitive struggles within the mediatic field, newspaper proprietors having the technical ability to launch themselves in battles for market supremacy.

II

Now, the role of technique should not be misinterpreted. Neil Postman for example, (a McLuhanian), established a direct correlation between the development of telegraph and the discursive evolution of newspapers. Since, he argues, the telegraph was able to receive news from anywhere and transmit to everywhere in the world (global village theme), newspapers began to print news which, because they did not concern the direct social or political environment of readers, were pure entertainment. According to this technicist argument, the telegraph was not only a direct cause of discursive phenomena such as the fragmentation of contents, but also of the commodification of information (Postman, 1986: 64-70). But technical developments it is argued here did not have a direct influence on the properties of the texts produced by the press. The social and economic conditions of production, and the means of production are two distinctive moments, and the first determines the second. In fact, competitive struggles determine both technical progress and the discursive production of newspapers. This causality should not be reversed. Commodity producers, such as newspaper proprietors, are induced to enhance their competitiveness by the introduction of more efficient tools of production. By this way they form a market without which new machinery and techniques would not be developed.

Many examples illustrate the relationship between competition and the means of production. The following illustrations show that machinery, in an environment of economic struggle, is not neutral, but absorbed, as a vector of competition, in the logic of these struggles. In its first leader, on 4 May 1896, the *Daily Mail* explained why it could be sold at half the price (half-a-penny) of its rivals: "It is no secret that remarkable new inventions have just come to the help of the press. Our type is set by machinery, we can produce 200,000 papers per hour, cut, folded, and, if necessary, with the pages pasted together! ... it is the use of these new inventions on a scale unprecedented in any English newspaper office that enables the *Daily Mail* to effect of saving from 30 to 50 per cent, and be sold for half the price of its contemporaries. That is the whole explanation of what would otherwise appear a mystery" (*Daily Mail*, 4 May 1896).

Besides lower production cost and better printing capabilities, another advantage that a new plant could bring is speed. In 1918, a Northcliffe newspaper, the *Evening News*, faced the growing success of its direct rival, the *Evening Standard*, whose circulation was steadily increasing. According to White, the circulation manager of the *Evening News*, the rival's rising circulation was due to the fact that it was able to print the late edition before the *Evening News*. While the *Evening Standard* could print the last edition at 4.45, which enabled it to catch the 5 o'clock train for Brighton or the 5.10 to Margate, the *Evening News* could not meet these tight deadlines. In a letter sent to Northcliffe, White admitted that: "During this week our last edition has not commenced printing until 5.25 which does not enable me to compete with our rival" (George White to Viscount Northcliffe, 30 October 1918, Northcliffe Papers, Add. MSS. 62,228). Then, after having discussed the figures of the supplies at the London stations with the exact schedule followed by both papers, he concluded: "It proved conclusively to me that our only remedy is to speed up and not let them have the great start in time they have been having" (*ibid.*).

These facts taken from the daily life of the press industry show why one should not, like McLuhan or Postman, abstract the technical factor from the economic conditions of production. The choice and use of a particular technique is a strategy in an economic field. For instance, printing machines were often built at the specific demand of a newspaper. When, in 1855, the circulation of *Lloyd's Newspaper* approached 100,000, they contacted the American Hoe company to install a rotary press whose system was especially improved to meet their requirements (Bourne, 1887: 254-255). A market of readers created a market for machines, since producers strove to gain competitive advantages from their tool of production. Economic competition precedes the use of new techniques, and this is why the means of production should not be autonomised from the economic conditions which brought these means into use.

From a philological point of view, which is also Postman's standpoint, these examples illustrate the fact that technique, by itself, did not transform the discursive production of the press. It is true that the telegraph accelerated the flow of information and that it extended the proportion of foreign news in the press. This fact however is not sufficient to explain the difference between public and mediatic newspapers. Pre-telegraphic newspapers were not devoid of foreign news, as Postman pretends, and this acceleration concerns only a limited aspect of the mediatic discourse without involving its being-in-itself. Technical innovation is not enough to explain either the behaviour of economic agents or the unparalleled expansion of the mediatic field during this period: journal owners, when they purchased new machinery, could have contented themselves to print the exact same paper cheaper and quicker. On the contrary, new plants mean new pain, since proprietors, because of competition, used their new machinery to increase the number of pages, to multiply daily editions, and to send them before rivals to train stations. What metamorphosed the public discourse were the agents' economic practices, themselves determined by "competition [which] subordinates every individual capitalist to the immanent laws of capitalist production, as external and coercive laws"[23] (Marx, 1976: 739). Competitive struggles were made possible by tax abolitions which, by allowing newspapers to reach their market price, imposed an economic *necessity* to compete for an open and expanding market of readers. The pertinence, therefore, of technical progress for the quality of the discourse produced by the press is

[23]This is a concrete way of saying that agents are not sovereign in their texts. Competition is one of the constraints of the mediatic field which externally determine agents' discursive practices and impose on them the use of certain discursive strategies (cf. chapter III - section II.3 & conclusion).

limited to the fact that new techniques intensified competition by multiplying the mechanical power of capitalists to compete for a market of readers.

III: The Economic Struggles of the Mediatic Field

Industrialisation, concentration, and capitalisation are the three concrete effects that competitive struggles had on the press. These effects transformed a sector of activity into a competitive industrial field. They gave to this field its structure, and defined its limits.

III.1: Industrialisation

Industrialisation is here taken in the wide meaning of the term. It refers to the increasingly complex mode of newspaper production.

I

The technical evolution of the mode of production had been extremely rapid from the 1850s onwards. To edit, print, distribute, and promote an Edwardian newspaper demanded a complex and expensive range of techniques. Yet, the invention of a new technique does not guarantee its widespread use in an industrial field. As explained in the preceding section, the main incentive for a newspaper owner to up-date the means of production is competition: a new printing plant is expected to produce cheaper, faster, and better than the older machinery. In lowering operative costs, (generally labour costs), press owners may reduce cover price, or spend more on the editorial service. In printing, composing, or editing faster, they can increase the number of pages, or extend the existing deadline schedules, so they are capable of covering late stories. Once an industrial agent has up-dated his machinery, it becomes a necessity for the rest of the competitors to do so if they want to keep their papers afloat. It can be said therefore that industrialisation is an outcome of competition, or at least that the rate of industrialisation is correlated to the intensity of competitive struggles (the more intense struggles are, the faster the rate is).

From our perspective, what matters are the costs of the industrial means of production. During the pre-capitalist era of the press, the costs of production were low and an enterprising individual wishing to start a newspaper would generally find the capital. Since the tool of production was limited to a hand press, the required economic capital was small. As seen with working and middle class activists, the same person could own, manage, print, and edit a paper and at the same time write many of its articles. The labour force rarely involved more than five salaries, one or two in many cases. Even the more sophisticated governmental newspapers were relatively inexpensive. In the 1780s, Perry bought the *Morning Chronicle* for £500 (Williams F., 1957: 57). In 1795, Stuart bought the *Morning Post* for £600 (Williams F., 1957: 59). In 1818, it was said that the initial expense of establishing a paper was between £2,000 and £5,000 (Jones, 1919: 175).

It was this wide accessibility to the technology of production and diffusion of news which made the movement of the unstampeds possible. This accessibility also explains one of the functions of the heavy taxes which were levied on paper and on many other raw materials used in newspaper production. When newspaper production was not expensive enough in itself to prevent the ownership of newspapers by the working classes, these excise duties were designed to artificially close off access to this position. These taxes were repealed in 1861, that is, when the heavy production costs necessitating large economic investments made them lose their role as gatekeeper.

By the beginning of this century, production costs included: 1) Editorial costs, or expenses of gathering and editing information. This included the costs of an editorial staff of approximately one hundred journalists and editors, of telegraph contracts, and of several foreign correspondents. 2) «First copy» production costs (typesetting, phototypesetting, plate production, and other production tasks necessary before the print itself). 3) Printing costs: machinery, newsprint, and ink. 4) Distribution and circulation expenses. 5) Promotional expenses (advertising, competitions, etc.). 6) Administrative costs and overhead. These production costs can also be divided in fixed or variable costs. Variable costs, in opposition to fixed costs, are those which are directly generated by the production of the newspapers. Ink, newsprint, and the wages of the workers on the production line, are three examples of variable costs (Owers, 1993: 10).

One of the mechanisms which increased the costs of production was the dialectical movement created by competition between the means of production and circulation: rising circulation required the constant modernisation of the means of production, and the modernisation of the means of production made rising circulation possible. New printing plants were required to print more pages (from around 8 in the 1880s to 16 by the 1920s), and more copies. More reporters were hired to fill up these pages, and more sub-editors were needed to edit their articles. Advertising and circulation departments were created to handle the increasing complexity of what became a «daily miracle». So, the higher launching and running costs, created by, and necessary for, huge circulation, meant that the period of time needed to reach the break even point (the point in sales at which the newspaper becomes profitable), became much longer. Industrialisation, therefore, made the amount of economic capital necessary to launch and run a newspaper much higher than during the pre-capitalist era, and this put the press in the hands of capitalists, in the economic meaning of the term. The fact that sophisticated and efficient means of production require extensive capital investments is tantamount to an economic law (Picard, 1993: 197). From a sociological perspective, it means that the press became a field whose limits are defined by the number of people able to invest a sufficient amount of economic capital in the machinery of newspaper production:

In 1876 Edward Lloyd bought the *Daily Chronicle* for £30,000, and invested £150,000 to refurbish it (Koss, 1990: 203-204). In 1893, the *Westminster Gazette* cost Newnes £100,000, and then £10,000 a year for 15 years (Spender, 1927: 138). Between the year it was launched, 1881, and 1894, the *Evening News* lost £298,000 (Symon, 1914: 153). Before the *Daily Mirror* came out, in 1903, it cost £100,000 in promotion alone (Fyfe, 1949: 114). In November 1904, Pearson bought the *Evening Standard* for £300,000 (Koss, 1990: 464), while Thompson was losing the same amount in two years on a Liberal venture, the *Tribune*, which closed down in 1908 (Koss, 1990: 498). In 1917, Lloyd-George bought the *Daily Chronicle* for £1,600,000 (Fyfe, 1949: 186-187), while Kennedy Jones refused a proposal for a new daily with a capital of £200,000, estimating the need for a new paper to be at £500,000 (Jones, 1919: 157). Finally, on Northcliffe's death, in August 1922, Astor paid £1,580,000 for *The Times*, and Rothermere bought the *Daily Mail* and a Sunday paper for £1,600,000 (Koss, 1990: 841).

II

The bourgeoisie did not appropriate the material means of ideological production, but created them: industrialisation of the press, concretising the correlation between means of material production and means of intellectual production, made the press the monopoly of the bourgeoisie because the publicising of political ideas became a luxury only one social class could afford. Whether or not the bourgeoisie could influence the working classes with their own intellectual production is debatable. What is certain is that the consequences of the costs of running a newspaper were that the working classes could not afford a newspaper of their own. During the pre-market era, when production costs involved a hand press, they had, in spite of the legal obstacles, *via* the unstampeds, a strong and vivid public voice. Despite the fact that during the second half of the XIXth century, the second and third Reform Acts (1867 and 1884) widened the franchise, that there were, by 1909, 1,168 trade unions totalling 2,369,000 members (Cole & Postgate, 1946: 484), and that, with Marx's publications, working classes had at their disposal a more coherent and more articulated doctrine than those diffused by the unstampeds, nevertheless the working class did not possess a single daily, and lost a significant means of publicising their point of view. Contrary to the pre-market situation, where the unstampeds helped to raise the class consciousness of the general working class public, late Victorian and Edwardian working class movements, such as Socialism and New Unionism, had enormous difficulties to establish a press of their own. This paradox, between the strong public voice of the nascent proletariat of the 1830s and the weakness of the working class journalism of the second half of the XIXth century clearly reflects the new difficulties in newspaper production created by industrialisation.

It could be said that the 800 periodicals allegedly published by working class organisations between 1890 and 1910 contradict such statements (Pugh, 1993: 79). The presence of these texts in the 1890s is indeed challenging but their discursive status may be clarified by contextualisation. Several facts prevent these texts from being historically significant. First, the position of these papers in the discursive field of their period and the one of the unstampeds half-a-century earlier is different. Since the 1850s, journalists attempted to monopolise the business of news production and diffusion through the occupational norm of neutrality. By the 1890s, journalists rejected the militancy of working class periodicals and symbolically excluded them from the mediatic field. They stigmatised these periodicals as mere propaganda, arguing that to publish «objective» news papers must be «independent». With the emerging journalistic ideal of objectivity, working class periodicals were neutralised as being ideologically «biased». Before the emergence of journalistic discursive norms and practices however, the unstampeds were not perceived as being «biased» or politicised. Being the sole source of information for working classes, having no access (because of their price) to other newspapers, they could not compare these unstampeds to the journalistic discursive production. Far from being marginalised as ideologised information, unstampeds constituted, for working class readers, the natural way to get information. So, unstampeds, unlike the 1890s working class periodicals, were not stigmatised as propaganda; they were the *legitimate* purveyor of news for the working classes.

Second, most of these periodicals were newsletters, not newspapers. The great majority carried very little news other than that which was connected to the publishing organisation. Trade-union periodicals for instance mostly reported news of the union and of other unions. They also published industrial and political news, but in both cases affairs had to have a direct link with the union. In other words, these periodicals were mostly for «in-house use» and did not have the function of a paper carrying general news for a wide public. This is reflected in a peremptory statement of a German communist who turned this inferiority into a «law» in 1907: "We should never think to compete with the news system of the capitalist press. Our press would then completely lose its propagandist thrust because it would damage its principles in favour of profit. We can only repeat: a principled press can never be a newspaper, a newspaper can never be a principled press" (Morton, 1985: 189). By the 1890s, the role of general news provider was fulfilled by dailies and popular Sundays, which had the necessary circulation to pay for telegraphic cables, news agencies and their own reporters. This confinement to a limited range of news also differentiates these periodicals from the unstampeds of the 1830s. Unlike these newsletters, the unstampeds also carried news of general interests and their public did not complete this reading with other newspapers. In sum, limited to the production and diffusion of newsletters of a modest circulation, the Victorian working class organisations did not possess a public pulpit that could project beyond their immediate sphere of influence. With few exceptions, they did not possess publications whose readership would be wider than the group of militants that already belonged to the publishing body in question. So, from the 1850s onwards, the proletarian press is characterised by its marginalisation as a legitimate and general purveyor of news for the working classes.

The main cause of the marginalisation of the few proletarian periodicals which attempted to challenge the journalistic discursive production is that they faced constant, and in most cases insurmountable, financial difficulties. The inability of the proletarian press to generate revenues from advertising (because of the poverty of its readership and sometimes the boycott of advertisers), its difficulty in deploying the necessary amount of economic and human capital, meant that working class papers were invariably unprofitable, and often owed their precarious existence to the voluntary work of devoted militants. The intensifying economic competitive struggles between newspapers made the necessary investments to heavy a burden for the dominated class whose journals could not survive in such a hostile milieu.

The difficulties experienced by the proletariat in having a daily press of their own during the second half of the XIXth century is illustrated by the fate of two papers. First came the *People's Paper* of Ernest Jones, with whom Marx shared the editorship in the summer of 1852. Launched in May 1852, it became the largest working-class newspaper ever produced. In spite of its success and its excellent circulation figures, the funds raised were not enough to compensate for its continual loss, and it ceased publication in September 1858 (Harrison, 1974: 137-139).

Then came the *Beehive*. It was launched in 1861, when Potter, leader of a small union, realised that he could not publicise his point of view in the London dailies and weeklies. It became the semi-official organ of the First International, of the London Trades Council, and of the Trades Union Congress. Influential among working class public opinion it expired for lack of finance in 1876, after fifteen years of success (Harrison, 1974: 141-142).

It has often been argued that the fate of working class newspapers follow the fate of working class movements. By the beginning of the XXth century however, the working class press was more private than ever whereas the working classes have never been better organised. The closure of access to the public sphere produced the paradox of the period, (foreshadowed by the earlier difficulties), where one can observe a working class mass movement (trade unions) and the emergence of a working class mass party (the Labour party) without working class controlled mass papers, or even without a mass paper favourable to these working class organisations. It was beyond the sphere of possible political strategies for a working class advocate to start a newspaper on his own. Such an enterprise could only be attempted, with much difficulty, by working class organisations. After five years of discussion, the Labour movement, without the TUC, launched in October 1912 the *Daily Citizen*. Although £150,000 was sunk in the project, it was no longer enough to launch and run a newspaper. The staff of fifty journalists and sixty employees was too tiny compared to that of its competitors. The paper was unprofitable, not simply because it had a circulation of only 120,000, a modest figure compared to those of rivals, but because of its working class readership, it could not generate enough advertising revenues. The restrictions imposed by the outbreak of the Great War could not harm the paper, which closed in 1915 by governmental decree (Hopkin, 1988: 236-238).

The *Daily Herald* was more successful than the *Daily Citizen*, although its short survival as an independent working class paper was described as the «miracle of Fleet Street». Started in April 1912, its existence was extremely precarious until it turned weekly between September 1914 and March 1919, which made things easier. But as soon as it came back to a daily routine, the paper was losing heavily and appealed for £400,000, which it did not get (Lansbury, 1925: 17). In 1922, it was sold to the TUC, for which the paper proved too expensive as well. In 1929, the Conference sold half of its shares to the Odhams group. The fate of the *Daily Herald* shows that, even with political organisation in support, it was difficult for the working classes to possess a daily newspaper.

The *Star*, founded in January 1888 by the Irish MP T. P. O'Connor, is often labelled «radical» and mentioned as a working class paper. This daily, however, is more an illustration of the transition from a public to a capitalist press rather than the ability of the working classes to publicise their opinions. Although it earned the reputation as a champion of the poor and the labourer, this halfpenny paper was more a milestone in the history of journalism than socialism. Backed by wealthy Gladstonians, O'Connor was at the forefront of the new journalism: he imitated most of the Steadian innovations, such as the use of interviews, feature articles, illustrations, headlines and crossheads. He introduced the gossip column, and, following the *Daily Telegraph*, he devoted several columns to sport. Ambitious and successful in terms of circulation, the *Star*'s ideology was closer to Pulitzer's populism than to the socialist creed (Schults, 1972: 233-239). Generally seen as the first working-class paper, the *Star* was, on the contrary, an early producer of the mediatic discourse, which, when addressed to a popular audience, is called popular journalism. Far from being working-class, the *Star* was the first paper to set the pattern for the «popular» press of the XXth century: popular readership, middle class journalists, and bourgeois ownership.

III

Industrialisation is a good reason why the press of the XXth century cannot be described as public. To be public, every social group, every social class, should not only have equal access but equal weight in the press. But industrialisation made it too expensive for the dominated class to possess its own voice in the public sphere. Unlike the bourgeoisie, the proletariat did not possess dailies capable of giving information and informed judgements on politics.

What semiologists and content analysts rediscover every day deciphering the signs and symbols of mediatic production, i.e. the ideological arbitrariness of the press, is indicated once and for all by high costs of discursive production which the representatives of only one social class can afford. Once a stage is arrived at in which important economic means are required to produce newspaper articles, a legal «press freedom» is not enough to guarantee a real freedom of the press. Since economic capital is imperatively needed to diffuse one's own interpretation of events and political ideas, the freedom of the press is limited to those who possess these economic means. Industrialisation made it possible for the bourgeoisie to achieve what the taxes on knowledge attempted to do: to distribute press freedom along class lines.

III.2: Concentration

The monopolistic trends of the mediatic field, i.e. the concentration of *ownership* of newspapers in fewer hands, is the result of competitive struggles which, when intense, exhaust the financial resources of the weakest competitors. When the capacity of an agent to struggle in the mediatic field is exhausted, the newspaper can either close down or be integrated into a larger group. Concentration, therefore, is related, on the one hand, to the decrease in the numbers of newspapers, on the other, to the growth of conglomerates.

I

Because the movement of economic capital in a market economy is directed by the expectations of profit, the allocation of capital to newspapers is an investment which must be as profitable as in other industrial fields. A newspaper, therefore, owes its existence to its ability to generate an acceptable margin of profit. With this in mind, it becomes clear that the correlation between industrialisation and concentration is concretised by the *break even point* of a paper: it is the amount of sales necessary to reach the return on investments. A certain amount of copies must be sold each day in order to pass beyond production costs. For instance, in 1914, 50,000 copies sold every day were enough for the *Daily Herald* to survive. By the 1920s, although it reached a circulation of 330,000, it was far from self-supporting (Williams F., 1957: 189-191). The running costs that industrialisation imposes explain why proprietors cease to publish a title even with circulation figures of several hundred thousand copies: the *Daily News* and *Daily Chronicle* merged in 1931 with respective circulations of 765,000 and 828,000 (Koss, 1990: 932).

Costs, as a contemporary involved in those economic struggles emphasised, "is a serious thing in these days of fierce competition" (Symon, 1914: 223). What distinguishes *competition* and *rivalry*, is that the former involves a «negative» element, in the sense that to survive an agent may also attempt to neutralise rivals. Some of the techniques used by Northcliffe, (occupying the dominant position in the mediatic field in the first two decades of the century), to keep the pressure on cost, included paying higher wages than competitors, and selling newspapers for the smallest possible price (cf. section I.3). Another illustration of the use of price as a competitive weapon is given by *Daily Herald's* competitors. In 1919, the government's attacks on the *Daily Herald* brought this paper to the brink of collapse as the subsequent rise of circulation (because of the heavy price of newsprint) cost the paper a fortune. To survive, the *Daily Herald* had to raise its price from 1*d*. to 2*d*. Knowing that the cost of newsprint made other newspapers lose money as well, the managers of the *Daily Herald* asked them to do the same. They refused to move, seizing the opportunity to kill a competitor and to capture part of its readership, even at heavy cost (Lansbury, 1925: 160-161). (The manoeuvre resulted in ruining the *Daily Herald*. Heavily indebted, it lost its independence and was sold to the Trades Union Congress in 1922. They sold in turn half of their shares to the Odhams group, who turned the paper into a tabloid.)

So, newspapers disappear because of *mutually destructive* economic behaviour. Conglomerates grow for the same reason. When two titles combine (merger), or when a group takes control of another one (acquisition), it is because one of the papers, or one of the groups, *had its resources exhausted by competitive struggles and became unable to pursue the struggle by itself.*

In case of business combinations (mergers and acquisitions), the expected benefits of the operation is generally a diminution of costs through economies of scale, which may involve four areas. First, several titles placed under the same roof can share editorial costs, which include journalists' wages and contracts with news agencies. Second, administrative expenses can be cut. This may imply a regrouping of the billing service, the classified advertisements department, or the distribution system. Third, control over several newspapers may allow the proprietor to offer a greater array of markets, differently stratified, to advertisers. Fourth, and most importantly, a plant can be shared by several newspapers, such as a Morning, an Evening, and a Sunday paper. This allows for the optimal use of plant and printing equipment. For example, the main reason why the director of Odhams, Julius S. Elias (1st Viscount Southwood) wanted, in the 1920s, to buy a daily, was the fact that the plant which printed the Sunday *People* was left unoccupied the rest of the week. It turned out to be the TUC's *Daily Herald*, but at first he would have preferred the Tory *Morning Post*, Elias being himself a member of the Conservative party (Koss, 1990: 892).

Since the costs of keeping a newspaper running might be greater than profits, or expected profits, or because the profit or expected profit margin was too tiny to be worth the effort, the concentration of titles in the hands of fewer owners happened not only through mergers, but also because papers disappeared, reducing henceforth the total number of independent papers. There were 172 dailies in England in 1900, the highest number ever. Then, the figure fell constantly. By 1921, there were 124 newspapers, by 1926 112, and 106 in 1931 (Royal Commission on the Press, 1949: 188[24]). A decline of 38 per cent in three decades. More precisely, this decline was due not only to the closure of many newspapers, but to a deficit between the number of closures and of launches. During the same decade the *Daily Dispatch*, (1900), the *Daily Express*, (1900), the *Daily Mirror*, (1903), and the *Daily Sketch*, (1909), were successfully started by prominent press groups, the *Daily Courier*, (1900), the *Daily Paper*, (1904), the *Majority*, (1906), and the *Tribune*, (1906-1908), failed to succeed, and accompanied the closure of five other newspapers in

[24]Henceforth abbreviated to R.C.P.

London, such as the *Echo*, the *Morning*, or the *St. James's Gazette* (Bell, 1912: 575).

So, concentration of ownership is the product of two correlated phenomena: extinction of titles on the one hand, and on the other, mergers and take-overs.

II

Concentration is widely recognised by media analysts as a fundamental characteristic of the mediatic field. The fact was already acknowledged in 1947, in the scope of enquiry of the first Royal Commission on the Press, which was to monitor "the growth of monopolistic tendencies in the control of the press" (R.C.P., 1949: 3). Commission members held the moral opinion that "free enterprise in the production of newspapers is a pre-requisite of a free Press", and tried to "reconcile the claims of society and the claims of commerce" (R.C.P., 1949: 155-156, 164). This is probably the reason why, although they were aware of phenomena of competition between newspapers, they refused to link competition with concentration. Concerning the correlation between competition and concentration, it is significant that the British press became strongly concentrated only a couple of decades after the field became heavily competitive. As early as 1910, the British press reached a level of concentration which thereafter remained relatively stable. (This is why the commissioners could reach the conclusion that although concentration exists, the trend does not (R.C.P., 1949: 149).) In 1910, the three same companies controlled, in terms of circulation, 66.9 per cent of Mornings, and 82.6 per cent of Evenings (Lee, 1976: 293):

	Mornings	Evenings
Northcliffe	39.0%	31.3%
Morning Leader Group	15.5%	34.5%
Pearson	12.4%	16.8%

Without being in itself proof of the correlation between competition and concentration, this early date in the concentration of the press would tend to confirm that both phenomena are closely connected; a few decades of intense economic struggles being enough to create powerful conglomerates and to drive out the weakest competitors from the field.

III.3: Capitalisation

I

The concept of capitalisation refers to the change in the *type* of ownership between the precapitalist press and the commercial one. The ownership and management of the pre-market newspaper fits in with the pattern of production characteristic of early capitalism, in which the simplicity of the mode of production limited the division of labour, and in which the relatively low cost of the means of production did not require large financial assets. With the evolution of the mode of production of newspapers (the process of industrialisation), the possession of newspapers changed hands, because it required a greater volume of economic capital and because a newspaper became a more complex undertaking. Newspapers became the property of capitalist enterprises which bear two characteristics: they are profit oriented and bureaucratically organised.

In this evolution from a public to a capitalist press, the historical figure of the *press baron* should be understood as a *transitional figure* between precapitalist newspaper production and its capitalist and bureaucratised production. The press baron appeared when economic capital became predominant in the production of a newspaper. With the increasing rationalisation of production and the increasing power of managers, press barons changed their style of management and behaved more like conventional press owners.

The power of press barons within their empire could be characterised as patrimonial, a patrimonial power bordering on «sultanism». The power of the «chief» was absolute and unchallenged, the recruitment of senior employees (directors and editors) was done on the basis of personal loyalty, there was a regime of rapidly changing favourites within this staff, which was dominated in many cases by a ruling family. Inside the fief, employees were subject to the chief's whims and arbitrary decisions. Outside, politicians and statesmen were the witnesses or the victims of his personal vendettas, exaggerated sense of self-importance, and presumptuousness. Press barons however gradually lost their arbitrary power because of the bureaucratic and rational mode of management that the size of the empires they owned, and sometimes created, increasingly required.

By 1922, newspaper ownership could take various forms. The first was when newspapers were the primary activity of the group. That was the case of the Harmsworth galaxy. Through companies such as the Amalgamated Press Ltd. or the Associated Newspapers Ltd., Lord Northcliffe and his brothers, (including Lord Rothermere), possessed, in the early 1920s, 75 weeklies and monthlies, (*Answers*, *Comic Cuts*, *Home Chat*, etc.), as well as prominent dailies and Sundays which included the *Evening News*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, *The Times*, the *Weekly Dispatch*, or the *Sunday Pictorial*. They also controlled approximately 17 other dailies and 34 weeklies in the country (R.C.P., 1949: 197-203, 217-218). Another example, though more modest, of a primarily press undertaking was the Riddell group, which, by 1922, incorporated George Newnes Ltd. and C. Arthur Pearson Ltd. The group owned more than 24 publications, its flagship was the *News of the World* (Labour Research Department, 1922: 31).

The second type of press ownership was related to undertakings whose primary activity lay outside the press. In the early 1920s, that was the case of the Berry group, which included the economic interests of the three Berry brothers, Lord Buckland, Lord Camrose, and Lord Kemsley. The three brothers were connected, by capital, with 57 companies involved in shipping and transport, insurance, finance and investment, engineering and shipbuilding, in the production of textile, chemicals, coal, iron, and steel. Out of a total capital of £55,560,126, £2,687,421, (less than 5 per cent), was invested in newspaper companies (Labour Research Department, 1922: 23). By 1922, although the involvement of the Berrys in the press was still in its infancy, (being developed in the following decade in what became the independently run Kemsley and Camrose conglomerates), their most significant 1922 possessions included the *Sunday Times*, the *Financial Times*, the *Daily Graphic* and *Sunday Graphic*. Another example of this type of ownership is what was called the «Cocoa Press», that is, the newspapers owned either by the Rowntree or Cadbury families. The Cadburys concentrated their efforts in the *Star* and *Daily News*, two national dailies. The Rowntrees had more diversified assets. In 1922, they possessed at least five dailies in the north, such as the *Yorkshire Gazette* and the *Northern Echo*, and were involved in more than ten other provincial dailies. They also controlled the weekly *Nation* and the daily *Westminster Gazette*, two allegedly influential Liberal publications (Labour Research Department, 1922: 31-34).

There has always been great debate about the «motives» (profits or propaganda?) of press barons and other powerful press owners. This question is complex and the analysis of the motives of an agent should never be autonomised from concrete history and the specific situation in which these motives are embedded. In the case of the cocoa press for instance, it is often assumed that they owned newspapers for the sake of Liberal propaganda only. As both families were heavy advertisers however, their newspaper possessions should not appear as disinterested as is generally believed. For the Berrys, the profits were multiple and variable from paper to paper. From the ownership of the *Financial Times*, for example, many types of profit could be drawn: a direct economic profit, since the paper was profitable, an indirect economic profit, since the paper had a certain influence in the financial field, and, since its possession might have contributed to the attainment of a peerage, a symbolic profit. Moreover, the possession of a popular paper gave them a political advantage. Thanks to the *Daily Graphic*, they could defend their point of view as coal producer during the numerous miners' strikes. During a strike in 1921, the *Daily Graphic* could claim that "Neither the Government nor the owners are against the miners, but the miners are against both, and are moreover at present against the Community" (Labour Research Department, 1922: 28).

This phenomenon of capitalisation points to the closure of access to the ownership of newspapers. Since the extraordinary amount of economic capital necessary to own a newspaper greatly limited the number of people capable of doing so, it also limited the number of persons who could have motives for possessing newspapers. So, whatever the intentions of press barons, the privilege they had must be underlined. Capitalisation, or the erection of economic capital as a barrier of entry to the ownership of newspapers, indicates why the term «capitalist press» is not a criticism, an insult, or a metaphor, but a fact.

II

The basic argument of this chapter is that the market of readers made possible by the new price of newspapers in 1855 created a field of struggles. This field is characterised by the predominance of economic conflict over other types of struggle. This chapter was devoted to their inside analysis. It started with the three phenomena that the opening of this market created (growth of the total number of newspapers, increase of average circulation, and limitations of agents in generating financial resources), pursued with the role of technique in economic competition, and ended with the three consequences these effects had on the field: industrialisation, concentration and capitalisation. These changes metamorphosed the texts produced by the press. From public, they became mediatic. The next chapter attempts to examine this discursive transformation.

CHAPTER VII
THE GENESIS OF THE MEDIATIC DISCOURSE

The mediatic discourse is characterised by several discursive phenomena. They are examined in this chapter in their process of formation.

I: Commodification of the Public Discourse

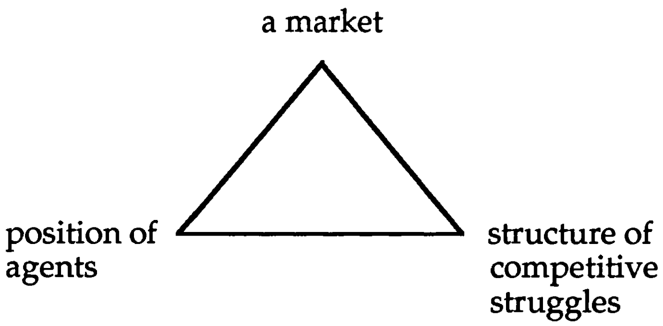
In the next sub-section (I.1), the process of commodification of the public discourse is examined at a relatively high level of abstraction.

I.1: The Rationalisation of a Discursive Practice

Unlike public texts, mediatic texts are the products of rationally calculated discursive strategies. The set of mediatic discursive practices is determined by the discursive strategies employed by agents in competitive struggles. As already seen, agents of the mediatic field use several types of strategy. Pricing is one of them. They also compete with texts. Texts are the symbolic weapons with which editors and journalists engage in economic struggle. When texts are used to compete, and when strategies are deployed in texts, these strategies are discursive. They constitute the main factor of rationalisation of discursive practices.

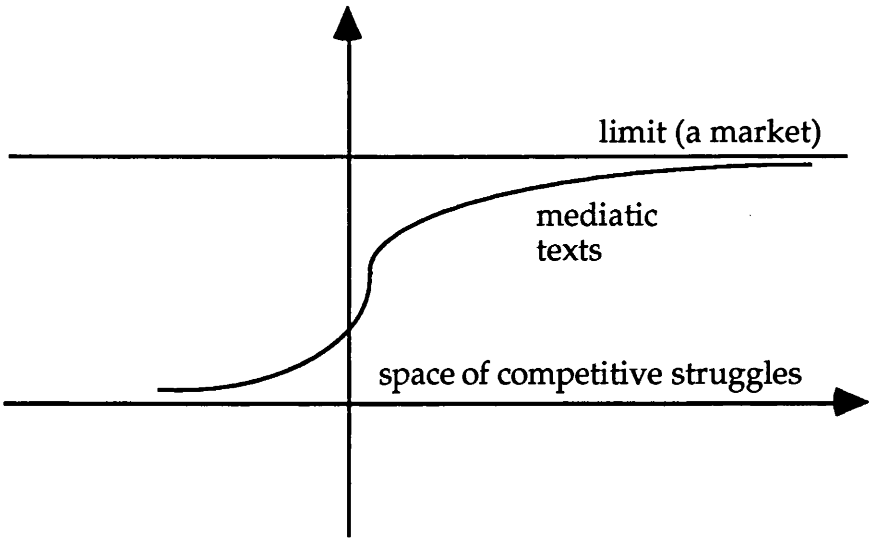
These strategies are themselves determined by three elements. First, they are determined by the global structure of the mediatic field, as shaped by the competitive mechanisms and their consequences (industrialisation, concentration and capitalisation).

Second, by the relative position of each agent in this structure. The third determining factor is the object of these struggles and strategies: a market of readers. Statically, the discursive strategies which originated the process of rationalisation of the production of mediatic texts is the outcome of the interplay between these three factors:



In its dynamic, the process of rationalisation may be compared to a mathematical model in which a function determines the value of a variable which tends to the limit of this function. In this metaphor, mediatic texts are the variable, the function which determines the value of this variable is competitive struggles, and the limit of this function is defined by the object of these struggles, the particular market agents compete for. In other words, it is argued that because a group of agents compete for the same market, this latter constitutes the limit towards which converge the texts written for the readers of this market.

Since competitive struggles for the *same* market induce discursive strategies which force discursive practices to adapt to the tastes and needs of the readers of this particular market, these discursive strategies *uniform* and *systematise* agents' discursive practices. This systematisation of discursive practices is what creates discursive regularities, that is, the convergence of certain texts towards their market-limit. So, this model suggests that not only is the nature (in this metaphor: the value) of mediatic texts determined by rationally calculated discursive strategies, but that these texts converge towards the bounds fixed by the market they are aimed at:



The group of texts which are produced to compete for the same market (e.g. the popular market), converge towards the same limit. This movement implies a *standardisation* of the texts which converge towards this limit. Standardisation may have two meanings. It can be understood as the discursive consequence of the process of concentration of ownership. In this case, the term refers to the fact that only opinions which have at their disposal the economic means for their expression have the possibility of being voiced. The aspect of standardisation which is here emphasised concerns the *similarity* of the texts which compete for a same market.

This intertextual similarity is the product of the discursive strategies of agents who are attempting to make their texts conform to the market they are «targeted» at. Since the profitability of a newspaper depends, partially, upon this adequacy, never perfect but always perfectible, mediatic texts are the expression of the search for this *optimum* adequacy. This adequacy is defined, and perpetually redefined, on the one hand, by the structure of competitive struggles at a given time and by the relative abilities of competitors to meet market's demands, and on the other hand, by the state of the market (in expansion, in decline, etc.) that these agents struggle for. So, the texts which are written with rationalised discursive practices are the expression of a *performance*.

In sum, since all competitors, either by way of imitation, or by market research or any other means, are susceptible to the same calculation and therefore employ similar discursive strategies, the most tangible effect of the rationalisation of the mode of production is the great similarity of the texts produced for a similar market. This similarity is illustrated by the discursive phenomenon called dualism, i.e. the divergence between the «popular press» (more exactly the press produced for the popular market) and the quality press. This *discursive gap* is generated by the fact that newspapers competing for the same market become increasingly similar, converging towards the same optimum adequacy. Progressively, this similarity forms a distinct group of newspapers, clearly different from papers competing for other markets. Similar to dualism, the discursive phenomena examined in this chapter are the intertextual outcome of agents who employ similar discursive strategies to succeed in a market.

I.2: Depoliticisation

The origins of this complex discursive phenomenon are examined (sections I.2.1 & I.2.2), and then its various facets analysed (sections I.2.3 - I.2.5). It must be specified first that depoliticisation does not mean de-ideologisation. Depoliticisation does not mean that texts are not politically arbitrary or that they are not politically motivated. The concept refers to specific discursive treatments of politics as well as to the decision to reduce the amount of politics by the agents of an emerging field slowly creating an autonomy for themselves from the political field. An example of the depoliticised discursive treatment of politics is the way it has been progressively personalised and spectacularised by journalists. The deliberate strategy to reduce the amount of politics in a newspaper, or the discursive fact that sport can take more prominence in the news selection of certain newspapers than political facts, is another form of depoliticisation.

In a certain sense, it could even be said that both phenomena are inversely correlated. Ideologisation begins where politics stops. The transition from depoliticisation to ideologisation is illustrated by an article written by a "Conservative journalist" in 1885. The concern of the anonymous author was to provide advice to Conservative supporters interested in the establishment of a newspaper. The article was published in a purely and openly Conservative review, the *National Review*. Once the question of costs and managerial problems had been dealt with, the author came to the core of the problem: politics. On this subject, he wrote: "The anxious Conservative politician who is deploring the state of the Conservative press in the provinces will ask, what about the politics? I answer, the less the better" (A Conservative journalist, 1885: 825). This remark shows that *even* in the case where one of the motives for launching and running a newspaper was political, it was considered that not only too much politics but also too "violent" (i.e. a too visible) an ideology would not only damage the success of the enterprise but also reduce the ideological effect sought after. The ideology a text conveys becomes a philological problem only with the phenomenon of depoliticisation. With the discursive strategies (in most cases commercially motivated) that the phenomenon of depoliticisation implies, political ideologies are not stated explicitly and individuals read implicit political and ideological statements without knowing it. Political ideologies are still in the texts, but in a different way.

The phenomenon of depoliticisation epitomises the rupture between the two classes of texts. For instance, the commercial calculation was so alien to publicists' discursive practice that many of them could keep the same leaders' political subject up to several weeks. By comparison, the most political of the editors of the Edwardian years (and for this reason considered an anachronism by his contemporaries), the Liberal Alfred Spender of the *Westminster Gazette*, did not dare write more than three consecutive leaders on the same subject (Spender, 1927: 161). This illustrates one of the discursive characteristics which differentiates both classes of texts:

in contrast to the politics-centred discourse of publicists, for whom not only politics was almost the only source of news but the *raison d'être* of their newspapers, the agents of the mediatic field started to produce depoliticised texts.

I.2.1: News as a Competitive Variable

During the second half of the XIXth century news became a *competitive variable.* As such, news acquired an important function in journalism. When news became for the agents of the field a discursive weapon in competitive struggles, editors began to devote less space to politics and to extend the realm of news to non-political matters.

News from «all spheres of life» (as it was then said), became more important than political news when editors began to realise that the news they provided to their readers were a means to beat competitors. For instance, a piece of news, preferably sensational, became a scoop if published before rivals. (It may be noted that the scoop ideology of journalists could only develop within a competitive system in which it becomes crucial to perform better than rivals. The scoop epitomises the historical specificity of the necessity to compete with words and symbols.)

Competition is therefore the reason why the hunt for news started. Good editors or journalists became those who developed this «news sense» which allowed them to detect good «stories» before rivals. Money, in addition to news sense, also became an essential tool to secure exclusives. In 1896, Nansen received £4,000 from the *Daily Chronicle* for his account of his north pole expedition (Simonis, 1917: 72). The Central News, a news agency founded in 1870, paid slightly more, £5,000, for Scott's story, as the "tragic end of the expedition ... added considerably to the money value of the story" (Simonis, 1917: 169). The agents of the mediatic field developed a specific way to treat events, depending on what they could earn from them, and how they performed compared to rivals.

The case of war is archetypal. For its victims, war is a tragedy, and cause of sorrow, but for journalists, it became a spectacle and a source of profits. The Franco-Prussian war of 1870 was the first opportunity for the *Daily News* to distinguish itself from its rivals. Its correspondents performed extremely well and the Liberal paper had the best coverage of the war among London newspapers. Its sales tripled, passing from 50,000 to 150,000. For this reason its editor was told that "you and Bismarck are the only persons who have gained by this war; you deserved it" (Bourne, 1887: 281). Although the news agency Central News "suffered form real bad luck" with Jack-the-Ripper murders, World War I was a compensation for this loss, where "C.N. men scored heavily" (in term of scoops) (Simonis, 1917: 169 & 172). The same war was also a cause of satisfaction for the *Daily Mail*. As its editor-in-chief explained: "For four years [1914-1918] the war had been the daily «big story» ready-made every night" (Clarke, 1931: 120).

So, since exclusives were profitable both to the journalist's career and the sales of the paper, a sense of rivalry between journalists developed. Because of this system of struggles, journalists developed an instrumental perception of reality. Scandalism for instance is nothing else but the extreme instrumentalisation of news, and shows how far editors and press owners can go to beat rivals using news as a weapon. Since *the relations of production condition journalists' perception of reality*, these struggles also extended the realm of facts open to perception by journalists as a piece of news to fields other than politics. When Kennedy Jones (editor of the *Evening News* and Northcliffe's associate in this undertaking) said that "we neither live for politics nor by politics" (Jones, 1919: 158), he meant that, since texts are a source of revenue, and news a weapon in the battle for readers, there is no reason to confine oneself to a specific type of news: "The first object of a newspaper is to supply news ... on all topics of public importance" (Jones, 1919: 158). In the instrumentalisation of news, the «news-value» of a fact became *external* to the fact itself, and therefore political news lost its priority in the selection of news: "We must not let politics dominate the paper" said Northcliffe to an editor of the *Daily Mail*, "Treat politics as you treat all other news - on its merits. It has no «divine right» on newspaper space" (Clarke, 1931: 197).

In a competitive system, editors have a hope and an agony. The hope is to increase the readership, the fear to lose readers. At the same time they try to «score» scoops and exclusives, they live in the perpetual anguish that rivals will disclose information that they passed over or simply that remained unknown to them: "The *World*", wrote Pulitzer in a note to his journalists in 1899, "should print not only all the news worth printing, but should have, daily, some striking development or feature in the news line that will lift it away from its competitors and make it talked about" (Juergens, 1966: 48). Northcliffe used to read all morning papers and to ring his editors to "cross-examine [them] about the contents of the rival morning papers" (Clarke, 1931: 127). Clarke (the editor of the *Daily Mail*) had therefore to read them all as well, and could learn, on the phone, "whether [he] had won or lost the previous day in the incessant quest for «scoops»" (1931: 126). Every morning, Julius Elias, the director of the *Daily Herald*, spread on the floor of his office the three rival papers he was competing with (the *Daily Mail, Daily Express* and *News-Chronicle*), to spot differences in the treatment of news, and to check if rivals had published news disregarded by the *Daily Herald* (Williams F., 1957: 184 -205). So, as news became an instrument of competition, it also became a *constraint*.

The news selection was less determined by the need to inform readers than by the necessity to satisfy their curiosity at least as well as competitors. It became a necessity for editors not to omit facts and events published by rivals. Just as a paper can gain readers with scoops and exclusives, so also it can lose readers if its readership find out that other dailies publish more scoops than their usual paper. «Nothing is news until it has been printed by a rival paper» said a Fleet Street motto. It shows the ambiguous relationship of editors to events: at the same time they constantly attempt to secure exclusive news, they watch each other, and the information an editor decides to publish acquires the status of news. This is because no editor can afford to disregard an exclusive piece of news published by a competitor, for fear that readers would find it interesting enough to buy this rival daily. This strategy depoliticised the source of news, as competition forced editors to cover all sorts of events, not only the political ones. In 1888 for instance, the ambition of the editor of the newly created *Star* was "to be the earliest in the field with every item of news" (Schults, 1972: 235). That is, all sorts of news. Some facts become news therefore not because they have a particular importance in the political field but because they are considered as useful by journalists in the competitive struggles in which they are involved. In sum, the result of competitive struggles was that journalists developed an instrumental relationship to facts and events and the selection of news was the reflection of this specific relationship. The fact that news became a competitive variable helped to separate the mediatic discourse from politics.

I.2.2: The Journalistic Definition of News

The Royal Commission on the Press noted the two most common elements in the definitions of news they received from newspapermen. News must interest the public and be new (R.C.P., 1949: 103). The requirement to interest a readership, whatever its size and composition, reflects the fundamental fact that what makes an event worth being published is not its intrinsic value but the presumed interest that a readership may find in it. The news-value has been exogenised from the event itself to be defined, *via* the tastes of a market, by competitive relationships. In these conditions, political facts cease to have a privileged access to publicity. They have the same status as events from other fields of interest, in the sense that their publication depends upon the same criteria as other types of news: what happens in politics must be as interesting or entertaining as what happens in sport for instance. Simonis was told, when the *Evening Standard* was in difficulty, that, although they preferred "subjects which people were talking about", political facts would also be published but only "when they were directly interesting to the general reader" (Simonis, 1917: 103-104). If, theoretically, all sources of news have an equal probability of being published, which is already a great difference compared with the public press, journalists inverted the scale of value. Contrary to publicists who privileged political subjects, they began to ignore news from the political field. When the same commission asked newspapermen which events they considered as being "both new and interesting" (R.C.P., 1949: 104), they did not even mention politics. First came sport, then news about people, followed by news of "strange or amusing adventures", then tragedies, accidents, and crimes (1949: 104).

Second, news must be new: «Old news is no news». With the intensification of competitive struggles after 1855, the freshness of news became even more imperative. In the parts of the world where electric means of transmission of information were not available, couriers carried their parcels using whatever means of transport they could find, steamer, train, horse or even dromedary (Bourne, 1887: 136-139). Technical progress and the telegraph in particular allowed editors to improve the up-dateness of news, and newspapers started to "palpitate with actuality" on a 24 hour basis (Stead, 1902: 479). Being judged on the freshness of their news, the newness of news became the new standard of publication. As competing newspapers concentrated on the latest possible news, the day before publication became history, anything occurring in the world after the last edition was printed becoming crucially more important than anything which happened before. «Now» became the new frame of reference for the publication of news, by opposition to the old one, politics: what happened yesterday in politics became less newsworthy than what happened today in sport. This new criterion of selection means that whatever their provenance, the events of the day gave pulse to the dailies.

The depoliticisation of the public discourse was not provoked by a movement endogenous to the public sphere, as Habermas tends to believe (Habermas, 1992: 141-180). Journalists defined news according to the needs of production as imposed by competition. Economic competition is a form of relations of production which is exogenous to the principles of functioning of the proletarian or bourgeois public spheres of the XIXth century. The journalistic definition of news had three consequences for the mediatic treatment of politics. First, the mediatic discourse lost the role of publicity which characterised the public discourse (I.2.3), second, the treatment of political information became itself depoliticised (I.2.4 - I.2.4.2), third, politics became a small proportion of the discourse of the press (I.2.5).

I.2.3: The Loss of the Function of Publicity

The right of the press to *publicise* the debates of the Houses was a right fought over more than a century, and gained during the 1770s (Siebert, 1965: 346-392). England was the first country in Europe to authorise the publication of parliamentary proceedings, while the French and German press gained this right only during the second half of the XIXth century. By itself, the exercise of this right justifies the title of «public» by which the texts of the pre-market press are known. This right gave to bourgeois papers (whose reputation was established on the basis of the quality of their reports), the opportunity to inform their readers on the way their economic and political interests were protected and promoted in both Houses. For radical papers, middle and working classes, the publication of these debates constituted the substance of their critiques and the main source of information which was indispensable to their political struggles. Because the debates were fully reported in the same paper in which they were criticised, publicists knew that their readers were aware of the parliamentary debates and of the current political situation and were thus in a position to understand the scope of their critiques. Although their readers were unrepresented in parliament, working class publicists published nonetheless the debates of the Houses. These debates also, helped them to shape working class consciousness. Working class publicists had their own way of reporting speeches, slicing them with sarcastic comments. The *Poor Man's Guardian* for example published the full copy of the King's speech of the 1831 winter session, together with, "according to our custom, the literal meaning of it" (29 October 1831). The publication of the parliamentary proceedings also reminded the working classes that they elected none of the peers and MPs speaking in the Houses, and that the bills discussed and voted in the parliament represented interests opposed to their own. But whatever way these reports were used by publicists, they were essential for the public press, and constituted the nucleus of its information. These debates were so important to the press that even when the public character of the press was already diminished, a book on newspaper reporting published in 1890, included, out of seven chapters, four on the work of reporters at the Houses (Pendleton, 1890).

It is probably because of this historical and political importance that the parliamentary reports remained intact until the end of the 1870s. While, under the compulsion of the *Daily Telegraph*, newspapers were increasingly characterised by «lighter» and «brighter» contents, such as sporting news, gossip, antics of famous people and other tit-bits, nevertheless, between 1855 and the 1870s, none of them, including the *Daily Telegraph*, removed or shortened verbatim reports of parliamentary proceedings. A typical 1870s layout had nearly one page devoted to parliamentary reports. The debates of the House of Lords could be given half to one and a half columns, while those of the Commons could reach five long columns. The reports were fairly extensive and quasi-verbatim. The debates were automatically reported, whatever their importance.

In the 1880s, however, the *Daily Telegraph* began to be more selective and more concise in its parliamentary reports than other newspapers. If, in *The Times* for instance, a six-column page could be entirely devoted to verbatim reports, the *Daily Telegraph* started to divide the equivalent news page with, on average, two to three columns of foreign news, one to two of criminal reports, and one to three of parliamentary information. During the 1880s, although the *Daily Telegraph* was imitated by some Evenings, the function of publicity was relatively well preserved by most newspapers which did not drastically cut the long reports of speeches and proceedings. For the Evenings, the first significant change came in 1888 with the *Star*. Since this paper was aiming at a working class readership, its editor preferred, at the start, not to publish too extensive reports. For the same reason, the *Evening News* or *Evening Standard* also heavily sub-edited parliamentary reports. In Evenings with readerships recruited among the bourgeoisie and the elite, such as the London gazettes, (the *Globe*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, or the *St. James Gazette*), proceedings were summarised in few columns. The function of these newspapers however was different from those of bourgeois Mornings, and it can be presumed that many of their readers looked over morning newspapers as well.

Decisive for the future of the discourse of the press, the most serious breach in the function of publicity came in 1896 with the launch, by Northcliffe, of the *Daily Mail*. *The Busy Men's Daily Journal*, as its front page stated, preserved, in its early years, the reports of the debates, but these reports rarely exceeded two short paragraphs. The average size of its parliamentary column, in its first month of existence, was seven lines for the Lords, and eight for the Commons. These proportions remained approximately identical up to the beginning of the century, when however the debates were reported only if considered worth publishing. By the Edwardian decade, the bulk of the discursive production of the mediatic field (that is, popular and middle class papers, such as the *Daily Express* or *Daily Chronicle*, the illustrated dailies, such as the *Daily Graphic* or *Daily Mirror*, and the Evenings) only rarely mentioned parliament. When they did so, the reports were never longer than few lines. Regarding the quality papers, although their reports were longer, none had particularly extensive reports. *The Times* ceased to be the exception in 1908, the year Northcliffe bought it. He forced its editor to shorten the general length of its articles, and, among them, the parliamentary proceedings.

Along with parliamentary proceedings, the public press used to report verbatim politicians' speeches made in and outside the Houses. Concerning these speeches, a particular reason why they progressively disappeared from the columns of newspapers was the appearance of the interview. The interview is a properly journalistic stylistic form, in the sense that informal verbal interaction with politicians had long been a traditional means of collecting information, but it is only around 1884 that journalists started to state explicitly in newspapers that politicians were being interviewed, and that they published the actual questions asked them. In fact, the interviews journalists could secure with prominent politicians proved very useful in their rivalry with other journalists. The introduction of the formal interview in the 1880s allowed journalists to introduce themselves within their own discursive production, and to enhance their prestige in the mediatic field (showing rivals and readers direct access to certain politicians). Formal interviews also gave them the possibility to claim to publish exclusive information (the interview being granted personally), and to intervene in politicians' discourse. When the technique was introduced, most politicians who were asked to be formally interviewed were reluctant. William T. Stead, the editor of the Liberal evening *Pall Mall Gazette* who promoted the technique, had to be extremely persistent to secure some interviews (Brown, 1985: 164-165). Once published, since interviews were edited, the result was not always what politicians expected. Gladstone for example twice made a complaint in 1889 for distortion (Brown, 1985: 166).

So, in spite of the technical apparatus of the mediatic field, journalists of the 1900s did not perform the simple task of transmitting primary political information as efficiently as publicists did. Three decades of capitalism in the field of the press (three decades of mild competitive struggles), were enough to greatly reduce the public character of the texts the press produces. This new relationship to political information can be comprehended with an analogy. For just as capitalism is not interested in labour for itself but for what it can extract from it, so also the loss of the function of publicity is the symbolic consequence of an *instrumental* discursive practice which is only interested in an event for what it can earn from it. For a discursive practice which is motivated by economic profit and determined by economic competition, the intrinsic political signification of a parliamentary debate becomes irrelevant, or less relevant than the need to produce a «bright», «lively», «amusing» newspaper, of which verbatim political reports are excluded because they are judged dull and monotonous.

When verbatim parliamentary debates and speeches disappeared from newspapers columns, the press lost an essential dimension. First, the most legitimate (because the most socially useful) of the functions of the press, the publicity of these debates, disappeared. This role of the public press provided an opening onto politics, since it increased readers' political knowledge. Without it, the press is no longer a *window* which opens onto politics but a *mirror* which reflects people's political ignorance. Since the reports were free of any journalistic interference, this function made the public discourse genuinely objective, and gave readers the opportunity of being in *direct* contact with politicians. By contrast, since it became the role, and the power, of editors and sub-editors to decide not only when their readers are interested by politics, but what, in politics, should interest them, the mediatic discourse stands, like a *wall*, between readers and politics. Second, with the loss of the function of publicity, one of the most communicative dimensions of the public discourse disappeared. The public press was the *intermediary* between readers and politicians. Without politicians' words and sentences, the press lost this communicative aspect that resides in the discursive act of making debates public.

With the loss of the political reports, the press, alienated from one of its essential dimensions, lost a part of its political and social *raison d'être*. This loss contributed as well in alienating the public from politics, and, as far as the working classes was concerned, it also led to the loss of consciousness that laws are made and voted by men and women representing and promoting the classes and fractions of class which elect them and which contribute to reproduce the class divisions which are at the basis of these laws.

I.2.4: Making Politics Entertaining

The second aspect of depoliticisation is the depoliticised treatment of politics. The separation of the news-value of the event from the event itself, and its location in what editors believe to be the tastes and desires of a readership, had several consequences for the way journalists treat politics. Many political events are not selected for their intrinsic political relevance, but because of their aesthetic, entertaining, or dramatic qualities. Politically important events are also selected, but they are treated in a way in which they lose their political dimension. In both cases, because editors and journalists want to make "politics entertaining" (as said the editor of the *Illustrated London News* about the *Daily Telegraph*) (Symon, 1914: 198), the treatment of political news became itself depoliticised, and politics ceased, in popular newspapers notably, to make sense politically. The depoliticised treatment of politics took several forms: the anecdotalisation, personalisation, and spectacularisation of public life are briefly examined in the three following sections (I.2.4.1 - I.2.4.3).

I.2.4.1: Anecdotalisation of Public Life

An early sign of anecdotalisation of public life was given by the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Among the thirty-three competitions that the journal ran between 1886 and 1887, several had politics as their subject. One of them asked contestants to rate members of the Commons in twelve categories, including "best orator", "best debater", "greatest bore" and "most eccentric" (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 October 1886). Significant as a vision of politics external to the political field, such a competition, unthinkable a decade earlier, quickly pervaded the press. By the beginning of the XXth century, a large section of the Edwardian press routinised the anecdotalisation of politics. The *Daily Mail*'s readers, while ignoring what was discussed in the Houses this day, were informed of the half-dozen MP's coming to the House on cycles (4 May 1896). During the Transvaal crisis, the same paper reopened for the occasion a short parliamentary column, and entitled it *Drama at Westminster* (*Daily Mail*, e.g. 22-27 January 1900). Those of the *Evening News* could learn that the new House of Commons' toilette was "brighter and cleaner" (2 October 1908).

The introduction of photographs during the first decade of this century, first in the illustrated daily press, then in most other newspapers, also contributed to the development of this phenomenon. In the *Daily Mirror*, as early as 1904, pictures of politicians supplanted speeches and reports: the subject of the speech was mentioned in the caption below the picture of the speaker, or of the audience. Politicians were photographed going to or coming from Downing Street, attending a luncheon, or delivering a speech. What became the centre of interest for the press which began to ignore the political aspect of politics, was the irrelevant, but entertaining, details of the daily life of politics. Readers lost sight of the unity of action of politics, fading away behind hundreds of textual «snapshots». While readers were given a false feeling of political awareness, becoming familiar with the daily life of the political field, this mediatic vision of politics masked the real struggles and conflicts of interests which make and unmake concrete and constraining laws. What they gave to their public was images without meaning, words without sense, politics without politics.

I.2.4.2: Personalisation of Public Life

Another form of depoliticisation of politics is the personalisation of public life. This terminology may have various meanings. In the sense employed here, it refers to the disclosure of politicians' private life. What is referred to by the notion of privacy is the individuals' domestic sphere, such as their sexual and familial life. These disclosures personalise public life, in the sense that the private life of politicians, becoming a political factor, transforms politics into an affair of persons. Even though a great deal of political profit, in one way or another, is made out of the disclosure of intimate facts, this is primarily a discursive phenomenon which was created by journalists during the last decades of the preceding century.

More than the ideology and interests politicians stood for, their private lives progressively became a basis of judgement for their political actions. Charles Dilke, chosen by his party as Gladstone's successor (Jenkins, 1958: 212), was the first politician to be forced out of national politics due to press agitation following publicity about his private life. Alleged to be Crawford's lover, he was named as the co-respondent in the trial for divorce intended by her husband (Jenkins, 1958: 214). At the conclusion of the first trial, in 1886, the press campaign against him on the themes of debauchery and perjury obliged him to retire from the political scene (Jenkins, 1958: 235-260). Dilke was the first victim of a journalistic discursive trend which personalised politics by judging politicians and their political acts in a psycho-moralistic perspective; that is, in judging them (and in inviting readers to do so) on the basis of facets of their private life. The Dilke scandal, followed by the Parnell affair in 1891, mark the beginning of the journalistic psychologisation of politics.

On this point as well, the public and mediatic discourses differ. To publish accounts of the intimate details of a politician's life consists in passing a frontier, *once rigid*, between the public and private spheres. In spite of their political virulence, unstampeds did not invade the politicians' private life. Crawfurd provides valuable contemporary evidence as he otherwise had little sympathy for the unstampeds. He acknowledged that "One thing may be remarked of all of them [the unstamped papers], that they refrain from personal scurrility and private scandal" (Crawfurd, 1836: 38). This helps to contrast the attitude of Liberal journalists (such as W. T. Stead, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*), who attacked a politician (Dilke) of the same political party on the ground of allegations about his private life. What caused this change? The first cause is rivalry in the mediatic field which induces ambitious journalists to promote their name and the sales of their newspapers by disclosure of private scandals. Second, as a field of cultural production emerges and autonomises itself because of these internal struggles, its members develop and internalise a specific way to perceive and comment on reality. With the emergence of the mediatic field, journalists developed a *properly journalistic perspective* on politics, whose main difference with the publicist's viewpoint is that its criteria of judgement of political acts are *exogenous* from politics.

The *legitimacy* of the journalistic perspective on politics is grounded on either of two different bases. The first is pragmatism, that is, journalistic judgements on politics which claim *common sense as a legitimate basis*. This type of legitimate basis is not used to comment on and/or criticise politicians' private life. In this case, journalists employ their second main source of legitimacy: morality. As far as the revelation of the private life of public persons is concerned, it is on the ground of morality that disclosures are justified. W. T. Stead for instance, in the aftermath of the Dilke case, defended himself arguing that the vices of the elite should not be covered up (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 February 1887). The moral basis is itself based upon categories of judgement used to break the division between public and private spheres which had been observed by publicists: moralistic categories such as «good» and «bad», «false» and «right» are taken for universally valid, that is, valid for all spheres of life, public or private. Stead, the Liberal, did not believe that a Liberal politician (Dilke) would become a good prime minister (as Gladstone and the Liberal party thought), and based his objections on the «bad» things Dilke had allegedly committed in private. Journalists used these moralistic categories to suppress the division between private and public and to justify their disclosure of public persons' private life. So, unlike publicists, journalists did not accept the fact that the two spheres are unconnected.

The problem with this journalistic practice of making of politicians' private affairs current affairs is not so much that intimate lives are made public, but that public life is made intimate. This personalisation of the *res publica* has two consequences. First, by disclosing politicians' private life, journalists introduced *heteronomous* criteria in the public judgement of politicians whose acts are assessed, confusingly, together with allegations about their intimate life. Politics - the entirety of politicians' political acts and decisions - is no longer assessed on the basis of properly political criteria, but from the perspective of politically nonsensical value. In allowing themselves to invade and reveal others' private life, journalists took for granted that politicians' intimate life is a reflection of their public and political activities, that the former explains the latter. On the other hand it could be argued, as the publicists believed, that both spheres are governed by two different logics, and that there is no relationship between the intimate (e.g. sexual) and public life of a politician.

Second, and more recently, many politicians learned to use this journalistic curiosity. The public perception of some politicians often depends more on the image they portray of themselves using private aspects of their life rather than the concrete political decisions they take. Public perception is manipulated not only because the true ideology of some politicians is concealed behind a veil of a reassuring pseudo-intimacy, but also because some politicians' political decisions become politically possible only because of a public image constructed with facets of their pseudo-intimate life (i.e. the facets of an intimate life whose only function is to become public). In both cases, pseudo-privacy is used so that political decisions are not judged on the basis of purely political criteria. In both cases, journalists, far from being the white knights of politics, are the manipulated instruments of politicians' public relation strategies which are deployed to deceive citizens about the true nature of their political decisions.

The journalistic perspective on politics is neither «neutral» nor «objective», as agents of the mediatic field claim, but merely journalistic. It is only to the extent that journalists developed their own way of commenting on politics that they could claim to be politically «neutral». To understand the journalistic viewpoint on politics as properly journalistic helps to appreciate the absurdity of the claim of mediatic institutions to be politically unbiased. To be politically «biased» as journalists claim, is in fact to have political opinions on politics, that is, to act and think politically according to, and as a function of, appropriately political criteria. Whereas journalists, unable to judge politics politically, developed a *journalistic bias* on politics whose only legitimate bases are either pragmatism or morality. In fact, even this legitimate basis is weak. Indeed, the severity of moralistic judgements on politicians depends on the intensity of competitive struggles, at a given time, in the mediatic field: the more intense is the competition between journalists the smaller the fault committed by politicians needs to be for them to become a target of slander. Conversely, the less intense competition is, the bigger the chances are for politicians that their intimacy will remain protected. In other words, the more journalists struggle between themselves, the more moralistic they become. To empirically demonstrate this correlation would show the true value of their own values, the true ethical value of their moralising sermons.

I.2.4.3: Spectacularisation of Public Life

The last way to discursively depoliticise politics is to spectacularise it. Politics is treated as a spectacle when, first, political events are illustrated rather than explained, and second, the focus is on the «visible side» of politics.

Historically, this discursive trend is closely linked to a specific way of conveying information and meaning, the *image*. It should be noticed however that the spectacularisation of politics can also be achieved by means of a particular use of language, or with a combination image/language. This discursive trend first developed with the illustrated popular Sundays, launched during the period of the penny stamp duty (1836-1855). Then, between 1890 and 1910, this discursive trend became noticeable in the way recently launched dailies treated politics. This was the case of dailies such as the *Star*, 1888, the *Sun*, 1893, the ultra-sensational *Evening News*, 1894, the *Daily Mail*, 1896, or the *Daily Express*, 1900. This tendency was even more marked with the illustrated dailies of the same period. The *Daily Graphic* was launched in 1889, followed by the *Daily Dispatch*, 1900, and the *Daily Mirror*, 1904. The major burst of the spectacularisation of public life however was the mastery of the reproduction of photographs which allowed the daily reproduction of pictures. In 1904, it was this technical advantage which helped Northcliffe's *Daily Illustrated Mirror* to beat its rivals. It was the first paper to master the half-tone illustration technique, and to be able to print several pages of pictures on a 24 hour basis.

To illustrate the spectacular treatment of politics we can compare the way the *Poor Man's Guardian* reported the opening of Parliament in 1831, with the *Daily Mirror*'s coverage of the same event in February 1904. This copy of the *Poor Man's Guardian* has already been mentioned (cf. this chapter - section I.2.3). It consisted of the full report and analysis of the King's speech. Concerning the *Daily Mirror*, its coverage mainly consisted of three illustrations. The first, half of the first page, was a picture of the King and Queens' coach, the second was the map of the "royal route" from Buckingham Palace to Westminster, and the third, the entire last page, was a picture of the late Queen Victoria opening Parliament. The two articles reporting the event focused exclusively on details of the procession, such as the decoration of the royal carriage. Unusually, the leader had a political subject, in which the editor attempted to justify the lack of interest of the illustrated daily in politics. Parliament was characterised as a "talking-shop which has very little real influence upon the course of events" (2 February 1904). This was the way the *Daily Mirror* appreciated a century long working class political struggle for franchise, even at this date not completely successful[25].

The consequence of this discursive practice is that political events lose their political meaning. The use of images to relate political events is in great part responsible for this loss of meaning. This is due to the nature of the image. Unlike words employed in language, images are signs whose relationship to the represented object is not arbitrary. For this reason, there is no symbolic distance between an image and its object. It is only within this distance however, possible with language and impossible with images, that the comprehension of an object based on reason is possible. The image is a primitive word. In the history of civilisation, individuals first used non-arbitrary systems of representation to communicate and then only discovered, progressively, arbitrary languages. This order of things is however turned upside down in contemporary societies. Indeed, the image acquired during this century a new aura of prestige. This aura is due to the fact that images are technologically much more difficult to reproduce and manipulate than words. The printed image (the illustrated press) is the first moment of an evolution which continues with the reproduced image (cinema) and finally the instantaneous image (television). In spite of this technical progress, it should not be forgotten that the image is only a primitive language with which events can only be directly reproduced. Images never explain or help to comprehend an event, they can only satisfy the curiosity of readers. Because of the absence of symbolic distance, images only illustrate an event, they do not signify it. For this reason, images annihilate the historicity of an event. Images cannot explain the genesis of a political event because this genesis does not reside in its external and visible aspect.

[25]It is a curious coincidence, that, a few years after a great part of the male working classes gained this political right, (claimed by all XIXth century working class movements), its value was denigrated: to the consciousness of being unrepresented was superseded the unconsciousness of being represented.

This is illustrated in the reporting of the Portuguese republican revolution by the *Daily Mirror*. Instead of explaining with words the historical genesis of the event, or discerning why the Portuguese people preferred a republic to a monarchy, the editor decided to publish dozens of pictures. Readers could admire panoramic views of Lisbon, royal palaces, royal yachts, King's relatives, King's high ranked officers, etc. King Manuel alone appeared in sixteen pictures over three days, many were one page size (5-6, 8 October 1910). Reporting the revolution through images, the explanation not being inscribed on the face of the king, the journalists of the *Daily Mirror* lost sight of the dynamic of the revolution. On 12 October, as if nothing changed, the same paper printed an enormous picture of the newly installed president of the Portuguese republic.

As a discursive strategy, spectacularisation possesses two advantages. The first is simplicity. Since editors had to sell their newspapers every day, and to the greatest number, simplicity became one of the most constraining rules of production for journalists. Northcliffe for instance, gave the following order to his journalists: "Make your story read so that a man coming off an Atlantic liner to-morrow can understand what it's about" (Clarke, 1931: 32). The second is *dramatisation*, an effect achieved with several discursive techniques which are related to spectacularisation. One of them is the «human approach», a technique constantly used by journalists and editors of popular papers. It consists in selecting a trivial but emotional and/or spectacular aspect of a political event, and supplanting the totality of the event with one of these aspects. In this way, an event becomes a narrative, a «story». From an objective, impersonal fact, an event is emotionalised by being suffused with human feelings and passions. A typical example (and its banality suggests the frequency of use of this discursive technique even for political events), is a report of a local election at Chelmsford. Although readers could find out in the inside pages that the winner of the poll was a Conservative (Unionist) candidate, the front page read: "Chelmsford's birthday present to Lady Beatrice Prelyman: seat in Parliament for her husband" (*Daily Mirror*, 3 December 1910).

Another means to dramatise an event is to create an *effect of concentration*. The event is made more intense than it really is *by reducing it to the sum of its spectacular aspects or moments*. Again, the image is a principal means to achieve this effect. The war between Russia and Japan, in 1904, was turned into a spectacle in the pages of the *Daily Mirror* by vivid and sensational drawings of naval battles[26].

Further examples are unnecessary since this style of reporting politics characterises today the relationship between the political and mediatic fields. The sensational manner of reporting politics became dominant with the «popular» press of the 1920s and 1930s. From dominant, it became «natural» with television. The spectacle constitutes the only possible relationship of television to politics. Comment on images of politics, but not on politics itself, is about as sophisticated as television can get with politics. On television, and with images in general, the nature of political events changes: from products of history they become news items. In the process, they are reduced to the level of sporting events. As an image or a series of images, a political event is reduced to its *spectacularity*, that is, its immediate and external appearance. So, the political *in itself* of a political event disappears behind its image. Pulled out of the historical situation which a political event is the result and expression, it is disconnected from its historical «context». In this process of spectacularisation, it loses its historicity, its historical and social substance and becomes, for the spectator, politically meaningless. History disappears behind the image. The image masks history. The mediatic discourse masks the reality of reality, because it separates the present from its past, and because the past ceases to explain the present. The mediatic discourse erases memories in suppressing, as Lukács put it, «the past as the prehistory of the present».

[26]During this same war, a *Daily Illustrated Mirror War Game* was offered to readers who were provided a map to pin, with armies, ships and flags to cut from the paper and to paste on the map according to the outcome of battles (*Daily Mirror*, 11 February 1904).

I.2.5: Variety of News and Trivialism

The third aspect of depoliticisation concerns the extension of news to subjects other than politics. This trend was fully developed when newspapers still constituted the only source of information. Expressed quantitatively, it means that the proportion of space devoted to politics sharply decreased. By the 1920s, almost half the space of a newspaper was filled by advertisements, and, in the remaining editorial space, news constituted approximately one half of the content. (The last quarter was constituted by numerous features, such as serials, crosswords, puzzles, or cartoons that most newspapers by this time had to offer to their readers.) In 1927, news on politics, economics, and social affairs, constituted 12 per cent of the news space of *The Times*, 10 per cent of the *Daily Mail*, and 10 per cent of the *Daily Mirror*, that is, respectively, 5.3 per cent, 2.9 per cent and 2.1 per cent of the total space of these newspapers (from a compilation of tables made by the R.C.P., 1949: 247-261).

Between the public and mediatic discourses, the comparison is simple: the 2 per cent of (sensationalised and spectacularised) political news of the *Daily Mirror* stands in contrast with the unstampeds, almost entirely devoted to politics. What changed, between the two classes of texts, is a shift of the *centre of gravity*. The public discourse gravitated towards politics, and one aspect of its political dimension consisted in giving readers the necessary *political culture* and *political knowledge* indispensable for raising the political awareness of the members of a social class who sought to become masters of their collective fate. Publicists considered the diffusion of knowledge as an essential dimension of their political role. The long leading articles they wrote, the addresses and resolutions they published, had, for them, a precise function: "the only knowledge which is of service to the working people is that which makes them more dissatisfied, and makes them worse slaves. This is the knowledge which we shall give them" (*Destructive*, 7 June 1834). The link between dissemination of knowledge and political struggle was clearly stated. Working class public texts were written to have an ideological effect, to penetrate and transform consciousness: "Without knowledge there can be no union - without union, no strength, and without strength of course no radical alteration in the system" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 22 December 1832).

The mediatic discourse is the product of a discursive strategy which *deliberately* avoided politics. During the Edwardian years, journalists and editors, competing to «brighten» their newspapers, strove to find alternative subjects to politics. As the necessity to entertain readers superseded the urge to propagate knowledge, and as frivolities and trivialities supplanted political information and discussion, a new facet of depoliticisation emerged, which may be called *trivialisation of content*. So, if newspapers were still closely associated with parliament in the 1880s, by 1914, they were instead related to suburban theatres as a proof of the "insatiable desire for amusement and distraction" of the public (Symon, 1914: 292). This discursive metamorphosis corresponds in fact to a deliberate strategy motivated by the «insatiable» capitalist desire to increase circulation, and profit. This strategy greatly increased the diversity of news topics and the result can be reduced to three discursive characteristics which define trivialism.

I.2.5.1: Trivialism as the Great Diversity of News Items

First, the term refers to the great diversity of news items selected by editors and sub-editors, as opposed to the much narrower range of subjects that publicists dealt with. News pages of the most popular papers displayed a common preoccupation with distracting readers by treating every possible topic, (including politics), but never too lengthy, or even too seriously. Police scandals and criminal courts, romances, divorces, suicides, murders, doings of prominent people, tit-bits and gossip, accidents, natural catastrophes, but also sport, special events, anniversaries, exploits, were prominently reported by many newspapers, and constituted the staples of the most popular ones. Each issue of the leading titles also contained a multitude of news items, «snippety summaries», features, and special articles on hundreds of different topics.

This effort to gain readers by avoiding politics and by diversifying news pages' topics is illustrated by Northcliffe's conception of the main news page, which he called the "*surprise page*" (Clarke, 1950: 181). To his editors, his main order was to "get more news and more *varieties* of news", to create "contrast" ("the salt of journalism") in the paper, and to "catch the reader's eye" with small articles and distinctive heading at the top of each column (Clarke, 1950: 181). This was how the news pages of his papers looked. Two *Daily Mirror* pages of 13 October 1908, selected here as an illustration of trivialism, may be considered as representative of a large section of the press. Pages four and five, the two main political news pages of the paper, contain no less than thirty-three news-items. The main news items on page five include articles about six asylum officials charged with stealing large quantities of provisions, and the divorce of the Earl of Yarmouth. The rest of the page is filled with short articles of two and three paragraphs. They relate the opening of a school of orators by an anti-socialist union, a charge of cruelty to a cat brought against a lieutenant-colonel by the Humanitarian League, the story of a woman being killed to save her dog from a motor-car, a royal romance between an Italian Duke and an American, the summary of a comedy staged in London, Chamberlain's denials about retiring from public life, the deportation of four Indians from Transvaal, the death of Ireland's alleged oldest inhabitant, and the report of eight men sentenced to death in Singapore. The same page also includes two pictures, one of the prince of Servia, the second of policemen guarding approaches to House of Commons, both without connection with the mentioned articles. The facing page is no less varied, as it includes, among other news, the account of a robbery, a taxicab dispute, the adoption of two babies from Marylebone workhouse by a merchant, a balloon race accident, the journey of the King to Newmarket by motor-car, British warship's movements in Spain, and a picture of cabinet ministers on their way to 10, Downing Street. In this melting-pot, two articles concerned politics (one per page): a brief report of the conference of the South African Federation, and few lines of a statement of the Prime Minister (H.H. Asquith) on foreign policy.

The diversity of topics of these news pages reflect a strategy whose aim is twofold. First, editors strove to please, by the diversity of topics, the greatest possible number of readers, and so felt obliged to cater for a great range of interests. The large selection of news items corresponds to the constraints associated with mass circulation newspapers, that is, to the constraints of competing for a great number of readers. Second, considering each reader individually, this diversity had the purpose of distracting him or her as much as possible, or at least, more than rival newspapers. For these two reasons, competitive struggles made the discourse of the press explode into hundreds of short texts without unity and without link between them except the one provided by their common economic function. It is this explosion which has since then given the mediatic discourse its famous *mosaic* aspect. This mosaic effect is not simply the result of the ability of newspapers to obtain, *via* the telegraph, news from everywhere, as it is often argued. It is above all the product of a deliberate discursive strategy determined by the economic struggles in which cultural agents are engaged.

I.2.5.2: Trivialism as the Nature of the Selected News Items

Trivialism also indicates the nature of the selected news. Sport, social news, sensational news, and «news about nothing», are the four main categories of trivial news.

1) Sport:

The *Daily Telegraph* was the first paper, in the 1860s, to regularly publish a «sporting intelligence» section. By the late 1880s, most newspapers had a sporting editor gathering and selecting information for several columns every day. By the Edwardian decade, sport was a subject of prime importance, and the most newsworthy sport events were reported on the front page. Depending on the season, *The Times*, the *Evening Standard* or the *Evening News* could devote half a page to a page to sport, the *Daily Dispatch*, *Daily Mail*, or *Daily Express*, one page or more, and the illustrated dailies (*Daily Mirror, Daily Graphic*), sometimes two illustrated pages. For most newspapers, horse racing, cricket and football were the staples of sport news. *The Times* offered a much wider selection and its sport page included, besides the three sports already mentioned, rugby, golf, tennis, racquets, badminton, bowling, croquet, lacrosse, hockey, polo, yachting, rowing, swimming, coursing, athletics, archery, rifle-shooting, fencing, boxing, cycling and car racing. Professionalism in sport was in its infancy, and therefore many of the events reported by *The Times* were non-professional sporting events, such as those organised by universities. Popular newspapers however, such as the *Daily Express*, were progressively starting to publish columns of gossip on players and news on "soccer celebrities" (*Daily Express*, 5 September 1906). Cricket players and footballers seem to have been among the first to become professional, but the term was still used between quotation marks.

If today the large place given to sport by mediatic institutions seems natural, by no means trivial, it has not always been the case. Max Weber for instance was surprised in America by this new phenomenon, unknown to him: "The big Boston newspapers had half a page about the war in East Asia, three about the presidential election, and eight about the [football] game. Then there were endless interviews with each of the twenty-two young Rascals who had participated" (in Weber Marianne, 1988: 301).

2) Social news:

Social news may be defined as news about the public, semi-private, and private activities of the members of the most privileged strata of society. Aristocrats were given a particular attention, followed by artists (mostly singers and comedians) and persons occupying prominent positions in the state bureaucracy (sometimes themselves aristocrats). Royal families, from all over the world, British of course, but also, among others, the Swedish, Spanish, Russian, Siamese, or Chinese ones, became the subject of an overflow of photographs and articles.

The first daily to specialise in social news was the *Daily Courier*, launched by Newnes in 1896. The leader of the first issue is an attempt at legitimating the almost exclusive preoccupation of the newspaper for this type of news. One of the advanced arguments, based on an accurate sociological observation, ran as follow: "in exact proportion as the wealthiest and the most cultivated classes take the lead in the social life of their generation, their tastes, their pursuits, their movements, and their amusements become, under existing conditions, matters of reasonable interest to multitudes who are unconnected with society, and make no attempt to enter it" (*Daily Courier*, 1 April 1896). It is on these premises that the editor organised the news pages of his journal. The sections of these pages had titles such as: "The Court", "The Town", "The Country", "Public Men", and "From Abroad". The first two pages of news were often devoted to the first section, that is, to news on the social life of aristocrats. Articles on court events were therefore very detailed: "Lady Sophie Cadogan, at her wedding, will be attended by the bridegroom's little nephew as page, and by six bridesmaids, including Lady Helen Stewart, Lady Isobel Stanley, Miss Bridget Bulkeley, and three cousins" (*Daily Courier*, 29 May 1896).

During the Edwardian decade, many papers developed a devotional obsession for these persons' activities. Social news became for newspapers such as the *Daily Mirror* or *Daily Graphic* one of the most common types of news. In the *Daily Graphic* for instance, out of the fourteen news items of one page, six concerned queens and kings of different nationalities (26 October 1905). During this decade, this type of news became general in the dailies targeting of a popular readership. Although social news was by no means confined to specific columns, these dailies ran columns of social news entitled "Stories About Well-known Men and Women of the Day", This Morning's Gossip" or "In the Social World" in the *Daily Mirror*, "Court Circular" in the *Daily Dispatch*, "Social and Personal" in the *Daily Graphic*, "In Society" in the *Daily Express*, "To-night's Gossip" in the *Evening News*, and "Mainly About People" in the *Star*. The column of the *Star* was the most famous. It was the first to be started, in 1888, and a specialised periodical was launched in the early 1890s after its name.

The type of event treated by social news may be sub-divided in four categories. The first is *public and official activities*. It includes accounts of diverse public ceremonies, official visits, charity events and dinners. The second is *social events*. This category is mostly made up of entertainments such as weddings, balls, parties (tea-parties or shooting parties), private concerts, premieres at Covent Garden or in some theatres, and other events organised for and attended by the leisure class. The third category is *family events*. This concerns marriages, deaths, and births; travels and journeys; as well as expensive acquisitions, such as new yachts and new mansions, made by the members of this social group.

Finally, when information reveals intimate details of someone's private life, social news become *gossip*. The *Daily Mirror* for instance revealed the legal attempt of the King of Saxony to obtain possession of his daughter from his divorced wife. Although journalists were refused entry to her house, (so readers were told), through a friend of hers, the daily was able to give some intimate details of her second marriage (*Daily Mirror*, 1 & 5 October 1907). Two aspects of gossip are particularly attractive for journalists. First, the breach of privacy arouses readers' emotions. Privacy is associated to secrecy and to know someone's secrets is always exciting, even when these secrets are in fact meant to be divulged. Second, when this breach of privacy is made without the person's consent, journalists can speculate *ad nauseam*, invent lurid details and build up wild hypotheses to excite readers even more.

3) Sensational news:

Besides sport and social news, sensational events is the third main type of trivial news. Sensational news is of two sorts. The first is the events which are extraordinary. As reflected by one of Northcliffe's definitions of news ("anything out of the ordinary" (Williams F., 1957: 144)), special events (birthdays, celebrations, ceremonies, exhibitions, etc.), natural catastrophes (earthquakes, floods), all type of accidents (on sea, on the roads, etc.), began to be reported on front pages. If these events were already reported by the working class unstampeds of the 1830s or the bourgeois press of the 1880s, it is the Edwardian press however which began to illustrate them on the front page and describe them at length in the news pages. In other words, it is the Edwardian press which mediatised these events. The mediatic discourse may be placed in perspective if the way the public press reported these events is compared with this process of mediatisation. In the *Poor Man's Guardian* a case of incendiarism (among the most sensational which could be found) is reported as succinctly as possible: "On Saturday last the inhabitants of Snelford were again thrown into alarm by the cry of «Fire», which was discovered to be on the premises occupied by Mr. W. Cambridge, but through the prompt assistance of the neighbours, the fire was confined to the barn, the farm containing only two small barns and a cottage, occupied by two families, who were in bed at the time the fire broke out. This is the eighth fire at Great Snelford within the last four years" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 11 May 1833.)

Such accidents, albeit on a larger scale, were transformed into *mediatic events* by Edwardian editors and journalists, who learned to make the most of each accident and catastrophe. Not only did they «splash» them in the front page, but they wrote special reports on them, sending correspondents and reporters who described every scene, every detail of these events. Maps were drawn, persons involved in the accident and witnesses interviewed, hypotheses on the cause of the drama suggested. On the 16th of October 1907 for instance the *Daily Mirror* reported a train accident at Shrewsbury in which twenty persons were killed and forty injured. Although this accident is more serious than the fire above mentioned, both events can still be compared: between the decade of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, and the one of *Daily Mirror*, England industrialised at great speed, and the illustrated daily did not bother its readers anymore with farm fires. In any case, the difference between the above description and the array of discursive techniques employed by the staff of the *Daily Mirror* to report the railway accident is impressive. This report can be divided into nine constituents. There is first a series of six headlines which introduce readers to the event and put them in the proper reading mood. Three of these headlines read: "Deadly Curve", "Scenes of Horror", "Thrilling Stories". The second element is the detailed account of the accident and the third is four pictures. Two of them cover the entire front page. The illustrated paper's journalists also published a list of the persons killed, seriously injured, and slightly injured. Fifth, readers were provided with a plan showing how the accident occurred and with a collection of "survivors' stories". Seventh, they also published the account of a witness and entitled it "A Thrilling Moment". Hypotheses on the causes of the accident were proposed, as well as a list of the previous great railway disasters, (with, in each case, the number of people killed). Finally, the «follow up» to the story must also be mentioned. This consists of the exploitation of the event in the subsequent issues. The *Daily Mirror* was consistent and most accidents and catastrophes were reported on the basis of this model, which includes in most cases the headlines, the detailed account of the accident, the pictures, the plan or map, the accounts of people involved in the accident (witnesses, survivors, officials, etc.), the hypotheses, the summary of past events, and, in the next issues, the follow up to the story. On 28 October for instance the staff of the illustrated daily started the whole process again, with another railway accident which killed three persons. Extraordinary events, then, are not only sensational in themselves, but are above all sensationalised by journalists. In their hands, accidents and catastrophes became tragedies with a stage, actors, and a plot which obeys precise rules.

Some social news can also be placed in the category of extraordinary news. All social news is not extraordinary, but some is. Extraordinary social news may be defined as *echoes of extraordinary events involving extraordinary persons*. The difference between social news and extraordinary social news is a matter of gradation. Three factors can promote some social news to the level of extraordinary news. The first is the rank of the person involved. What happens to a prince is more important than what happens to a duke, the private life of a star is more mediatic than the one of a famous actor, etc. The rarity of the event is the second factor. In a royal family, a coronation is rarer than a marriage. The dramatic intensity of a social event is the third factor. All other things being equal, a birth is not as dramatic as a marriage, a marriage as a divorce, a divorce as a death, or a death as a suicide.

The second type of sensational news is news which is both extraordinary and particularly violent. This category is mostly constituted by *criminal news*. This type of news refers to articles which give information either on acts which are considered as being criminal, or on the persons who committed these acts (or have been victim of them), or on the consequences of this act for the victims and the criminals themselves. Criminal news, such as crime stories, were scattered every day in the news pages, and many popular newspapers provided their readers with a page specially devoted to criminal news. It is not the objective of this typology to examine the nature of criminal news. (This type of news is treated in the section on sensationalism (section I.5).) From the perspective of trivialism, it is enough to note that the most dreadful crimes were reported with discursive techniques similar to those mentioned for the railway accident. This is particularly true of trials of great criminals, which were among the events that the popular Edwardian press mediatised the most. In October 1910 for instance, the trial of Dr. Crippen, who murdered his wife, dominated the news for several days (*Daily Mirror*, 18-20 October 1910; cf. section I.5).

4) «News about nothing»:

Finally, «news about nothing» includes three types of article. The first are those which may be called «articles without subjects». This category concerns articles such as "Is it fair to call the English stupid?" or "What do you talk about?" (*Daily Mirror*, 22 & 26 October 1907). This category of news also includes numerous articles of «general interest», whose subjects may be poultry-farming, gardening or stamp-collecting, or articles of much more peculiar interest which made sense, if ever, their day of publication only. Finally, it also includes very short news items, or titbits. Titbits belong to this category because whatever their subject they are too short to mean anything. Leading titles organised these news items in columns entitled "Through the Mirror", "Last Night's News Items", and "News in Little" in the *Daily Mirror*; "New Items", "In the Press", "In a Few Lines", in the *Daily Dispatch*, "Day's Doings", "Today's Story", "Items of Interest From All Quarters" in the *Daily Express*; "To-day's News at a Glance", "Much News in Few Words", in the *Daily Mail*; and "Late News" in the *Evening News*. In the foreign news pages, they ran similar columns, which were above all a diary of cosmopolitan social events: "Happenings of Interest in All Parts of the World" and "Bright News From Everywhere" in the *Daily Mirror*, "World's News in Brief" in the *Daily Express*, "From Far and Near" in the *Daily Mail*.

This typology of trivial news raises a question: is it possible for a sociologist to decide what is trivial and what is not? When I decide that an article on stamp-collecting is trivial, I am expressing something more than a personal prejudice against certain leisure activities. Correlatively, I am not simply revealing, as a socially located subject, my own relationship to the press. If these topics are rated as trivial, it is not simply because a publicist would have disregarded them, or, rather, would not even have imagined that such topics could be published. If a news item «divorce of an earl» is trivial, it is not only because this affair does not change the life of any of those who read it. It is rather because the *discursive act*, which is at the origin of the transmission of this piece of information, is not destined to *interact with readers' consciousness*. The author of the article does not expect to modify readers' systems of beliefs, or to penetrate into their sets of opinions. The mediatic discourse is composed of *monologic texts which do not communicate with readers*. Journalists who write this type of article do not expect a reaction, and they do not try to persuade, convince, or simply say something to their readers. Their texts are monologic, they are not "directed toward an *answer*" (Bakhtin, 1981: 280), and it is this monologic character which makes them trivial.

The exchange between journalists and readers is purely and solely economic, in the sense that the only value of such articles is the exchange value they confer to the newspaper in which they are printed. On this point also, the mediatic discourse is opposed to the public one. Public texts are driven by a *communicative intention*; they are pregnant with ideas and concepts capable of transforming the consciousness (and ultimately the life) of readers. This difference between the two classes of texts gives the first indication of the relationship of capital to discourse, which is in many points similar to its relationship to labour (cf. section I.3). Just as the appropriation of labour by capital kills and transforms it into dead labour (machinism), so too the capitalist appropriation of texts, of the public discourse, metamorphoses this latter into a *dead* (monologic) *discourse*.

I.2.5.3: Trivialism as the De-Selection of Politics as a News Item

I

It could have been the case that a selection of trivial news items would not have excluded more substantial news. Up to a certain extent, both the *Standard* and the *Daily Telegraph* adopted such an editorial policy. They kept politics and other «heavy» news as a main topic for many of their news pages, but they made some «concessions» towards «lightness» in the last two news pages of the paper. Most other dailies, however, from the *Daily Graphic* up to the *Daily Mail,* chose to *de-select* politics and other topics judged too «serious». So, the third aspect of trivialism refers to the fact that politics was deliberately excluded from many newspapers, or at least confined to the strictest minimum. While sport events and sensational trials were easily «splashed» on the front page, and if possible illustrated, it was never the case with politics: whatever the importance of a political event, politics was deliberately kept to the inside pages. When Campbell-Bannerman, after Balfour's resignation, announced the new Liberal government, in December 1905, the *Daily Graphic,* the *Daily Dispatch,* the *Daily Mirror,* and the *Star* did not modify their usual pagination. They kept politics away from the first page, and did not allow the event more space than they usually devoted to politics. In the *Daily Graphic* for instance (11 December 1905), the new government was only announced in the two usual columns of political news, on page seven. The *Star* exceptionally devoted its leader (three paragraphs of light comments) to the subject, but did not pursue this concession any further. Except for the list of the new members of the cabinet, and half-a-column of gossip entitled "Cabinet Chips", the daily, as usual, was free of politics. It was a conscious and *deliberate* discursive strategy not to let politics «invade» the newspaper and to give priority to more entertaining news.

This discursive strategy is manifest in the selection of leaders' topics. As for the rest of the paper, politics was diligently confined to a *pre-determined* proportion of leaders. As the copies from September to December 1905 show, the *Daily News* adopted a policy that one out of three leaders should not concern politics, and the *Daily Graphic,* four out of five. In the *Star,* the *Evening News,* the *Sun,* the *Morning Advertiser,* or the *Daily Mirror,* politics was extremely rare, and leaders were devoted to the most trivial topics. In the *Daily Mirror* for instance, between the 1st of October to the 31st of December 1908, out of one hundred and nineteen leaders, five were vaguely political. Even in these cases however, with one exception, the angle of discussion was, discursively speaking, ostensibly depoliticised. The first «political» leader presented few facts on the Women's Social and Political Union (14 October 1904), the second was concerned with physical endurance of candidates running for the American presidency (28 October 1904). The third leader, the only one of the series to mention the government, criticised it for the way it tackled the circulation problems in London (18 November 1904). The fourth, although the argument was political, presented it in a depoliticised manner. The leader-writer argued that some old Conservative politicians were once radical young men; thus naturalising Conservatism by presenting it as the policy which is closer to the actual course of life itself (26 November 1904). The only openly political leader was written against the suffragettes. It argued that the method of struggle of "militant suffragettes", ("battle-axes", "whips", "chains" and "piercing war-cries"), was not only disgraceful and offending, but also inefficient, especially as men would retaliate "without restraint or pity" (8 December 1904). Otherwise, the remaining 96 per cent of leaders revealed a genuine effort to avoid politics. The day the American election was reported (with pictures and illustrations), the subject of the leader was marriage (4 November 1904), and when fifteen suffragettes were arrested, the "journal for men and women" denounced the "intolerable tyranny" of women's hairdressers. Since the "free women of England" had to submit to the fashion decided by the "iron-willed coiffeurs in their secret committee", the journalist advised them to "defy the few" and to "fight for free expression" (29 October, 1904). If a large number of leaders' subjects cannot be rated under a particular heading, the most regular subjects were weather, marital affairs, and sport. Other subjects included gardening, "babyology" (a "rising science") and hotel ethics. Special events (the King's birthday, *Daily Mirror*'s birthday, Halloween, etc.), popular heroes and saviours, always received due attention. The most regular subject, however, was Christmas, appearing thirteen times. On 9 October, readers were wished, without apparent irony, a merry Christmas. One of the reasons mentioned by the *Daily Mirror* for this early date was its "desire to be first in the field" (9 October 1904). On the 20th of November, the journal, denouncing its own practice without referring to itself, complained that Christmas would soon be celebrated in August. Between December 16 and 29, out of twelve leaders, ten had as their subject Christmas. The *Daily Mirror* epitomised this trivialisation when it entitled the two leaders surrounding Christmas day, "The Day Before", and "The Day After".

This series of leaders makes clear that trivialism is the result of a strategy. Current political problems were not ignored but avoided: the editor had to ask leader-writers to be imaginative and to invent original topics to write on. It must be more difficult to write on a pseudo-science, "babyology", rather than on a political problem of current interest. This series becomes more interesting knowing that the *Daily Mirror* was published on Christmas day, and that, traditionally, it was a day off for the British press. Northcliffe breached the agreement in spite of the press workers' unions and his employees complaints. The fact that Christmas was celebrated with much noise in the columns of his paper while his own employees were deprived of the celebration denotes the type of structural contradiction on which the mediatic discourse is grounded.

The de-selection of politics reflects another difference between the two classes of texts. Mediatic texts are the discursive product of a strategy which strives to produce «soft», as opposed to «hard», texts. Mediatic texts are «soft» in the sense that they are not written with the intention of intellectually challenging or politically «waking up» readers. The emergence of this discursive strategy is due to a specific commercial constraint. As a newspaper needs to be bought *day after day*, it became crucial for journalists to «satisfy» their «consumers» on a daily basis. Having in mind the fact that unsatisfied readers might buy a rival paper on the following day, editors took great care not to irritate or annoy them with «boring» subjects such as politics. They strove, therefore, to produce texts without abrupt angles or sharp edges, without discursive elements that risked affecting readers' consciousness, interfering with their prejudices, or creating cognitive dissonances. The periodicity of newspapers accentuates the constraints of competition. It forced most editors to avoid politics, and contributed to transform newspapers into leisure accessories to be consumed and enjoyed.

II

Trivialism, therefore, refers to three different facets of the extension of news to other subjects than politics. It indicates the great diversity of these subjects, the nature of the topics, and, finally, the de-selection of politics as a news object. But trivialism goes further than diverting readers from politics. In the process, this market-oriented and competition-motivated selection of news trivialised politics, first, by making politics into a subject of amusement among many others, and second, by giving equal emotional importance to the divorce of an earl, the suicide of a maid, and the formation of a new government.

This *loss of hierarchy* in the rating of the relative importance of an event may be explained. For publicists, the reader was an *end*. Publicists wrote for their public and in the context of political struggles. For producers of mediatic texts, the reader became a *means* to fulfil their own economic goals, a means in their own economic battles. The instrumentalisation of discourse is therefore double: towards reality (section I.2.1) and towards readers. Both aspects of this instrumental relationship is epitomised in those discursive devices called «stunts». These stunts began to flourish in papers' columns at the turn of the century. They are a means of arousing readers' curiosity and of «hooking» them page after page. The information they contained was very poor, and sometimes fallacious. The *Daily Mail* for instance ran a series of articles on the Oxford rowing crew's diet for the boat race. The paper, in what it presented as the "egg theory", attributed miraculous properties to the egg, which would make the Oxford crew win the race. After having entertained its readers for three weeks on the subject, the journal was not ashamed to end the stunt by declaring that it was merely a joke, and by publishing a reader's letter: "We congratulate you on so successfully gulling the public, but regret we cannot extend our congratulations to your reporter on the accuracy of his information" (31 March 1906). This example, chosen among thousands, which epitomises trivialism, shows that what the reader learns is irrelevant for those who produce mediatic texts. They do not want to communicate something specific, they do not write with a specific objective in mind. Or rather, this objective is either their own career or economic profit.

Moreover, since the reason for which an article is published is neither the earl who divorces nor the government being formed, both may be treated in a similar way. Because nothing of the content of the article is important for its producer, everything acquires an equal importance. When the motivation to write is not driven by a political ethic, but is almost purely economic, the importance of events such as the divorce of an earl, or the formation of a new government, becomes identical.

This «loss of meaning» of mediatic texts, (due to the great variety of topics and the loss of hierarchy between them), has been referred to by some postmodernists as the flotation of signs which characterises postmodernity (Quéré, 1982: 153-175). But this phenomenon ceases to be taken for something culturally autonomous when it is connected to its real cause. It is capitalism, as a force organising and influencing the social and cultural life on the basis of economic competitive struggles (Garnham, 1990: 10), which produces a meaningless existence for many people, and which also produces texts whose meaninglessness is adapted to the meaningless existence of the dominated classes. Indeed, not only does the mediatic class of texts *reflect* capitalist competitive struggles, it also *refracts* the social world of the dominated whom capitalist mode of production has deprived of a meaningful existence. A discourse without meaning makes sense to those who work in a system of production which does not make sense to them, to those who operate the elements of this system and who have been dispossessed of their labour to the point that it becomes meaningless to them. A discourse «without meaning» objectively corresponds to the immediate needs of people subjected to meaningless labour since this type of labour transforms their lives into a meaningless existence. In other words, those who are alienated by labour consume alienated forms of culture. This triangular relationship between capital, discourse, and labour is examined in some detail in the next section, which concludes on the phenomenon of depoliticisation.

I.3: Discourse, Labour and Capital

I

So, contrary to what content analysts believe, depoliticisation is a discursive phenomenon wider and more complex than the decreasing amount of square inches devoted to politics in newspapers. From the perspective of journalists' discursive practice, depoliticisation designates the "prostitution" of journalists' "experiences and beliefs", a process designated by Lukács as the "apogee of capitalist reification" (Lukács, 1971: 100). From a textual perspective, it indicates that in the transition from one discourse to another a metamorphosis has taken place in the relationship to politics. A text belonging to the public discourse is a political act, the symbolic transposition of a political will. The link of this class of texts to politics is therefore *organic*, public texts being the symbolic element of the field of political struggles. With the mediatic discourse, this symbiosis with the political field disappears. Journalists who write for a popular audience contemplate politics as they do professional sport or natural catastrophes. Using politics as a source of news and amusement, journalists' texts rarely directly and explicitly penetrate, discursively, into the conflicts of the political field[27].

[27]As already argued, the phenomenon of depoliticisation does not imply that these texts have no ideological effect, or that journalists have no political intentions. Among other effects, the discursive depoliticisation is not without consequence for the political field itself. Successful politicians are today those who are most capable of evolving in a field whose discursive treatment has been spectacularised. Those who are aware of the depoliticised vision of politics that journalists succeed in imposing on their readers act accordingly, i.e. in doing politics without giving the impression of doing so, or in using their private life or

The fact that depoliticisation is a discursive phenomenon which corresponds to the immediate needs of the working classes alienated by their labour conditions does not mean that they provoked the phenomenon. The working classes however have often been taken as the cause of the development of this discursive trend. If during the XIXth century working classes were responsible for their poverty, the XXth century proletariat became likewise responsible for their political ignorance. But it is not the working class activists who wanted to introduce free trade principles into the press with the explicit intention of defeating the unstampeds. Nor did they attempt to provide working classes with amusing magazines capable of diverting them from politics. Above all, it was not the proletariat, but Northcliffe, who was involved, as he said, in a "struggle for supremacy among the London newspapers" (*Daily Mirror*, 16 February 1904).

In fact, the conditions in which the working classes lived and worked, misery and exploitation, created in them a need of artificial escape to forget these conditions. It should not be forgotten however that these conditions also created in the working classes the need to really transform these conditions. The difference between the two alternatives is the difference between the public and mediatic classes of texts. The fact is that the working classes could no more choose their labour conditions than they could choose which texts they read. Once the half-penny market was created, the nature of competitive struggles created a series of constraints which excluded non-capitalists from the mediatic field and made almost inevitable the emergence of depoliticised discursive practices. For this reason, working classes are not responsible for the depoliticisation of the newspapers they read. The working classes, and the dominated fractions of the dominant classes, bought the newspapers they could

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their family for electoral purposes. This assertion does not equally concern all journalists, but particularly those who write for readerships who are themselves excluded from the political field, such as working class readerships (cf. section I.6).

buy, but which only fulfilled one of their needs, their desire to forget their conditions of life.

To control the press, competitive principles and market mechanisms worked better than any prohibitive law on the press. If the victims of the taxes on knowledge had no illusion about the nature of the impost[28], those of the capitalist conditions of production could not comprehend the source of the constraint as directly as their predecessors simply because the chains of economic struggle are less visible, less tangible, and more diffuse than crude coercive governmental laws. Since the complete lack of interest for politics of the greatest part of the press contributed to move away the working classes from politics and that the mediatic discourse helped them to tolerate their life conditions, it can be said that a part of the ability of the bourgeoisie to politically dominate the other social classes resides in the fact that this discursive repudiation of politics has not been achieved through governmental coercion, but through economic competitive struggles whose coercive aspect and overall effect on the discourse of the press are less visible because less direct. Economic competition, as a condition of discursive production in modern societies, constitutes a support for the reproduction of the domination of the bourgeoisie, who monopolise, behind appearances of freedom and democracy, the possibility to govern contemporary societies: without this economic mechanism and its discursive consequences, the proletariat would be less indifferent to politics, because less ignorant about it.

II

Depoliticisation indeed met certain needs of readers of the half-penny market. This correspondence is not only subjective, (the perspective of the subject), but objective, (the perspective of the

[28]Hetherington, on the 1819 Six Acts: "Need we say that in conjunction with former acts it has created a complete monopoly of the public press in favour of the rich, by reason of the great capital which the stamp duty renders necessary to the establishment of a newspaper" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 18 August 1832).

structure). It is due to the fact that capital has a similar relationship to discourse and to labour. Dead labour, machinism, and dead discourse, the mediatic textual class, have many similarities due to their common appropriation by capital. More specifically, there exists a *structural homogeneity* between politics, as treated by the discourse developed by the capitalist mode of production (by the discourse appropriated by capital), and the capitalist appropriation of labour. While capital transformed labour into a marketable commodity, it transformed public discourse into an object of consumption; while capitalism dissociated workers from the process of production, its discursive production dissociated them from politics. The mediatic discourse reproduced, at a political level, the relationship of workers to their machine: just as they could only assist the process of production, without being able to affect it, so the mediatic texts treated politics as a process they could not be involved with. They were not given the political information and knowledge necessary to become individually efficient in the realm of political struggles and fully conscious of their class interests and class position within these struggles. Both labour and politics became a spectacle for workers, from which they became equally alienated.

Then, workers had the same relationship to the machine that they had to the mediatic discourse. In the same way they are confronted by the machine, they are confronted by the mediatic discourse, with which they do not interact but by which they are dominated, subjugated. As in machinism, which expropriated knowledge from its original owner, trivialism expropriated from the working classes the political knowledge correlative to class consciousness. In both cases, workers are dispossessed of their knowledge. This is why the discursive depoliticisation of the mediatic discourse is not ideologically neutral. On the contrary, the mediatic discourse is the discursive form which is most closely associated with capitalism. It is only in its relationship to capitalism that this discourse can be said to be neutral, in the sense that this textual class, the product of capitalist relations of production, does not prevent capitalism from developing as an economic and social force. This is why the mediatic discourse, *capital made symbols*, is more than an entirety of signs, but a *symbolic mediation of relationships of domination.*

I.4: From Separation to Autonomy

As long as the press was a *public voice*, the question of the relationship between the press and «public opinion» did not need to be raised. The public press was, indeed, the medium of publicity of the most diverse social groups whose discursive production formed public opinion. As seen in the fifth chapter, social and political groups from the most diverse origins could express their views and opinions through their respective newspapers. It was the press, precisely, which made *opinions become public.*

The emergence of the mediatic field meant that a new relationship between the press and public opinion was created. Several economic factors help to explain the progressive *separation* of the press from its publics. The first is that the industrialisation of the field put an end to the freedom of access to the public sphere. As seen in the sixth chapter, the process of industrialisation, by increasing the volume of fixed capital necessary to launch and run a national paper made the ownership of dailies impossible for most social and political groups. The closure of access to ownership, however, is not the only factor. It must be combined with a second, the rise of average circulation. By the 1900s, when the field was consolidated, instead of having a multitude of newspapers with a small circulation, say of 10,000, there were a few with a circulation above 100,000. With several newspapers beyond this figure, (the *Daily News* sold an average of 118,400 copies in 1904, the *Daily Mail* of 809,500 the same year (Wadsworth, 1955: 25)), the relatively small number of Edwardian daily newspapers was simply unable to account for the diversity of social and political movements, largely left unnoticed by this handful of papers forming the rightly named «national press». These two factors had the combined effect that the press lost the diversity which characterised its pre-market state, its *ideological heteroglossia*. The multiplicity of newspapers during the pre-market years may be compared to a situation of *ideological cacophony*: the diversity of ownership guaranteed a certain ideological plurality and the presence in the symbolic public sphere of political discordances. With the reduction in the number of newspapers by the turn of the century, distinctive voices faded away, and the rest started to sing in tune.

Economic competition is the third factor which contributed to the weaning of the press from the opinions of the publics. The competitive situation transformed the definition of a readership. Since readers lost by a paper may be gained by a rival (a fundamental fact to understand the dynamic of competitive struggles and its influence on discursive behaviour), since a press owner is bound to seduce the greatest number of readers, and, most importantly, to attract new readers, competitive struggles transformed a *public* of readers into a *market* of consumers. The shift from a public whose limit was defined by its political interests and ideological opinions to an open market was accompanied by a series of discursive strategies whose goal was to maximise the size of a readership by overcoming the limits of the political beliefs of a political public, by nature too tiny for an economic strategy oriented towards the domination of a market. The new set of discursive practices attempted to seduce readers out of their political beliefs. Mediatic texts are produced with the intention of avoiding open forms of militancy or propagandism, and do not express the political position of a particular public. Because a market of readers (e.g. «popular», «office boys», «housewives», «middle class», etc.), in spite of a certain social homogeneity, could be composed of several ex-publics, and because an editor wanted to satisfy a massive readership whose individual elements might therefore have diverse, if not divergent, political interests, the political opinions expressed in newspapers (with some exceptions (cf. section I.4.3)) became marked by the commonplaces imposed by the necessity of avoiding offence. The mediatic field's agents produced «soft» texts whose apparent discursive neutralism was a complete rupture with the political aggressiveness and ideological openness of those belonging to the public discourse. These discursive strategies do not mean that journalists and above all press owners ceased to hold political opinions. As it will be seen in section I.4.3, the majority of newspapers were Conservative. The point is that, by the Edwardian decade, most political groups were unable to express their political viewpoint, that the political opinion of a newspaper did not necessarily reflect the political opinion of its entire readership, and that the political opinion of a newspaper was rarely explicitly articulated as such. Concerning this third and last point, journalists and press owners began to mask (because of the necessity to seduce more readers than rivals) their political ideas behind a façade of neutrality, or to cast as «common sense» the arguments used to sustain their own political position.

The separation of the mediatic discourse from the political opinions of publics may be divided into several moments. There is first the separation between the dominant ideology of the press (its political arbitrariness), and the opinion of diverse publics and political organisations which cannot publicise their political viewpoint due to industrialisation and the rise of mass circulation newspapers. Second, once the agents of the mediatic field monopolise the diffusion and expression of political opinions they claim to represent «public opinion». Third, because press owners are concerned about the marketability of their product, they tend to produce soft texts and claim to be neutral.

The next sections analyse various aspects of the three moments of this separation. Section I.4.1 attempts to explain why journalists claimed to be neutral, and the legitimation strategy they used in their claim. Section I.4.2 briefly points to the particular way journalists define public opinion, and to their claim to be representative of a public opinion so defined. Section I.4.3 analyses these three moments in a specific historical situation: it examines the relationship between the dominant newspapers in the mediatic field and two important collective constituents of Edwardian public opinion.

I.4.1: The Mediatic Field's Search for Legitimacy

Since the beginning of the heroic phase of the mediatic field (1855 - 1880s), its agents felt the need, first, to legitimise its existence as an autonomous body, second, to institutionalise its growing symbolic authority. Journalists' claims to legitimacy were grounded on two types of argument[29]. The first might be referred to as the «fourth estate» argument, closely associated to the notion of press freedom. The press as a fourth estate in the realm presupposes its independence from the state, and the absence of governmental ties and controls over the press. If the content of the argument dates back to the pre-repeal period when middle and working class activists, since John Wilkes, fought against libel laws, pre-censorship, and taxes on knowledge, the term appeared in the journalistic jargon for the first time in 1850. *The Fourth Estate* was the title that an editor of the *Daily News* gave to his history of the press, the first of its kind (Hunt, 1850). By 1855, with the last repeal of the most important of the taxes on knowledge, and in the absence of state censorship, the British press could, indeed, proclaim its independence. Similar to *The Times* in 1852 (cf. chapter IV - section III), the fourth estate argument is still used today by the agents of the field to confer upon themselves the image of an impartial arbiter of partial interests and objective watchdog of subjective political stakes. This «neither/nor» type of argument which supposes nothing less than a neutrality of thought and of discourse is linked to another argument. This is the famous journalistic «objectivity». This latter, which could be almost

[29]These arguments must be distinguished from those (pragmatism and morality) that journalists use to justify the journalistic bias on politics (e.g. personalisation of public life) (cf. section I.2.4.1). Pragmatism and morality are internal to journalists' articles on politics and politicians. The arguments presented here constitute the discourse journalists hold about their own discourse, and their scope is much more general, since they aim at legitimating the role of the mediatic field itself.

contrasted with the principle of neutrality as the «either/or» argument, also functions as a *discursive norm* in the field. This norm constitutes the rule which, supposedly, guides journalists in their daily discursive practice. As one of the foundations on which the mediatic field sought to ground its legitimacy, the symbol of the fourth estate has been useful in two ways.

First, to claim to be neutral, i.e., to be above economic stakes, political conflicts, and class divisions, was the most rational way to justify the autonomy of a field whose *raison d'être* was its discursive production. As long as a newspaper was openly tied to a political party, its legitimacy rested on the party it depended on. But when, in the 1880s, most new papers claimed to be a-political, with one third of the total declaring themselves to be free from political ties (Lee, 1976: 229), they had to devise a new explanation for their existence. In other words, the relative autonomy of newspapers from political parties created the need to find a new legitimacy to report and comment on political struggles from an external (journalistic) position. And this turned out to be the self-attributed role of «guardian of truth», by which means they transformed an economic necessity into a virtue.

The second raison of the emergence of the claim to neutrality is that it provided journalists with the legitimacy to write and comment on others' political activities and helped them to enhance the credibility of the political arguments and opinions they expressed in their articles. In its relationship to politics, journalists' position was apparently an inversion of the one publicists had occupied. Since publicists were not independent from political parties, they did not need to pretend to be neutral to hold political opinions. The case of journalists was different. Since modern newspapers became financially autonomous from political parties and government, the claim to neutrality was the only way to legitimise a point of view on politics relatively separated from the political field. The fact that journalists presented themselves as the impartial arbiters of political struggles gave more credibility to the relatively independent journalistic point of view on politics. So, contrary to publicists, journalists' comments on politics are more legitimate and credible if journalists claim that their political comments and opinions are independently determined.

The second argument on which the field grounds its claim for legitimacy is the pretence of reflecting «public opinion». (What may be called the «reflection» theme is better known today as the metaphor of the «mirror»[30].) On the one hand, when press owners, such as Northcliffe, or editors, such as Blumenfeld, explained that newspapers reflect the "ordinary man's opinion" (Clarke, 1950: 153) or a "general state of mind" (Blumenfeld, 1933: 44), they expressed, above all, refusal of any political responsibility. Their conception of journalism, indeed, did not consist in expressing the opinions of a social group, or in *leading*, as opposed to *reflecting*, public opinion, but in distracting people and arousing their emotions. On the other hand, the pretence of reflecting public opinion not only helped to give a representative basis to an increasing number of newspapers whose ties with the political field were increasingly loose, but also provided them with the opportunity to enlarge their respective potential market of readers. So, by the 1880s, the representative basis of a newspaper became a stake of struggle in the mediatic field. Not only because newspapers had nothing else to represent but an abstract public opinion, but because it was easier to fight for circulation with a newspaper which claimed to be both politically independent and representative of the general political opinion rather than politically connected to a specific political party. Such a political allegiance limited the potential readership of a newspaper.

As it will be seen in the next section, the need to re-create *ex-nihilo* a representative basis independent of political parties and based on an abstract «political opinion» was felt as early as 1886 by William T. Stead. Although the *Pall Mall Gazette* which he edited between 1883 and 1890 was known as a Gladstonian paper, the field

[30]Such as used by a reporter in front of the US National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence: "There is not doubt that television is, to a large degree, a mirror of society. It is also a mirror of public attitudes and preferences" (Burns, 1977: 60).

was by then too advanced in its history (and too competitive) for an editor to be politically too stigmatised. Stead, in spite of his political sympathies, saw himself first and foremost as a «neutral» journalist, not as a Gladstonian publicist. As proven by his attitude towards Dilke (cf. section I.2.4.1), he did not conceive his evening daily as the organ of a political party. Stead therefore, along with other editors, was confronted with the necessity of finding a new legitimacy than the legitimacy of a political party for his evening paper.

I.4.2: A Journalistic Definition of Public Opinion

In two articles published in the *Contemporary Review* Stead, in spite of some exaggerations today forgotten, set out what has become the standard argument on the issue of the press and public opinion. In the first article, *Government by Journalism* (Stead, 1886a), he attempted to undermine the legitimacy of party politics on the basis that the House of Commons, elected only once every six years, had lost touch with the people and therefore ceased to represent them. By contrast to this "despotism" (Stead, 1886a: 654), the editor was re-elected every day. Since a newspaper was bought day after day, editors had to stay in touch with their public, to express its opinion, in one word, to be a "mirror reflecting ... life in the locality" (Stead, 1886a: 655). Because of this proximity between the press and its public, it became the true representative of the people, the direct exponent of their opinions, and so supplanted parliament as a "democratic debating-place" (Stead, 1886a: 657).

This fourth estate thesis was extended in a second article, *The Future of Journalism* (Stead, 1886b), in which he made an effort to improve the credibility of his claim to exclusive representation of public opinion. More than fifty years before its technical possibility, he articulated the principle of the opinion poll. His plan consisted of scattering one thousand people around the country whose function would be to collect the opinions of their neighbours and then transmit them to the editor. If, technically, his scheme bears no resemblance to the methods used today, nevertheless, not only was the principle of the "exhaustive interrogation of public opinion" established (Stead, 1886b: 674), but he imagined with precision all the profits the mediatic field would draw from a scientific or pseudo-scientific approach to the measurement of public opinion. With this network, he argued, "the journalist would speak with an authority far superior to that possessed by any other person" (Stead, 1886b: 675). Since the journalist is the "latest to interrogate the democracy", he would know, better than anybody else, "the opinion of the public" on the subjects of the day (Stead, 1886b: 675).

Besides the fact that it anticipated the importance of opinion polls, there are two key ideas in this plan which make the scheme important in the history of the mediatic field. First, Stead, implicitly, articulated for the first time the journalistic definition of public opinion. *For a journalist, public opinion is an abstract aggregation of individual and private opinions.* The aggregation is abstract because it is separated from concrete and particular political groups expressing specific, coherent, and politically determined opinions. These opinions are individual because they are not *collectively* expressed, as is the case when a social group possesses a newspaper whose function is to deliberately express and publicise its views. Then, they are private, because individuals who are not randomly selected do not have the opportunity to express their opinions. Finally, public opinion, journalistically defined, is merely an aggregation of private opinions without any connection between them. This definition may be contrasted with the *collective force* that opinions of individuals acquire when they have the possibility of being united and expressed in a single newspaper which has the exclusive objective of representing these opinions.

The second part of Stead's argument about legitimacy rests entirely upon the representative nature of this journalistically defined «public opinion». A serious obstacle to the validity of this representativeness lies in the object itself which is claimed to be represented, the opinion of a public. Which public? Contrary to journalists, publicists conceived the role of their newspaper as the mouthpiece of a specific public. This is the reason why they did not feel the need to desubstantialise the concept of public opinion and to transform a concrete public into an abstract notion. The fact that journalists form an occupational field with the consciousness of belonging to a profession rather than a political group or party, explains why they began to treat political opinions of specific publics as external, sometimes incongruous objects from which they felt separated. Contrary to publicists, who meant by «public» a social group whose limits they could clearly define, or at least clearly imagine, and, more importantly, a group with which they felt associated; journalists meant by this term a monolithic block facing, at large, the mediatic field. This notion of public therefore presupposes a separation between journalists and the publics whose opinion constituted public opinion. Journalists invented the *global public*, from which they are detached, and whose political opinions they put between quotation marks.

In sum, journalists would be both the political arbiters of democracy (the fourth estate argument) and the representatives of an abstract public opinion. These claims constitute the two general arguments that the agents of the mediatic field used and still use in their struggles for legitimacy. To demonstrate that journalists are neither the neutral arbiters of political conflicts nor the representatives of the opinion of «the public», I want to contrast the political arbitrariness of the press with the opinions of two dominated political groups, women and working men, during the two first decades of the century[31].

[31]The way I use Bourdieu's concept «arbitrariness» is explained in Chapter IV - section III.1. (For his own definition, cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990: XIX-XXii, 5-11.)

I.4.3: The Political Arbitrariness of the Press

The Suffragettes were politically organised women who had to fight for public attention. This is why the political acts of the Suffragettes were performed with a view to the publicity the movement would obtain from them. (In modern terms, this is the *syndrome of Greenpeace.*) It is this calculation which explains the theatrical character of the methods they used between 1906 and 1914. Suffragettes had indeed to fight against two fields, the political and the mediatic. As their own speeches and meetings were rarely reported, they had to find a way to make news. One method of securing publicity was to protest at cabinet ministers' public meetings. One of the reasons why they interrupted ministers' speeches at these meetings, explained Christabel Pankhurst, was that the following day "there is more in the newspapers about what the women have said than about what they had said themselves" (Marcus, 1987: 47).

Demonstrations, protest meetings outside the Houses or in the galleries or the lobby of the House of Commons, had a double function. The first, traditional, was to fight the political field by disturbing its usual functioning. The second was to obtain what is today called «media coverage». When Suffragettes formed a deputation, they always asked the public to follow them, so a huge crowd would surround the Houses and watch them demonstrating in and outside parliament. The presence of the crowd, giving a massive and therefore spectacular aspect to the demonstration, forced newspapers to give even more publicity to the event. Some other acts had a similar role. In October 1908 for instance, two women chained themselves to the grille of the Ladies' gallery in the House of Common, and, in June 1913, Emily Davison threw herself under the King's carriage. Because of their theatrical character these acts became mediatic events. As such they forced newspapers to devote more attention to the Suffragettes. None of these acts would have been useful if women had a strong public voice, that is, if they had possessed their own dailies and weeklies capable of voicing their opinion in the public sphere. Had they not needed to gain access to the press, the structure of their struggle would have been different; probably more directly pointed at men's dominant position in the political field. Some violence would still have been necessary to obtain the vote, but in another form, since the struggle would have been more symbolic, more properly political.

J.A. Spender, the Liberal editor of the celebrated *Westminster Gazette*, attempted to summarise the relationship of the Labour movement (a term which designates both trade unions and the Labour party) with the mediatic field when he explained that Socialists have been successful in building a "powerful party" because they have been working "*behind* the newspapers" (Spender, 1925: 122). Indeed, the Labour party emerged, in 1922, as the second political force of the country without a proper discursive apparatus. This rise, however, was not only possible behind the newspapers, but against them.

Between the Taff Vale Judgement, in 1901, which forced trade unions into the political field *via* the one year-old Labour Representation Committee, and 1922, one year before the first accession to power of the Labour party, trade unions/party membership grew from 376,000 to more than three millions (3,279,276) (Pelling, 1962: 127). More significant than automatic membership through trade unions however were the results of the 1922 election. At this general election the Labour party became the second party of Great Britain. Against three lists (headed by Bonar Law for the Conservative party, Lloyd George for the National Liberal party, and Grey and Asquith for the Liberal party), the candidates of the Labour party obtained 29.5 per cent of the total votes. This represents more than four millions polled votes (4,241,383), against five millions and a half for the candidates of the Conservative party, two millions and a half for those of the Liberal party, and less than two millions for those of the National Liberal (1,673,240) (Butler & Sloman, 1980: 207). Even put together both Liberal lists did not do as well as the Labour party, although they presented 490 candidates, against 411 for the Labour party (and 483 for the Conservative party) (Butler & Sloman, 1980: 207). The results of this general election (taken as a reflection of public opinion at this given time) can be compared with the support that the Labour party got from the press:

1922 General Election[32]

Conservative		Liberal		Labour	
Vote (%)	Total	Vote (%)	Total	Vote (%)	Total
38.2	5,500,382	29.1	4,189,527	29.5	4,241,383

Press support[33]

Conservative	Liberal	Labour
Large circulation (above 200,000)		
Daily Mail (1,800,000)	*Star* (550,000)	
Daily Mirror (1,000,000)	*Daily News* (500,000)	
Daily Sketch (950,000)	*Daily Chronicle* (250,000, estimated)	
Evening News (900,000)		
Daily Express (750,000)		
Daily Dispatch (460,000)		
Evening Standard (350,000)		
Daily Graphic (250,000, estimated)		
Medium circulation (above 50,000)		
The Times (160,000)	*Manchester Guardian* (50,000)	*Daily Herald* (150,000)
Daily Telegraph (160,000)		
Small circulation (below 50,000)		
Morning Post (20,000, estimated)	*Westminster Gazette* (20,000)	
Pall Mall Gazette (20,000, estimated)		

[32]Butler & Sloman, 1980: 207.

[33]Figures are rounded. Most figures from Wadsworth, 1955, or Newspaper Press Directory, 1922, 1923. For four newspapers, because of the absence of data concerning them, circulation had to be estimated. Estimations have been done on the basis of partial indications and of the comparison with similar newspapers.

If the circulation of the *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Chronicle* are estimated at 250,000, and those of the *Morning Post* and *Pall Mall Gazette* at 20,000, then the aggregate circulation of the newspapers supporting each party are, 6,470,000 for the Conservatives, 1,370,000 for the Liberals, and 150,000 for Labour. Out of an aggregate circulation of 7,990,000, the relationship between the press and the public in 1922 may be expressed as follow:

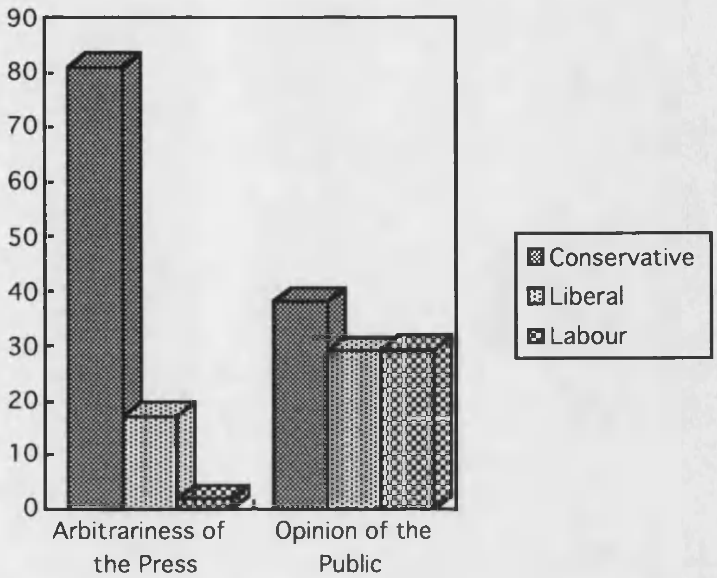
Political Arbitrariness of the Press
(in percentage of aggregate circulation, 1922)

Conservative	**Liberal**	**Labour**
81%	17.1%	1.9%

Opinion of the Public
(General Election, 1922)

38.2%	29.1%	29.5%

This relationship may also be expressed in a graph. The columns indicate the support of the press for each party, in percentage of aggregate circulation, and the results of the general election of 1922, also in percentage of votes for each party:



The ownership of the pro-Conservative popular papers as it stood before the general election in November 1922, constitutes a first step towards a justification of this classification. In any case, the examination of these ownerships is enough to demonstrate that a positive relationship between these newspapers and the Labour party was impossible.

After Lord Northcliffe's death, in August 1922, the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, and *Evening News* became the possession of one of his brothers, Lord Rothermere, who became the most right-wing of the press barons. He associated Labour with Bolshevism, and later on, in the 30s, supported Oswald Mosley, and, less openly, Mussolini and Hitler (Koss, 1990: 944-945, 970-972). The *Daily Express* was Beaverbrook's property. His most intimate friend, Bonar Law, became Conservative prime minister in 1922. The same year, the *Evening Standard* (to be bought in 1923 by Beaverbrook), the *Daily Sketch* (to be bought the same year by Rothermere), and the *Daily Dispatch* were still in the hands of the Hulton group, whose newspapers were invariably Conservative. Since 1920, the *Daily Graphic* was a Berry property. The industrial activities of this huge industrial group (cf. chapter VI - section III.3), gave to the brothers an excellent reason to support the Conservative party. Moreover, most of the popular Sunday press (*Sunday Dispatch* (Rothermere), *Sunday Express* (Beaverbrook), *Sunday Illustrated Herald* (Hulton), *Sunday Graphic* (Berry)) belonged to these groups, and all of them, except Beaverbrook, possessed dozens of weeklies and provincial newspapers. So, although the ideological preference of a newspaper should not be deduced automatically from its ownership, these few indications may suffice to show that, for different reasons, none of these press barons could support the Labour party.

Concerning the relationship between the Liberal press and the Labour party, notably the *Daily News* and the *Star*, both owned by the Cadburys, the 1922 situation of the Labour party was in fact worse than three years earlier. In 1919, the Labour party obtained some help from the Liberal press. After Henderson begged Liberal editors for a "Labour column", making clear that newspapers did not need to agree with the views expressed in these columns (Koss, 1990: 858), he could thank one of them, Gardiner, for the "fair play and sympathetic consideration which the *Daily News* has shown towards the Labour cause" (Henderson to Gardiner, 3 January 1919, Gardiner papers). In 1922 however, since the Liberal party was attempting a revival, the «Labour column» disappeared from Liberal dailies. So, for the 1922 general election, press support for Labour was limited to the moderately useful *Daily Herald*. Succumbing to its debts and out-distanced in term of circulation by the leading popular titles, it was taken over by the Trades Union Congress in September 1922, two months before the election. This take over limited the usefulness of the newspaper by the fact that it was immediately perceived as being «biased». The «tainted» ownership of the *Daily Herald* stood in contrast to the rest of the press, formally independent from any political organisation.

Before pursuing the argument, it is necessary to underline the difference, once more, between the depoliticisation of the press and its political arbitrariness (i.e. its pro-Conservative stance). It must be noted, first, that whatever the party popular dailies stood for, none of them showed a great deal of enthusiasm for these elections. Even during the two weeks preceding the general election, the popular newspapers, with the exceptions noted below, did not substantially increase the small proportion of space they usually devoted to politics. Most of these papers showed an almost surprising lack of interest in this general election and political information was nearly as scarce as ever. In fact, it could even be argued that this omission of politics has in itself an ideological effect which favours the Conservative party. To divert people from politics may be enough to encourage political passivity and increase their political submission to the dominant class, since to maintain them in ignorance prevents them from putting in question social and political hierarchies. It is plausible that the relative absence of politics in newspapers contributes to maintaining the conditions which ensure the reproduction of the existing social order, that the Tories defend. In the context of a Conservative press, it is significant that the Labour party itself (in 1922 precisely) felt a victim of the omission of politics by newspapers. They did not criticise the «Harmsworth press» for the political party it stood for, but for driving people away from politics with trivial titbits and for "anaesthetising the public mind" with a continuous flow of news (Labour Research Department, 1922: 46).

These papers however are not characterised as Conservative simply due to the scarcity of political information; an omission indirectly favouring the political objectives of the Conservative party. They actively supported the Conservative party, but in a way which was depoliticised. Some evidence is given by the *Daily Express*. Its support for the Conservative party is beyond doubt since Beaverbrook, the proprietor of the *Daily Express*, was himself an MP for the Conservative party (Chisholm & Davie, 1992: 76-88). Above all, he and Bonar Law were intimate friends. In spite of this, the *Daily Express* support for the Conservative party was neither avowed nor completely explicit. Like most other newspapers, the *Daily Express* favoured the party of the new Prime Minister (Law became leader of the Conservative party one month before the election) in several indirect ways. First, it devoted much more space to his speeches and activities than to those of his Liberal and Labour rivals. Second, the *Daily Express* manipulated information. During the week preceding the election, it published favourable economic reports, claims of good trade prospects in the case of a Conservative victory, and finally the presentation of the Conservative victory as certain (*Daily Express*, 8-14 November 1922). Its leader on polling day (15 November) summarises its attitude during the campaign. It could simultaneously remind its readers to "vote Conservative for one reason only ... safety", and claim to have "no personal allegiance to any politician or set of politicians" (*Daily Express*, 15 November 1922). Lack of frank political opinion, absence of openly political statements, manipulation through news selection and disinformation through news treatment, and claims of objectivity and neutralism are characteristics of depoliticisation. The meaning of «discursive depoliticisation» becomes even clearer if Rothermere's newspapers are singled out.

Since the death of his brother (Northcliffe) in August 1922, Rothermere came to possess, among other newspapers, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*. During the campaign, both newspapers were noted for their virulence against the Labour party. Both dailies nevertheless displayed a discursive attitude, which, in three of its aspects, illustrates the depoliticisation of the mediatic discourse. These aspects are the almost complete absence of factual information on the election, personalisation of public life, and pseudo-neutralism.

The absence of factual information on the election is first due to the relative scarcity of information on political affairs in these two newspapers during the two weeks preceding the election. It is also due to the fact that the information given to readers was largely manipulated and irrational. This second aspect may be illustrated in the way these newspapers treated the Labour party. Both dailies strove to associate, in readers' minds, the Labour party with Bolshevism. Some leaders in the *Daily Mail* claimed that "if the Labour Bolshevists once get control we shall all be irrevocably dragged along the Russian Road to Ruin" (*Daily Mail*, 1 November

1922). Moreover, since they "assail" the "whole principle of private property", "they threaten every man's house and furniture, and every woman's clothes and jewellery, as was done in Russia" (*ibid.*). In the leaders of the *Daily Mail*, «ruin», «misery», «unemployment», «starvation» and «robbery» were the most frequently employed words to describe the arrival to power of an entity formed by the Labour party, the Reds, Socialism, Communism, and Bolshevism. The *Daily Mirror* illustrated the argument in a series of six cartoons. The first of them showed a Cossack, "Bolshie", and his dog, "Wolfie", preparing themselves for the election by veiling their Russian origin in British garments. The Bolshevik in disguise became "Labourski", and "Wolfie" became "Snap". As suggested by the British name of the dog, the main preoccupation of the two protagonists was to steal, by way or ruse, people's property (*Daily Mirror*, 3-9 November 1922).

In these newspapers, politics was personalised. They transformed a general election for 615 seats into an affair of party leaders. In the *Daily Mail* for instance, the Conservative party and the Liberal party were generally referred to as the Bonar Law party and the Lloyd George party. Rather than the party the candidates represented and the political interests they defended, what became an issue was their party leaders, or more precisely their personality. Photographs were already in 1922 a privileged means to create in public's mind a familiar image of favoured politicians in showing private and intimate aspects of their life. In a special issue on Bonar Law, the *Daily Mirror* published three full pages of pictures. Bonar Law was photographed performing public duties, but also playing golf or tennis. His relatives, and particularly his daughters, also appeared in many pictures (*Daily Mirror*, 8 November 1922).

With these hysterical anti-Labour arguments in mind, it may seem paradoxical to refer to the «neutralism» of these newspapers. First, the only clearly stated political demand, not to vote for Labour, was not even politically motivated. «Common sense» and the «interest of the nation» were the main arguments these newspapers used to justify their anti-Labour propaganda. In spite of the marked preference of these newspapers for the Conservative party, their support for it was not «official». Popular papers found many reasons to claim that Law was an excellent Prime Minister, (he was «wise» and «experienced» for instance), but none of these arguments referred to the political principles he and his party stood for. By being evasive and maintaining the debate on an irrational level, these newspapers could avoid being fully explicit about who (and why) they really favoured. They did not give a clear indication who to vote for (except not to vote for the Labour party). In fact, Rothermere's papers supported their own list, the Anti-Waste league, whose objective was to force the government not to «waste» the «tax-payers» money. The candidates of the league (among whom the son of Viscount Rothermere, Esmond Harmsworth) were given a ridiculous amount of space and support in the columns of Rothermere's papers. Indeed, in a 615 seat election, this league, which claimed to put economy before politics, presented 10 candidates only.

Many of these phenomena are summarised in the last leader of the *Daily Mail*, entitled "Don't forget to vote today against Socialism": "The common sense of our people repudiates the Socialism and the Bolshevism of the Labour leaders. The first result of their capital levy would be wholesale unemployment, the second starvation and the third chaotic revolution. ... Our final counsel to the electorate of both sexes is: Vote for the Bonar Law Party (the probable victors) or the Lloyd George Party, or the Asquith-Grey Party, if you will, but don't vote Socialist!" (*Daily Mail*, 15 November 1922). This paragraph, which illustrates the phenomena above mentioned, also shows that some journalists, contrary to publicists who strove to educate their readers, manipulate them in employing arguments which presuppose and exploit their political ignorance.

How to explain the more discreet pro-Conservative stance of the remaining titles? Editors and journalists, in their pursuit of wider readerships, endeavoured to produce «soft» texts capable of pleasing the greatest number of readers or potential readers. This factor was the main economic motivation for proprietors and editors of the popular newspapers favouring, but not openly and not in a militant way, the Conservative party. The 29 per cent Labour vote came as a surprise to most press owners and editors. Moreover, although the Conservative party was still by an important margin the greatest political party, it is probable that the editors imagined Conservative voters being even larger. Independently of the political intentions of press owners, editors and journalists, a Conservative outlook was therefore thought to satisfy the majority of readers. In addition, to produce «soft» texts, it is easier to defend the established order than to attempt to create a new one, it is easier to reproduce what already exists than to attempt to explain what could be constructed: it is easier to be Tory than to promote Labour. To take the actual social order for granted is the best solution for agents who treat politics as a spectacle and who do not possess either the will or the interest to question the forces which determine life under capitalism.

This being said, three facts must be emphasised. First, press support for political parties is unequally distributed. Second, the dominant ideology within the mediatic field favours the Conservative party. Third, there exists a discrepancy between the political parties the press supported and the result of the election. While most newspapers supported the Conservative party (81 per cent in terms of aggregate circulation), 38.2 per cent only of the electorate voted for this party. Similarly, while less than 2 per cent of the aggregate circulation of the press supported the Labour party (and only one out of a total of eighteen prominent newspapers), more than 29 per cent of the electorate voted Labour.

Two conclusions may be drawn from these facts. First, because of the vast majority of newspapers favoured the Conservative party, the press was not, in 1922, the impartial arbiter journalists claimed it was. Correlatively, because of the discrepancy between press support and the results of the election, neither was the press the general representative of the public. Either because of the political convictions of press owners, or because of commercial calculation, the «collective opinion» of the press was distinct and different from the political opinion of a majority of the public. This means that, although the opinion of some newspapers reflected the political opinion of some social groups, this is untrue for many dailies, since many Liberal and Labour voters either did not read newspapers or had to read Conservative ones. So, the support that most newspapers gave to the Conservative party can be referred to as political arbitrariness since not only is the «opinion of the press» detached from that of a great part of the public, but also because journalists claim to be impartial. It must be noted that such a discrepancy between the press and its public could not appear during the pre-market period, since all social groups had the opportunity to possess and control their own newspaper.

The second conclusion concerns the ideological effect of the political arbitrariness of the press. It is difficult to speculate on this effect, particularly when the data available is scarce. On the one hand, it could be argued that popular Tory newspapers were instrumental in checking the rise of Labour, and that without a Tory press the Labour party would have obtained a parliamentary majority. On the other hand, it seems logical to acknowledge that, in spite of this plausible influence, they were unable to prevent four million people from voting Labour. In 1922, as far as Labour voters were concerned, their voting behaviour was uninfluenced by the popular Tory press which many working class people read. In absolute figures, more than twenty eight *Daily Herald* readerships are needed to fill the gap between the circulation of the title (provided all *Daily Herald*'s readers voted and all of them voted Labour), and the number of Labour votes. So, as early as 1922, the correlation between what people read and who they vote for is weak. Not that the nature of the mediatic discourse and particularly its relationship to politics is without ideological effect and long term political consequences but the validity of the claims of some journalists about exercising direct political influence is undermined by the fact that a certain proportion of readers read newspapers whose political position was contrary to their political beliefs.

I.4.4: Crusadism as a Discursive Strategy

I

The political arbitrariness of the press is not the only symptom of the increasing autonomy of the mediatic discourse. Editors became confronted with the necessity of developing consensual opinions and transcending, as far as possible, the political divisions of their vast market of readers. To this end, two discursive strategies were developed, jingoism and crusadism. It has been shown elsewhere that there exists a strong correlation between the intensity of competitive struggles in the mediatic field and the degree of nationalism of the newspapers who compete to reach the dominant position within the field (Chalaby, 1993). If it is the aim of a newspaper to maximise its sale, it finds itself obliged to seduce the greatest possible readership, and it is therefore increasingly difficult for its editorial board to take clear-cut and long-standing political opinions on domestic issues. Continuous support for a political party, a partisan position which, indeed, allows journalists to voice strong opinions, has the effect, as the empirical experience proves, of alienating a significant section of readers who are not associated with the party in question. Verbal nationalism is a way to overcome the difficulty, i.e., to be vehement and uncompromising on some political issues, without directly hurting the group or class interests of an important section of readers. Nationalism, in other words, brings the profits of resolute and determined political opinions without the commercial risks that such positions often imply. As far as the nationalism of the press is concerned, it proves that the ideological position of a newspaper is more dependent upon the state and intensity of struggles within the mediatic field, and the position of a newspaper within that struggle, than on journalists' convictions or public's opinion.

The second discursive strategy used to fake conviction is crusadism. Crusadism is a discursive phenomenon which contributes to autonomise the mediatic discourse from public opinion. Like nationalism, the appearance of crusades in newspapers' columns was above all due to some specific need of editors which arose from their engagement in competitive struggles. Crusadism consists in taking any *apparent* dysfunction of political, social, or economic life, and calling for reform. Stead was the first to consistently use this discursive strategy. His editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette* included crusades against the slums (1883), for General Gordon to be sent to Sudan (1884), for a bigger and better Navy (1884), for closer imperial ties (1885), and against prostitution, more especially, against the use of women below the age of sixteen in brothels. This last crusade became the famous *Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* that shocked his Victorian contemporaries during July 1885. In 1887 he ran a campaign in defence of Langworthy, a divorcee, and of Lipski, a murderer. The length and intensity of these campaigns was variable. The Langworthy crusade for instance (a woman whose husband flew away in Argentina without leaving her a pension), was run without break for thirty-five days, with an average of three wide columns (one page-and-a-half) a day. But some other campaigns, such as the Gordon one, lasted a year, and the one for the Navy became recurrent.

Crusadism developed rapidly in the following decade. By the XXth century, Northcliffe made crusadism into a current discursive practice in journalism. Apart from the imperialist campaigns, which emerged in different forms during the decade preceding World War I, and lasted up to the 1922 peace conference at Versailles, the *Daily Mail* also campaigned for all sorts of things, such as the standard bread, the *Daily Mail* hat, or the improvement of roses and sweet peas.

As the nature of some of the above listed subjects and their variety tend to show, the cause of crusades are not the subjects themselves. The origin of the anger or the enthusiasm that crusaders demonstrate in their articles must be sought elsewhere. Because competing newspapers have to appear to their readerships not only different, but also more indispensable than their rivals, they tend to pretend that what they publish is more important than what rivals publish. In order to sustain such a pretence journalists have to transform reality which is rarely as exciting as they need it to be. Crusadism helps them to theatricalise the facts or events they describe. So, either the chosen cause is itself tragic or sensational, such as prostitution, venereal diseases, or misery, or the crusade itself attempts to transform a banality into a thrilling subject of conversation. The specific function of crusadism, however, is not sensationalism, which is achievable through simpler means. It has the double advantage of dramatising reality while convincing readers of journalists' convictions and strength of opinions. A crusade constitutes a *simulacrum* of opinion, in the sense that, like nationalism, this discursive strategy is employed as a substitute for commercially more dangerous political positions. *Crusadism is therefore a discursive attitude whose success is founded on the dissimulation of its true nature.* It is a type of opinion which is founded on the necessity to mask a structural impossibility; the impossibility of having and expressing true opinions and convictions, particularly political ones.

Since crusaders are not really concerned with the causes they defend but with the emotional effects the words provoke in readers' minds, the central argument of a crusade is often irrational. One example will illustrate this aspect of crusadism. Both mediatic and public texts often criticised the exploitation of children in England. When the *Daily Mirror* evoked the problem, it printed pathetic pictures of suffering children, and described the living and working conditions of the "baby slaves" with the sole aim of moving readers and arousing their feeling of pity (17 March 1904). When, seventy years earlier, the *Poor Man's Guardian* referred to «infant slavery», the publicist did not emotionalise the subject. He described the situation, established the facts, and supported the whole by giving evidence of what he asserted (31 March 1832). Children's experiences were related in the children's own words, quoted in the article. Their sufferings were also taken as an illustration of the distress of the working class as a whole and of the evils created by the factory system. The difference between the two texts is that the first did not see anything else in slavery but slavery, while the second saw behind it the factory system, and behind the factory system profit, and behind profit private property, and behind private property the bourgeoisie, and behind the bourgeoisie capital. This is the reason why the publicist gave, in the same article, his solution to this misery. The cause of this poverty being bourgeois exploitation of the working classes, he thought that the only way to end the tyranny of the bourgeoisie was to pursue the struggle to overthrow the political power of this social class. What distinguishes the two treatments, is that in the mediatic version infant slavery became a curiosity, whereas in the public text it is a historical fact which, instead of being detached from the social world was related to its causes and to the means to eradicate it.

For the reason above mentioned, crusaders also often focus on the most spectacular symptoms of a phenomenon, and so take effects for causes. In 1911, Northcliffe launched a campaign in the *Daily Mail* against the taxes levied on non-imperial foodstuff imports (Chisholm & Davie, 1992: 114-116, 275-276). The superficiality (not to say the demagogy) of this crusade appears when compared to the evolution of the analyses on the same question of the pre-market press. The unstampeds of the 1830s began to analyse the economic means of oppression rather than, as was the case with the unstampeds of the 1810s and 1820s, its symptoms, such as corruption or privileges, and, precisely, taxes. Unlike Richard Carlile (the *Republican*) or William Cobbett (the *Political Register*), the working class publicists of the 1830s realised that criticising taxes, rents, and tithes, focused too much on a symptom of the property system, without attacking it at its roots. This is one of the reasons why the most widely read newspapers of the 1830s analysed the relationship between labour and capital or the capitalist mode of production. The comparison between the *Daily Mail*'s crusade against food taxes («stomach taxes») and the working class unstampeds of the 1830s underlines the artificiality of crusadism: in focusing on spectacular aspects of social or political life, it necessarily created false transcendences, expressed wrong judgements, campaigned against pseudo-problems, and called for absurd solutions. Like Don Quixote, journalists transformed reality into a fairy kingdom, in which prostitutes become princesses, inns castles, herds of sheep knights. Of the discursive phenomena which define the mediatic discourse, crusadism is the most direct threat to the standard of judgement of individuals, their scale of values, their capacity in discerning what is essential from what is sensational, what is important from what is trivial.

II

We saw first that the political arbitrariness of the press was a symptom of the separation of the dominant political opinion of press from the opinion of a majority of the public. Then, two discursive phenomena, nationalism and crusadism, confirmed that the ideological position of a newspaper is more determined by the competitive struggles within the field rather than public opinion. These phenomena however only constitute the first step in the complete separation of the mediatic discourse from society. Its autonomy is concretised by two other discursive phenomena.

First, the mediatic field became itself a *source of news*. Events occurring in the mediatic field, activities of newspapermen and journalists, were detailed in mediatic texts. The discursive production of the mediatic field, in which mediatic field's agents refer to themselves, constitutes the discursive phenomenon of *self-reflexivity*. Once again, Stead was among the first to take other newspapers and journalists as subjects for his articles. Early examples include:

- *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 May 1886. In an article entitled "Popular papers that pay", Stead interviewed Newnes, creator of *Tit Bits*, a popular weekly entirely made of trivial and snippety news copied from other papers.

- *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 November 1886. This issue included an interview with the proprietor of the "worst newspaper in England", the *Police News*, who was asked if his paper ever led to the discovery of a crime.

- *Pall Mall Gazette*, 25 March 1887. Interview with the manager of three Irish newspapers.

- *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 January 1888. The day before the launch of the *Star*, Stead published an interview with O'Connor, its proprietor. The article focused on the journalistic methods of "our new competitor", who admitted to be more interested in the "fate of a cat which is shot in Fleet-Street than in the overthrow of the King of Timbuctoo".

- *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 November 1889. Interview with the director of the *Daily Graphic*, when this latter was launched.

In his *Occasional Notes*, a column of comments on the subjects of the day, Stead criticised other newspapers. *The Times*, the *Standard*, or the *Daily News*, were among the most frequent targets of his criticisms. In an example among many, for a full week he criticised the London papers which accused him of sensationalism in his *Maiden Tribute* crusade on the ground of the space they themselves had devoted to the Campbell divorce suit. To back his criticisms of others' sensationalism, he published what probably is the first quantitative content analysis ever made. The *Daily Chronicle* had published ninety columns on the case, or about 180,000 words (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 December 1886).

As it can be observed today, the phenomenon of self-reflexivity took an increasing importance in mediatic texts. Its emergence is linked to the moment in the history of the field when its members became self-conscious of their existence. This collective consciousness is the product of three correlated factors: first, the growing size and considerable economic activities of the field; second, the common specialisation; third, the growth of competitive struggles. Concerning the last factor, it can be emphasised that competitive struggles helped to develop this self-consciousness because they made agents more interdependent of each other and forced each agent to become more conscious of the activities of the other operators in the field.

Because journalists became the object of their own discourse, they became public men, some of them «celebrities», a position originally reserved for statesmen. Doing so, they created the «star system», or *the celebration of people who have no other function but to be celebrated.* This being said, the star system is extremely useful to journalists since stars (others than journalists) have the capacity to become symbols «without referent», in the sense that they do not possess an autonomous existence from the mediatic discourse. Unlike other events, stars, created by the media, are entirely under control. Stars, who must incessantly adapt their behaviour to journalists' needs and expectations, are used and manipulated at will by journalists. When stars no longer want to play the rules, they cease to be a star.

The second discursive phenomenon, which particularly reflects the autonomy of mediatic discourse, consists in the publication of events which are specifically created to become news. Those events are the *pseudo-events*, or the events created by journalists for the sake of their diffusion (Boorstin, 1987: 7-44).

This discursive phenomenon had a brilliant debut, but then remained dormant for several decades. The first pseudo-event was the Stanley search for Livingstone, co-sponsored by the New York *Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph.* Stanley was a "flying journalist" (his own words) who Bennett, his employer and proprietor of the *Herald,* sent to Africa to search for Dr. Livingstone, rumoured in London to be dead (Seitz, 1928: 278). When found after a costly expedition lasting more than a year, it appeared that Livingstone did not need any help. In spite of the invitation of his «rescuer», he decided to remain in his camp to continue his research. For Stanley, this uselessness was not dramatic, since he located the geographer about whom "the world wanted news" (Seitz, 1928: 291). In other words, the only role this expedition had was to provide a scoop for two newspapers.

Imitating American press barons, it was Northcliffe, thirty years later, who systematised the practice in England. The early pseudo-events he organised included the *Daily Mirror* being sent by aeroplane to Bath, (becoming the first newspaper to be sent by airplane), sponsoring numerous races for yachts, gliders, balloons, or aeroplanes, and the creation and organisation of many other events of lesser importance, such as special days and special occasions (on Northcliffe's aviation prizes, cf. Clarke, 1950: 97). Pseudo-events can take many forms and it is increasingly difficult to distinguish them from normal events. Few people know for instance that the famous *Tour de France* (a cycling race) is organised by a press group which possesses two prominent French dailies, *Le Parisien* and *L'Equipe* (Charon, 1991: 328).

All the advantages of pseudo-events come from the fact that they are purposively staged for the media. So, spectacular and exciting, they are able to attract large audiences, but since their rules of functioning are fixed by the mediatic field, they have the important quality of being predictable. Moreover, the mediatic institution which organises the event possesses a right on this event. It owns it. It means for instance that it controls its diffusion, and can make profit just by allowing other institutions to treat it.

Both phenomena, self-reflexivity and pseudo-events, contribute to make of the mediatic discourse a socially *inauthentic* textual class. It is inauthentic because it is artificial, since the celebration by journalists of themselves and other celebrities does not reflect people's lives and experiences, but the experience of journalists. It is also inauthentic because it is unnecessary, since pseudo-events do not correspond to people's needs, but to those of the agents of the field.

I.5: Emotionalism

Emotionalism is another discursive aspect of the mediatic discourse, and may be concretised in several forms, such as scandalism, sensationalism, or sentimentalism. For reasons of space, the nature of this discursive phenomenon is examined through its most common manifestation, sensationalism.

I

Sensationalism, a pure product of competition between newspapers, is another example of the direct influence of competition over the nature of the discourse produced by journalists. The causal correlation between sensationalism and economic competition was demonstrated with great clarity during the New York circulation war in the 1890s, when three dailies (the *World*, the *Journal*, and the *Herald*) struggled for the same popular New York market. It was during this decade of intense conflicts that «yellow journalism» emerged; a journalism which has been defined by its tendency to serialise the most torrid scandals and to depict in brutal detail the most morbid of crimes. Headlines such as "He crucified himself", "Condemned to worse than death", "Murder murdered" (*The World*, 1 March 1891), "Is spiritualism true?" (2 March 1891), "His wife was a man" (3 March 1891), only indicate, in its most manifest tendency, the general tone of the New York press of these years.

In New York during these years sensationalism was not confined to the editor's news selection. Sensationalism was not only topical. It became the discursive practice with which many subjects were treated. In other words, if some subjects were sensational, some other were sensationalised. These three dailies adopted such a jingoistic stance in the case of the Cuban crisis for example, losing all sense of proportion, that it is considered one of the causes of United States intervention in the conflict, in April 1898. While the American government attempted to remain neutral, these papers aroused public feelings and campaigned for intervention, running for months headlines such as "Our flag has been insulted" or "The butcher [a Spanish general] sharpens his knife" (Wisan, 1934: 69 & 197). The discursive tactics included continuous boasts of scoops, claims of exclusives, gross exaggerations, and falsifications of news. Once the war started in Cuba, Pulitzer sent hundreds of correspondents, and Hearst even lead a corps of fighting journalists (Brendon, 1982: 139). If most reports were sensationalised, scenes of tortures and of cruelty (Wisan, 1934: 320), and even battles (Brendon, 1982: 139), were purely and simply invented. Never before had competitive struggles interfered so much with agents' relationship with reality. When a local Cuban newspaper charged the New York press with a "systematic attempt to deceive", Pulitzer's *World* was proud to be singled out and Hearst's *Journal* took it as a "grateful compliment" (Wisan, 1934: 190).

Because these competing popular dailies became less sensational when the struggle was ended by the capitulation of one of the protagonists, one historian judged this phase an "aberration" in the history of journalism (Juergens, 1966: 45). On the contrary, this circulation war constitutes a concrete historical situation during which market mechanisms reveal the influence on discursive production of naked conflictual relationships. Sensationalism, originating out of the urgent necessity for editors to attract readers and to divert them from rivals, is the most direct and purest reflection of economic competition in the mediatic discourse. The resurgence of this discursive practice during periods of intensification of competitive struggles reveals the historicity of the mediatic discourse and its dependence upon the nature of the relationships within the mediatic field. The fact that such a practice emerged against the dominant taste in journalism (some journalists resisted sensationalism), and that journalists had the relative consciousness to violate an implicit code of ethics (as proved by Pulitzer who felt obliged to endow, in 1904, the Columbia School of Journalism), also suggests the economic necessity of this discursive phenomenon.

II

Editors and scholars claim that sensationalism originated in the pre-commercial popular press. Editors of popular papers are unanimous in claiming that, all things considered, they did not invent anything. Among them, some argue that not only has sensationalism always existed, but that the sensationalism of the contemporary press compares favourably to the yellow journalism of the XVIIth century (Jones, 1919: 293; Blumenfeld, 1933: 18-22;

Clarke, 1950: 34; or Williams F., 1957: 139). Compared to the pre-market popular press, Blumenfeld argued, the "yellowest of yellow newspapers of to-day are restrained" (Blumenfeld, 1933: 21). Among scholars, Stevens maintained that Ancient Rome's official court publications, the *Acta Diurna*, were the first form of sensationalism (Stevens, 1991: 69). This crude falsification of history is made necessary by the need to justify sensationalism, when this latter began to become a systematic journalistic practice. More than a century ago, Stead was among the first to attempt to justify the practice in writing that "sensationalism in journalism is justifiable up to the point that it is necessary to arrest the eye of the public and compel them to admit the necessity of action" (Stead, 1886a: 671).

The comparison between the public and mediatic discourse made by these editors does not stand up for several reasons. Because of the need to legitimate their own discursive practice, they exaggerated the importance of crime reporting in the pre-market press. The list of unstampeds given in chapter V - section I.1.3 shows that, on 212 listed unstampeds, only three were devoted to crime, the first existing 13 months, the second 6 months, the third lasting one issue (Hollis, 1970: 318-328). Some political unstampeds had indeed a police information column. But the way they reported crimes dissociates them from the sensationalism of the commercial press. In many cases, the poor quality of these columns shows that publicists did not pay much attention to them. They were poorly edited, or could even disappear for several weeks, to suddenly reappear for some time. Unlike later commercial papers, crimes were not serialised in order to last one week, or more. They were not spectacularised, or dramatically re-written, but reported in a simple way, usually in no more than one or two paragraphs. These paragraphs could be an account of the crime itself, or, as was often the case, of the way the police dealt with it. Many of these accounts, therefore, were abstracts of dialogues in police stations. Except for public prosecutions, attended by reporters, data came mostly from court files and police reports. So, as publicists did not have direct access to crimes, they could not manipulate the story, build rumours, invent mysteries, or create suspense. They did not, in other words, use discursive methods which characterise sensationalism. The following article, entitled "Murder at Northwich", illustrates this absence of sensationalism in crime reporting: "A murder was committed on Friday week last, in the neighbourhood of Northwich, by a tradesman of that town, named Samuel Thorley, on the person of a young female named Mary Pemberton, the daughter of a widow lady residing on a farm at Leftwich, to whom he had been paying his addresses. A coroner's inquest, on view of the body, was held at the Bowling Green at Leftwich, at three o'clock on Monday afternoon. The jury, after hearing evidence, returned a verdict of «Wilful murder» against Samuel Thorley. The funeral of this ill-fated young woman took place on Tuesday, at Davenham church. It was attended by a vast crowd of spectators, and sorrow seemed to sit on every countenance." (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 21 December 1833). The commercial press of the end of the XIXth century, instead of the eleven lines of this article, would have published, between the murder and the verdict, dozens of articles several columns long, describing every detail of the crime, in particular the most lurid ones, sometimes adding and inventing some, interviewing persons involved in the case, commenting on each of its aspects, and adding a touch of moralising on the top of that (e.g. requiring an increase in the police budget, etc.)

Court reports could also be dealt with as a specimen of the inequality of the judicial system. Some publicists used certain cases to insist on the extreme poverty of people arrested for begging offences, or to comment upon the class-based judgements of magistrates, who were sometimes insulted in the columns of the unstampeds. The *Poor Man's Guardian* for instance entitled a police column "Hypocrisy and Cruelty of Rawlinson, the Marylebone Magistrate" (7 June 1834). Once the same unstamped commented on an execution of someone convicted of burning a stack of hay. But, according to the writer of the article, another convict, who deliberately shot a friend of his, had his sentence commuted. So, a man whose crime is "destructive of human life" escapes death, while an "offence against property" does not: "We cannot repress the exclamation - Is this justice ?" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 26 January 1833). In these cases, crime and police reports were enclosed in the general political argument of the unstampeds and they were used to illustrate their political point of view. The treatment of these crimes, therefore, was more political than sensational.

Pre-1836 popular Sunday papers, as a mix of popular culture and rising working class political consciousness, are often taken as a model of early sensationalism (e.g. Williams R., 1961: 176). Several facts however protect these Sundays from the charge of sensationalism. First, in this case also, the police reports did not invade, as was the case later on, the other news sections, and did not interfere with political information. By no means had sensational news the prominence it acquired in the modern commercial press, where it could reach the front page routinely. The Sunday papers did not supplant politics by crime. Second, unlike the modern journalistic practice for popular readerships which tends to sensationalise every type of subject (from sport to politics), the sensationalism of these Sundays, if there was any, was limited to the accounts in the police news section. The way the popular Sundays reported crime did not contaminate the way they treated politics, subject itself, in mediatic texts, to scandalism and sensationalism. These Sundays reported and commented on politics in a way that may be disgraceful for the intellectual standards of twentieth century *Homo academicus*, but efficient enough to raise working class consciousness of their time. Crimes and murders did not prevent the Sunday papers from being politically radical. During the 1820s indeed, a relatively quiet decade with few unstampeds, Sunday papers were the most radical and played a key role in transforming popular radicalism into an "intellectual culture" and building the "political consciousness" of the working classes (Thompson E. P., 1991: 781). Illiteracy, extreme poverty, and lack of leisure, did not exclude the working classes from "political discourse" (1991: 782); a discourse which was composed, during this decade, of tracts, pamphlets, and a few unstampeds, but mostly of these Sunday papers which modern editors attempted to retrospectively transform into sensational sheets. Advocates of universal sensationalism face the paradox that both the working class unstampeds and the Sunday papers were largely responsible for the politicisation of the popular culture, its early theoreticalisation, and the canalisation of the discontent of this strata of the population.

Sensationalism is a discursive practice which is determined by relations of production. Indeed, the use or emergence of sensationalism is correlated with the intensity of competitive struggles for a popular market: the more intense these struggles are, the more sensational competing newspapers become. A fundamental fact in a competitive market is that readerships are floating. So, when competitive struggles are intense, it becomes particularly crucial for a newspaper to attract more readers than competitors, since a reader gained by a newspaper is also a reader lost by rivals. Sensationalism is one of the strategies used to seduce readers and to capture them from rivals.

This discursive practice is characterised by a specific relationship to reality. This relationship to reality is defined by three elements. There is sensationalism when journalists write with the intention of transforming reality, when reality is altered, and, thirdly, when the frontier between fiction and reality is made less tangible. The serialisation of a crime, and its coexistent dramatisation, include all three elements: the *intention* to alter the event, the *alteration* itself, and the introduction of *fictional elements* (imagined details, insinuative questions, etc.) in what becomes a «story».

Either sensationalism is achieved by deforming particular and specific events, or by deforming «reality in general». In the first case sensationalism is achieved by the treatment of certain news, in the second by news selection. In the first case sensationalism is evident in journalistic treatment of reported events. Some events (such as accidents, catastrophes and crimes) are journalistically «over-written» by being romanticised or dramatised. In the second case, sensationalism resides in the type of news which is selected or prioritised. Sensationalism is produced by selecting and focusing on naturally sensational or sensationalised events, or by giving prominence to sensational news to the detriment of other facts. In both cases, sensationalism is a reading of - a relationship to - reality: what constitutes the «news-value» of an event is its extraordinariness and its capacity to arouse different emotions, such as horror, disgust or pity. Some events are re-written to provoke this type of feeling. Banal facts and common events may be de-selected by some editors if they prove useless in amusing or shocking regiments of readers. Because sensationalism is a discursive practice which is a strategy aimed at provoking feelings and emotions, it is not an autonomous discursive phenomenon. It is a variant of a discursive phenomenon, emotionalism, which can be achieved by other means (i.e. scandalism and sentimentalism). Sensationalised and sensational events, therefore, are the two means of producing sensationalism, an *intentional fictionalisation of reality*.

I.5.1: Early Sensationalism

In England, the first signs of sensationalism appeared with the first penny newspaper to reach, by 1860s standards, a mass circulation. The success of the *Daily Telegraph* was due to its low price (1*d*.), and to its new approach to news. In the 1860s, during the parliamentary sessions, its main news page was almost entirely devoted to the debates of the previous day, and its leaders, liberal in tone, focused on politics. When, however, the Houses did not sit, the tone of the paper changed to become, in some columns, sensational. Crimes (murders, suicides, robberies, etc.), all sorts of sensational events (fires, explosions, and other natural disasters), were scattered in the pages of the paper, the financial page included. An early copy included titles such as "Frightful Death", "Sudden Death in the London Docks", "Double Attempt at Suicide", "The Catastrophe in Birmingham", "Another Tragedy in Birmingham", "The Fatal

Explosion at Lewes", "Forty Ships and nearly 400 Lives Lost" (*Daily Telegraph,* 1 October 1859). Other copies included headlines such as "Extraordinary Discovery of a Man-Woman in Birmingham", "Five Men Smothered in a Gin Vat", "Horrible Atrocity: A Child Devoured by Pigs" (Brendon, 1982: 70). Facts were described in great detail so as to arouse thrills and emotions. The "Frightful Death" article was an account of a workman falling into an aperture of a depth of seventy feet: "Having an iron crowbar in his hand, he fell on the pointed end, which entered his abdomen, and on being got out he was quite dead" (*Daily Telegraph,* 1 October 1859).

Several differences in the selection and the treatment of news between the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* illustrate the change of discursive practice and denote the intentions of the *Daily Telegraph*'s editor. *The Times* of the same day (1 October 1859) reported none of the events above mentioned. *The Times* was also free of the numerous accounts of murders and suicides that the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* used to scatter in the news pages of his daily. The treatment of criminal news was also different in both papers, and consequently the police news column of *The Times* differed in many ways from that of its rival. *The Times* focused on small offences with the emphasis on what happened at the police station. On the 1st of October 1859, it reported three minor offences that the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* ignored, probably judging them too ordinary for his readers. In *The Times,* the dialogue between policemen and offenders was reported verbatim. There was no journalistic interference between facts and readers. More concise than the *Daily Telegraph,* there were no stylistic or linguistic attempt to dramatise events, and accounts were free of artificial emotionalism and additional pathetic details. It may be recalled that it was with such a discursive practice that the *Daily Telegraph* successfully challenged the supremacy of *The Times*. The latter, losing its throne after reigning fifty years, accused its rival, not without justification, of imitating the sensationalism of Bennett's New York *Herald.*

During the 1860s the practice developed and most London newspapers, with bourgeois readerships, made moderate use of sensationalism. The sensationalism of this decade may be illustrated with several examples. This first is considered as a landmark in the history of British sensationalism. Between the 12th and 15th of January 1866, Frederick Greenwood published a series of articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette,* entitled "A Night in a Workhouse". In those articles, the brother of the editor detailed the night he spent in the poorhouse. Although he warned his readers that "no language with which I am acquainted is capable of conveying an adequate conception of the *spectacle* I then encountered" (*Pall Mall Gazette,* 12 January 1866, my emphasis), he described in great detail the misery and the "horrors with which [he] was surrounded" but from which he could not "escape" during the night (13 January 1866). Out of his painful visit among the «outcasts», Greenwood emerged as a hero. The following week, the *Spectator* admired his "heroism": "for a man of one caste to sleep one night in an official ward occupied by men of another has been pronounced an heroic deed" (Diamond, 1988: 31). Heroism was however not the only profit Greenwood drew from his visit. In fact, the series probably saved the twopenny paper. In 1866, a year after its creation, it was on the verge of insolvency (Diamond, 1988: 26), and the two brothers published these articles to draw public attention which the newspaper could not get by other means. As intended, the story impressed the bourgeois readership of evening dailies, and circulation doubled in three days (1988: 31). Subsequently, it helped the editor to add four pages to the eight-page journal, it enabled him to attract better contributors, and to move the paper's office near the Strand (1988: 33). Greenwood's merit however is not limited to the profits he drew from the operation. He was the first to open up a gold mine for bourgeois journalists: misery.

The success of these articles was impressive enough for the *Daily Telegraph* to run a similar series. A year later, between the 23rd and 28th of January, 1867, the daily published several articles entitled "The Prevailing Distress". Lengthy articles described the misery of the east End of London. In this case also, the avowed intention was to reproduce "these sombre scenes in all their sad monotonous gloom" (*Daily Telegraph*, 28 January 1867). The *Daily Telegraph* even beat the *Pall Mall Gazette* at its own game. Once the "crowded" workhouses "with the destitute and utterly helpless poor" were visited (23 January 1867), the following articles described the streets and the "squalid" homes of the "hundreds craving help to keep body and soul together" (24 January 1867).

The motives of these journalists were often described as a «genuine» concern for the poor. The journalist of the *Daily Telegraph* for instance presented the "painful" task of depicting these scenes of misery as a "duty", "being called upon, in the name of humanity" (24 January 1867). The daily also set up a distress fund, and the list of contributors, with the amount of their contribution, was printed next to the "money market" column.

In fact, sensationalism is solely determined by competitive struggles and by the need, not only to attract new readers, but to capture them from rival newspapers. The ends of this discursive practice are therefore purely selfish, and journalists who employ it only seek economic profits. This point is illustrated by another Greenwood sensational crusade, a series of articles denouncing baby farming and infanticide. During this campaign, one of Greenwood's main targets was the newspapers which published advertisements for nurses and homes where pregnancies could be aborted (Diamond, 1988: 34). Significantly, Greenwood singled out the *Daily Telegraph*, his main rival, as one of the greatest offenders. His campaign, whose emotionalism was conveyed by pathetic stories, did not end infanticide and baby farming. Greenwood was successful, however, in making the *Daily Telegraph* refuse advertisements for baby farms. This early piece of sensationalism points to the true function of this strategy. Not only could Greenwood transform his search for an audience into a morale crusade, but he could accuse his rivals of immorality. So, while Greenwood increased his own revenue through circulation increase, he made the revenue of his rival diminish by making them refuse advertisements.

The sincerity of their motives for the poor may be measured by observing the attitude of the same newspapers, when, four years later, the proletariat decided to change their conditions with other means than relief funds. In fact, the «objective» accounts of London journalists were particularly violent against the Parisian insurgents of the 1871 Commune. At the beginning of the insurrection, the *Daily Telegraph* was ironic on the "comedy of the «Barricades»", explaining that it was the "most successful farce that has been brought out this season" (10 March 1871), and that its popularity was due to the "complete absence of any other amusement" (10 March 1871). When the local bourgeoisie began to lose their confidence, the *Daily Telegraph* denounced the "howling assassins", the "outlaws", and the "criminal classes acting as judges" (22 March 1871). The repression which followed was announced by the same newspaper as a divine providence.

To conclude on early sensationalism, the treatment of misery by working class publicists may be compared with that of bourgeois journalists. The XIXth century proletarian misery was to the bourgeois readership of these papers what starving Africa is for today's television audiences. The proletarian world was described to bourgeois readers who had no contact with this exotic reality, and who had neither the power nor the will to act to change it. Most journalists and their readers were only interested in the spectacle of misery. Journalists did not write on poverty with the hope of finding solutions but to arouse readers' emotions. By contrast, public texts did not describe misery. Publicists focused on the political and economic causes of deprivation. Numerous leaders of the *Poor Man's Guardian* for instance had as their theme the misery of the working classes. Without exception, these leaders were an attempt to comprehend the causes of this misery. An example is given by a leader entitled "On the Distress of the Working Classes". In a dialogue with a reader (whose letter on the subject had been published few weeks previously) the author of the article (very probably Hetherington) refutes the causes proposed by his correspondent to finally give his own explanation. Tithes and corn-laws, according to Hetherington, although one of the causes, are not sufficient to explain the distress in the country. At least in this leader, machinery and capital are not considered, in themselves, as a source of misery either. It is about the "abuse of them, we complain": "Capital is like muck or manure, there is no good in it unless it is spread; when properly diffused, it enriches and fertilises; but, if suffered to lie in idle heaps, it breeds nothing but stink and vermin. It is the same with religion, and the same with knowledge; let the dispensation of either get into the exclusive hands of a favoured few, and there is an end of their use. Instead of guides to happiness, they become instruments of robbery, and fire-brands of discord" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 30 March 1833). Not only did Hetherington, like the other working class publicists, attempted to understand misery, but he continuously encouraged his readers to collectively act to transform their conditions of life.

Whilst publicists wanted to eradicate misery, journalists made material and symbolic profit out of it. In the hands of bourgeois journalists, the proletarian conditions of life became a spectacle. The bourgeoisie read these articles for the same reason children go to the zoo, for curiosity and excitement. Journalism became a type of voyeurism. In their hands, the proletariat, from being subject in the public discourse, became the object of a drama: the character of a tragedy written to arouse "pity and fear" (Aristotle, *De Poetica*, 1449 b 27).

I.5.2: Diffused Sensationalism

Between the end of the 1860s and 1888, sensationalism, as a discursive phenomenon, remained stable. Readerships of daily newspapers were still largely bourgeois, no prominent newspapers were launched, and positions in the mediatic field remained unchanged. The two decades were aptly summarised by a contemporary: "Competition between rival producers was keen enough to force them to use all their wits in seeking and winning public favour, but not yet so keen as to drive them often into unworthy ways of attracting and amusing readers" (Bourne, 1887: 284).

In 1885 therefore, Stead (often taken as the «father» of sensationalism), still felt the need of a moral pretext for sensationalism. This is the reason why he multiplied crusades. The strategy to wrap sensationalism in morality by means of crusades was illustrated by his famous *Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon*, which provoked a great scandal when published. This series of articles published by the *Pall Mall Gazette* constitutes Stead's inquiry into the world of juvenile prostitution. He interviewed brothel-keepers, young girls before and after being bought, and other people related to this trade. Some headlines indicate the tone of the campaign: "The Violation of Virgins", "The Confessions of a Brothel-Keeper", "The London Slave Market" (*Pall Mall Gazette,* 6 July 1885), "No Room for Repentance", "I order Five Virgins" (7 July 1885), "The Child Prostitute", and "Imprisoned in Brothels" (8 July 1885). The intention of arousing readers' emotions is made clear by the naturalistic descriptions of situations and the use of intimate detail in depicting these girls and the brothels. Even if this was not his intention, the 80,000 additional readers of the *Pall Mall Gazette* during the campaign and the one-and-a-half million people who read the 2*d*. reprint of the crusade did not do so out of moral indignation, but to be titillated (Mills, 1921: 64).

However sensational Stead's crusade was, it marked the end of an era. A few years later, the convergence of two factors led to the emergence of the second and final form of sensationalism. The sexual crimes committed by «Jack-the-Ripper» were widely reported by the London press and became between September and November 1888 the most recurrent press topic. This is epitomised by the *Evening News,* which devoted between the 1st of September and the 20th of October (the first spate of murders) no less than 82 columns, in 43 issues, to the subject. The *Evening News,* like many other newspapers of the broadsheet format, was only 4 pages long, each page being divided into 6 long columns. Out of these 24 daily columns, 6 columns were taken by advertisements, and two by the serial. So, during these seven weeks, out of approximately 16 daily columns, the *Evening News* devoted almost 12 percent of its free space to this series of crimes (the Whitechapel murders did not prevent the paper from reporting other street and domestic crimes). So much space allowed journalists to be very descriptive in their reports. The first sentence of one of them suggests the tone of a two-column description: "The corpse was that of a woman, and it was lying on its back, in the south-west corner, on the footway, with the head towards a hoarding, and her feet to the carriage-way" (*Evening News*, 1 October 1888). For the first time, a sensational event dominated the mediatic sphere for several months. This is true not only for the London press: a club for reporters in Chicago opened its doors in 1889 under the name of the Whitechapel Club (Schudson, 1978: 69). This had the effect of making the murderer famous and sensationalism public. After this affair, sensationalism became an established fact for both journalists and their readers. Journalists could not deny the importance of the phenomenon which reached the point of no return. The second factor which produced the second form of sensationalism was the launch, since 1888, of new dailies. These included the *Star*, 1888, the *Daily Graphic*, 1889, the *Sun*, 1893, and the *Daily Mail*, 1896. These newspapers modified the discursive practices of the daily press for two reasons. First, they were new competitors, and they increased the intensity of competitive struggles within the mediatic field. Second, these newspapers, launched with heavy circulation ambitions, introduced new commercial techniques into the mediatic field.

I

Neither the *Pall Mall Gazette* nor the *Daily Telegraph* were sensational sheets. In both papers political news maintained a certain prominence, at least during Parliamentary sessions. Sensationalism, evident in the selection of news, in the reporting of criminal news, and in some crusades, was *localised*, that is, restricted to certain articles, confined to certain subjects. By the end of the

1880s however a rupture occurred and sensationalism reached its second historical stage, its *diffused* form. To apprehend this second form it is necessary to relate it to the context of creation of the new dailies of the 1890s. This decade sealed the future of the popular press as an emerging entertainment industry rather than the organ of the political public sphere. Indeed, the dominant financial figures of the mediatic field, Newnes, Pearson, Northcliffe, and Hulton shared in common the distinction of having published comic popular periodicals before moving to the daily press.

Sir George Newnes was the first in the field of popular periodicals. His *Tit-Bits,* launched in 1881, became the model that others imitated. The principle of this weekly was to collect from other newspapers the short pieces of news that could thrill or entertain readers (that is, news had to be both short and sensational). He was also the first press owner to attempt systematically to boost the circulation of his publications by means of competitions. He was the first to offer houses as prizes, and was the inventor of the fateful insurance scheme. This scheme, which quickly extended to the popular daily press and continued up to the 1920s, consisted in converting each copy of *Tit-Bits* into an insurance policy against railway accidents (to claim the benefits, one had to have a copy of the periodical when the accident occurred). By the next decade, he possessed twenty periodicals, such as *Home Notes, Woman at Home* or *Girl's Realm.* During the 1890s and 1900s, his press group was involved in both periodicals and dailies. Besides periodicals such as the *Review of Reviews* (a monthly edited by Stead) or *Strand Magazine,* and several provincial dailies, he launched the *Westminster Gazette* (1894), a quality daily, and the *Daily Courier* (1896), a popular daily based on the model set by *Tit-Bits* (Simonis, 1917: 285-290; Fyfe, 1949: 54-56).

Sir Arthur Pearson was one of Newnes's former employees. After the model of *Tit-Bits,* he launched *Pearson's Weekly.* He also started periodicals for segmented publics such as the *Pearson's Magazine* or the *Royal Magazine* (Simonis, 1917: 298-301). These periodicals sold very well. Pearson regularly put up cash prizes, and used original methods to boost his magazines' circulation. He once claimed to have doused each copy of *Pearson's Weekly* with eucalyptus, allegedly a good preventive for influenza (Simonis, 1917: 299). The capital accumulated with these periodicals allowed him to venture into the field of the daily press. In 1900, he launched the *Daily Express*. By 1904, he owned five provincial dailies (notably in Birmingham, Newcastle and Leicester), and three dailies in London, the *St. James's Gazette*, the *Evening Standard*, and the *Standard* (Simonis, 1917: 78). He unsuccessfully attempted to transform the latter (originally an austere conservative paper), which he purchased in 1904, into a popular paper. In 1908, he was beaten by Northcliffe in a bid to take over *The Times*.

Lord Northcliffe (Alfred Harmsworth) started his journalistic career writing for periodicals such as *Bicycling News* or publishing articles such as "A Thousand Ways to Earn a Living" (Bourne R., 1990: 13). Sending articles to Newnes's *Tit-Bits*, he also took this magazine as the model of his first publication, a weekly entitled *Answers to Correspondents on Every Subject Under the Sun*, later shortened to *Answers*. "Items covered the gamut of mystery, horror, health, royalty, women's features, jokes, and interesting facts" (Bourne R., 1990: 16). Before the practice was forbidden, Northcliffe had time to imitate Newnes's strategies for boosting circulation. In 1889 he offered a £1 prize a week for life for the nearest guess of the amount of cash held in the Bank of England. He followed this by a competition offering a house as first prize, and another one with a price of £2 a week for life (Clarke, 1950: 66). Between 1888, his first publication, and the start of the *Daily Mail*, in 1896, he launched an impressive range of periodicals. In May 1890 for instance, he started *Comic Cuts*, a magazine for boys, and *Illustrated Chips*, a comic journal aimed at an adult readership. Then came, in November 1891, a periodical for girls (*Forget-Me-Not*), followed, in 1892, by *The Funny Wonder* and *Home, Sweet Home*. Between 1893 and 1895, he started many similar periodicals (Herd, 1927: 39-51; Clarke, 1950: 56-78). It is difficult to estimate the precise number of periodicals he possessed by this date but it is almost certainly above twenty. In

1894 he made his first foray into the world of the daily press by co-financing the re-launch of the *Evening News*. In 1896, he launched the *Daily Mail*. In sum, like the other press barons of the turn of the century, it was as an entertainer and publisher of comics first that gave Northcliffe his entry into the field of the daily press.

Sir Edward Hulton, from Manchester, also possessed a host of weeklies and several Sundays (*Sunday Herald, Sunday Chronicle*) before involvement with dailies such as the *Daily Sketch*, the *Daily Dispatch*, and later on with the *Evening Chronicle* or the *Evening Standard* (Simonis, 1917: 86-93; Labour Research Department, 1922: 34).

Such are the cultural and financial premises on which a great part of the Edwardian daily press was built. Except for the quality papers, which, when owned by one of these press barons, was the result of a strategy of diversification, the kinship between their periodicals and the popular dailies they bought or launched is manifest. This kinship is not only due to the fact that periodicals and dailies had the same ownership. Northcliffe, like Newnes or Pearson, transferred both close collaborators (managers and editors) and journalists from periodicals to daily journalism. These men imported into daily journalism the methods they previously applied to comics. They treated and selected news with the same objectives they had while working in the field of periodicals: to excite emotions and sensations of their readers. The fact that the periodicals were incessantly advertised in the newspapers of their respective owners, shows that both periodicals and newspapers were written and edited with the same public in mind. So, popular periodicals and popular dailies were written with similar discursive practices. The origin and the context of the popular dailies of the 1890s helps to explain why sensationalism became not simply a discursive phenomenon but the dominant discursive practice of journalists writing for newspapers with popular readerships.

The first effect of these changes could be observed in the *Daily Mail*. In this paper, not only did the police and law courts reports occupy an increasing proportion of space, with at least half a page (great format) of reports, but also the main news pages were indiscriminately devoted to trivial or sensational news. Page two of the issue of 11 May 1896 is representative of the newspaper at this period. It included the following articles: "A Spanish Lady's Death in Pimlico"; "Death From Excitement"; "Murder near Matlock: An Unaccountable Crime"; "Extraordinary Scare at Forest Hill"; "Corpse in a Burning House"; "Ghastly Scene in Camberwell". Sensationalism was not confined to domestic news. Many news items of the foreign page of the *Daily Mail* were also sensational. On 18 May 1896, page five, *in extenso,* read: "Texas Tornado: Two Hundred Lives Lost: Enormous Damage"; at Bida: "Terrible Explosion: Two Hundred People Killed"; "Fire in Glasgow: Exciting Scenes"; "Rioting in Paris"; "Zola on the Jews"; "Brigandage in Italy"; "Distress in Italy"; "The Cholera in Egypt"; "Tribal Fighting at Berbier"; "Germans in Africa: Sensational Story"; "The Transvaal: Suicide of a Prisoner".

With the entry into the popular market of the *Daily Dispatch,* 1900, and of the *Daily Illustrated Mirror,* 1904, the final stage in diffused sensationalism was reached. This stage may be measured with several indicators. Not only the amount of sensational news grew, but the sensationalism of this type of news itself increased. It is not necessary to count the exact proportion of sensational news in the popular press. It is more interesting to know that the proportion varies according to the intensity of competitive struggles for the same market. In 1904-1905, the popular market (which already counted the *Daily Chronicle,* 1877, the *Star,* 1888, the *Daily Graphic,* 1889, the *Morning Leader,* 1892, the *Sun,* 1893, the *Evening News,* 1894, the *Daily Mail,* 1896, and the *Daily Express,* 1900) became more competitive and therefore the proportion of sensational news grew correspondingly. The *Daily Graphic,* which specialised in trivial and social news, was the only one of these newspapers not to use sensationalism as a competitive strategy. Sensationalism was also relatively moderate in the *Daily Express*. Besides these two exceptions, other newspapers made great use, in the battle, of the discursive practice. On 12 September 1905, page five of the *Daily Dispatch* read, among other slightly less sensational headlines: "Plunged to Death: Passenger's Head Found Sixty Feet From Body"; from an earthquake: "One Vast Cemetery: Weeping Women's Pathetic Appeal to Italian King"; "Premature Burial"; "Dragged to Death"; "A Bridegroom's Suicide"; "Attempted Suicide at 12"; "Under a Traction Engine". A selection from the *Daily Mirror*: "White Men and Women Slain in Savage Africa" (26 January 1904), "A Beared Lady Cyclist" (27 January 1904), "East African Savages who Tattoo their Conquests on their Bodies" (28 January 1904), an Indiana physician aiming at making Blacks white: "To Bleach the Negro" (29 January 1904), a woman, certified as dead, was buried, then exhumed, and remained alive: "Grave for the Living" (6 February 1904). Or: "Native Woman Burnt to Death by her Husband" (13 February 1904).

As already mentioned, sensationalism can be expressed in the type of topic which is treated, but it is also a specific discursive relationship to reality, a re-writing of reality with the intention of arousing emotions. Sensationalism is an *over-representation* of reality with this goal in mind. When a young woman was found mutilated on a railway line, the *Daily Mirror* exploited the issue and ran a series of articles on the «murder or suicide» theme (22 February 1904). The same journal entitled the police news section *Law, Police, and Mystery*. It was indeed the task of journalists to add mystery to the crimes they reported. This writing procedure was also stylistic. When twenty-one miners remained trapped down a mine for several days, their experience was "terrible", their "fight for life" "desperate", their narrative "thrilling", their meeting with the rescue team "dramatic", their escape "miraculous", their emotions "indescribable", and the suspense "dreadful" (*Daily Mail*, 31 March 1906).

This effort at re-writing is also clearly visible in a facet of emotionalism often left unnoticed, sentimentalism. Some pages of these dailies, in terms of pathos, are closer to Puccini's operas, than the style and content of the public press. Pathetic stories, such as

"Heroic mother's Futile Battle with the Flames" (*Daily Mail*, 1 September 1904), or "Child's Pathetic Story of her Mother's Suicide" (*Daily Mail*, 1 October 1904), became the extremity of a spectrum whose other end was constituted by heroic tales. The common point of happy tales is their happy end. The *Daily Mirror* outlined the "act of splendid heroism" of a boy who rescued a lifeboat crew (15 October 1910). The story included the "poor girl", "tearfully" asking him, when he returned, if he had found her brother. The same paper applauded a "heroic midshipman" who saved ten lives (4 October 1910), as well as the story of Kane, imprisoned in a capsized dredger, and rescued after a hole had been cut in the ship's side. Dialogue: "I cried to him: «Hang on, Kane; I'll save you», and he replied: «Bill, don't let me go. I'm dying»" (15 October 1910).

The fate of a piece of news in the popular press was dependent on how sensational it was. Not only was the characteristic of being sensational the prime condition for an event becoming public, but the rule was to give the greatest prominence to the most sensational events. This rule produced *mediatic events*, that is, the events which, by virtue of their potential sensationalism, become highly publicised. During those years, popular papers, like today, reserved their front pages for either sensational news or sensationally treated events. The *Daily Mirror* systematically used this page to illustrate, (first with drawings, then with photographs), crimes, murders, suicides or social scandals. The following example is of an early mediatic event, the trial of Dr. Crippen, condemned to death for the murder of his wife. During the trial, the *Daily Mirror* published, over three days, thirty-five pictures, some two pages wide, and twelve pages of news, comments and reports (18-20 October 1910). Front pages, and the central double pages, were, during the same days, devoted to sensational pictures, such as photographs of the convict, the court room, or the carriage of the judge. All the actors of the drama were photographed, from jurymen to Crippen's mother.

The role played by typography and image in the sensationalism of the popular press must also be underlined. The typography of these dailies is in itself sensational. The *Pall Mall Gazette* or the *Daily Telegraph* were among the first newspapers, in the 1880s, to use headlines to cut the long columns and to attract readers' eyes. The editors of popular papers generalised the practice. Headlines were spread on every page, and they grew bolder, ranging from several columns to two pages wide.

The Crippen trial is a good example of the way the *Daily Mirror* used photographs to create sensations. The fact that images and photographs in particular directly represent reality means that images have a greater sensational impact than words. Even though the face of a murderer may be described with words, language is not as efficient as a photograph to give to readers the sensation of his existence, of his presence. The sensational impact of images completes the emotions created with words. To dramatise a topic, journalists writing for popular readerships mix the emotions conveyed with words and the sensations created by the direct representation of images. Words and images complement each other in the dramatisation of an event. This combination constitutes one reason why the popular press made great use of images.

II

In many cases, there is moralism in the critique of sensationalism. These critiques are based on the following syllogism: crime is immoral, sensational newspapers relate crimes, therefore sensational newspapers are immoral. Sensationalism is only a discursive means to arouse emotions, to give immediate satisfaction to readers, such as scandalism or sentimentalism, and from this perspective that it should be appreciated.

Emotionalism denotes a relationship to the world: emotions are the reason of the dominated. The dominated see the world emotionally when they have lost the means, individually or collectively, to act on it, or, simply, to comprehend it. Emotionalism therefore constitutes another difference between the two classes of texts. Both lead their readers in opposite directions. Public texts were written by and for politically confronting publics constituting, by the history of their struggles, the political reality of a given time. Mediatic texts, on the contrary, are written to move their readers away from the common, but banal, social and political reality. While publicists sought to understand political reality and to give their readers the possibility of doing so, when they attempted to share with their readers this understanding, journalists helped them to escape from reality. Whereas publicists addressed their readers' intelligence, arguing and reasoning as logically as possible, journalists sought to titillate their readers' imagination without appealing to their reason. Both classes of texts, therefore, are written with opposite aims in mind: *the public discourse to help readers to collectively and concretely transform reality, the mediatic to make readers escape from it.* Publicists wanted to change the world, journalists help people forget it.

I.6: Dualism

The concept dualism refers to an internal textual division *within* the mediatic discourse. It refers to the division between the *quality press* and the *popular press*, which form two sub-classes of texts within the mediatic discourse. It will be argued that each sub-class is different enough from the other to constitute a distinctive part of the discursive production of the mediatic field, but at the same time not distinct enough to form another class of texts. The «quality» of *quality press* is always spelled with quotation marks because scholars and journalists are afraid of being accused of making a judgement of value on the relative quality of newspapers. Behind the appearance of political correctness, not only do they refuse to appreciate a fundamental dimension of mediatic discourse, but they also avoid having to explain the inequality on which the financial functioning of the press is based. Against this hypocrisy, the notion of dualism refers to three related elements of the division. It refers to the historical, economic, and discursive aspects of the division.

I

The emergence of the division still needs to be historically located. Following the commercial creations of the 1890s and early 1900s, the national press included, by 1904, twenty-one newspapers which can be categorised in two groups. The first group included the *Evening News*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Dispatch*, the *Daily Graphic*, the *Morning Leader*, the *Sun*, the *Star*, the *Daily Express*, then the *Daily Mail*, the *Evening Standard*, the *Daily News*, and the *Daily Chronicle*. The second group included *The Times*, the *Standard*, the *Morning Post*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *St James's Gazette*, the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Echo*, and the *Globe*.

What is the basis of discrimination between the two groups? An explanation at the discursive level is not yet necessary. The discursive aspect will be examined when dealing with the third aspect of the dualism of the mediatic discourse, and in the last section of the chapter (section II), which deals with the outline of the mediatic class of texts. Now, it suffices to notice that at the beginning of the century two distinct groups of newspapers emerged, and that this distinction was grounded on *the two separate and relatively homogeneous markets of readers* at which each group of newspapers aimed.

The first group of twelve papers aimed at a popular readership. Because of the absence of readership analysis for the period, there is little extra-textual evidence on the exact sociological constitution of readerships[34]. In the popular readership group, however, one may include both working class readers, concentrated on the first eight dailies, and those of the petty bourgeoisie, probably concentrated on the next four titles. The readership of the second group of newspapers is distinctively bourgeois. The most relevant variables

[34]Research conducted from the 1950s onward, although very unsatisfactory on methodological grounds, showed that the great majority of popular newspapers are read by the working classes (grades C2, D and E) and the lower middle class (C1), whereas most readers of quality papers belong to grades A (upper middle class) and B (middle class). Cf. for instance the series of regional readership surveys conducted by the Evening Newspaper Advertising Bureau, 1964: tables 2A; the report *Attitudes to the Press*, by the Royal Commission on the Press, 1977: 22-23; or Negrine, 1989: 70-71 (based on the *British Social Attitudes*, 1985).

which differentiate this group of readers from the preceding one are its higher cultural, educational, and economic capital. The newspapers of this group were read by political and cultural elites.

The distinction between the two readerships is concretised by the price difference. The first group constitutes the half-penny press, the second the penny papers. This division between two markets may be dated with a relative precision around the first years of the XXth century. This is confirmed by the failure of the *Daily Courier*.

This newspaper was launched by George Newnes one month before Northcliffe started the *Daily Mail*, that is, in April 1896. As rationally planed and edited as his rival's paper (Newnes applied to his daily the same successful methods he employed in his periodicals) the journal would have been a success, like the *Daily Mail*, had its owner realised, like Northcliffe did, that a newspaper aiming at a popular readership had to be sold at half-a-penny. Sold at a penny, it proved too expensive for its market, and it disappeared in August 1896, after five months in existence. Newnes's mistake shows that two markets were in the making. He knew the type of newspapers popular readerships needed, but the situation was not clear enough for him in 1896 to realise that a popular readership could not pay a penny every day. In fact, 1896 was among the last years such a pricing mistake could be made. The popular market crystallised with the three half-penny dailies of Northcliffe, (the *Evening News*, 1894, the *Daily Mail*, 1896, and the *Daily Mirror*, 1904), and by the half-penny launched by Pearson in 1900 (the *Daily Express*), which, together, solidified the distinction between the popular and quality markets, between the newspapers of the masses and those of the elite.

II

As explained in the introduction of this chapter (section I.1), the division between the two presses is created by the discursive strategies of agents who are attempting to make their texts conform to the particular market they are targeted at. The inequality in the financing of the popular and quality presses reinforces and contributes to maintain this division. This financial inequality meant that popular newspapers need much greater readerships than those of quality papers to cover costs, and, therefore, were forced to use discursive methods which widened the gap between the two presses.

The income inequality is in fact double: it is created both by advertising and sales revenues. We already mentioned the importance, for the press, of advertising revenue (cf. chapter VI - introduction). Another illustration is the revenue structure of *The Times* in 1871. That year, its owner received £160,000 from sales (with an average circulation of 70,000), and £300,000 from advertisements (Grant, 1871: 125). It is in the distribution of advertising revenue that the first source of financial inequality between the two presses resides. When advertisers and their agents realised that the readers of popular papers had lower incomes than those of quality papers, the purchasing power of a readership became a determinant of the price of advertising space in that paper. So, the wealthier the readership of a paper, the more expensive the unit of space. This created an inequality in the financing of the two presses which may be expressed in different ways. For instance, the lower the average income of the readership, the larger that readership needs to be to attract an adequate volume of advertising. The result of this is that the proportion of total revenue coming from advertisements is greater in the case of quality papers.

It is in the 1905 edition of the *Newspaper Press Directory* (published by Mitchell, an advertising contractor for advertisers) that a minority of newspapers started to publicise their advertising rates with consistency. The difference between the two groups of dailies was not yet marked but was starting to appear. Concerning the newspapers which did not mention their rates, it became clear that if they had a bourgeois readership, they emphasised the «quality» aspect of their audience, if they had a popular one, the «quantity» element was put forward. Neither *The Times* nor the *Westminster Gazette* for instance published their rates. The first however underlined that its readers were "people of means", the second that its readership (not limited "on mere party lines") was mostly composed by the "wealthy and influential classes" (Mitchell's *Newspaper Press Directory*, 1905: 3 & 91). Popular papers, on the contrary, advertised the size of their readership, (350,000 for the *Daily Express*, 900,000 for the *Daily Mail*) (*Newspaper Press Directory*, 1905: 59, 61).

When rates were advertised, the difference between the two groups of newspapers began to be clearly marked. If the rates advertised in 1905 are not strictly comparable, mostly because circulation figures are missing, it can still be noted that the popular *Daily Mirror* asked for £45 the page, while the *Morning Post* and the *Globe*, two evening London newspapers which never exceeded 40,000 of circulation, asked for a similar price of £40 (*Newspaper Press Directory*, 1905: 63, 87, 88). The trend was confirmed during the decade. In 1914, the *Daily Sketch*, claiming 663,000 readers, asked £70 for a page, while the *Daily Telegraph*, a quality paper, for an estimated circulation of 250,000, asked £200-250 per page. The *Daily Graphic*, a popular paper, asked for the modest sum of £40 for several hundreds thousands readers, while the *Globe*, in spite of its confidential circulation, asked between £50 and £72 for the same amount of space (*Newspaper Press Directory*, 1914: 452, 455 & 458)[35].

The second inequality comes from the sales revenue. Since popular papers are sold at half the price of their counterparts, the popular press has to sell twice what quality papers need in order to meet production costs. To make things worse, although they are sold at half-price, the production costs are greater for popular papers than for quality ones. Their need for greater circulation implies greater expenditure than their quality counterparts not only

[35]The first economic study of the inequality in the structure of revenue, which necessitates the detailed accounts of each newspaper, was done in 1966. The members of the first royal commission were aware of the phenomenon (R.C.P., 1949: 136), but did not quantify their claims, neither in the report nor in the memoranda of evidence (R.C.P., 1947). In 1957, the net advertisement revenue as a percentage of the total net revenue of the four quality dailies (*Daily Telegraph, Guardian, The Times, Financial Times*) was of 67 per cent, and of 41 per cent only for the five popular dailies (*Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, Sun, Daily Sketch* and *Daily Express*) (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1966: table 12).

in term of variable costs (e.g. ink and newsprint) but also of fixed costs (e.g. more efficient machinery).

All in all, these inequalities set the break point (the number of copy needed to cover costs) much higher for popular papers than for quality dailies. The difference is of the order of five to ten times. In the 1900s, none of the three evening gazettes (*Pall Mall Gazette, St. James's Gazette,* and *Westminster Gazette*) ever went much beyond 20,000 in circulation. Such a figure, (which proved too low by the 1920s), would have been unthinkable with popular readerships. In 1922, (according to the figures provided above in the chapter (section I.4.3)), the average circulation for the twelve popular papers (including the *Daily Herald*) was of 660,000, 9.2 times more than the average of 72,000 of the six quality papers[36]. So, since they need greater readerships than their quality counterparts to get similar advertising and sale revenues, the burden of competition is heavier for popular papers than for the quality press. A consequence is that they are pushed to use discursive strategies which widen the gap between themselves and quality papers. And the more they compete the more they widen the gap.

It is possible to demonstrate that market mechanisms, by making competitive struggles more intense for the popular market, contribute to reproduce this division. To demonstrate this, it is useful to mention the situation of the British press during World War II, a historical situation where market mechanisms were disrupted.

An unintended consequence of the German invasion of Norway in April 1940 was to cut the greatest source of newsprint of the British press. This created a shortage of newsprint. Rationing was introduced, and newspapers accustomed to printing thirty-two pages could only print four to eight (R.C.P., 1949: 5-6). The effect of this was to ease the financial strain on the popular press and, above

[36]This difference has been confirmed in the following decades. In 1930, the average circulation of the three quality papers was of 160,000, of the six popular papers, 1,350,000 (R.C.P., 1947: 130).

all, to end competition between them for readership: the demand was higher than the offer and since advertisers were on waiting lists for space, both the size and quality of readerships became irrelevant for advertising rates (Curran & Seaton, 1991: 80-83). In other words, the effect of the shortage of newsprint was to deregulate market mechanisms, and to limit competition between papers. Since popular papers were not forced to constantly use and abuse discursive strategies designed to maximise readerships, they became quality papers. On the nature of this evolution, the testimony of George Orwell may be taken as convincing. A year and a week after the German army's entry in Norway, the 15 April 1941, he wrote: "The tone of the popular press has improved out of recognition during the last year" (Orwell, 1968: 112). The dailies of the lowest section of the press (*Daily Mirror, Daily Express,* or *Evening Standard*) "have all grown politically serious", and "all of them print articles which would have been considered hopelessly above readers' heads a couple of years ago" (1968: 112-113). Including Beaverbrook papers, "nearly the whole of the press is now «left»", and even *The Times* "mumbles about the need for ... greater social equality" (1968: 113). He also noticed a greater accuracy in the news, and that the "flag-waving and Hun-hating is absolutely nothing to what it was in 1914-18", (when no material constraints checked competition). In other words, because competition ceased, *the relations of production were modified,* and so were agents' discursive strategies. Consequently, the popular press ceased to be popular and began to close the gap between the two presses. This historical situation allows us to assess with clarity the influence of economic competition on the discursive production of the mediatic field. As can be seen, public tastes are not the cause of the quality of content of popular papers. The pre-market press and the World War II situation demonstrates that working classes, too, want and deserve quality papers.

III

We come now to the discursive aspect of the dualism of the mediatic discourse. Except for those who put the term quality press in between quotation marks, and semiologists, who specialise in «sophisticated» textual readings, any reader and any apprentice philologist may observe that quality journalism produces better texts than its popular counterpart. The texts produced by quality journalists are more informative, more rational, more analytical, and more accurate than the texts published in dailies for popular readerships[37]. The journalistic difference between popular and bourgeois newspapers may also be observed from the subjective perspective of the journalist. The cultural gap between popular and quality papers is internalised by journalists whose awareness of being on one side or the other of the «barrier» make them think their discursive practices differently. While quality journalists may perceive their function close to that of organic intellectuals, the others perceive themselves as mere entertainers. Every thing else being equal, the absence of a feeling of having a meaningful political role to play releases entertainers from the sense of duty of having to write rationally or objectively, that is, to write something which seems to be both rationally deduced from the course of events and having the appearance of concordance with reality. Since they do not share the same feeling of irresponsibility, quality journalists work to a higher professional standard. For instance, to the extent that they are conscious, they would not allow themselves, like popular journalists, to mix fiction and reality, or to transform reality into fiction.

[37]It has been demonstrated for instance that the reading of "difficult-to-read" and "complex" newspapers (attributes of quality papers) contributes more to the "acquisition of political knowledge" (provided the educational level of the reader is high), than "easily readable" newspapers (Kleinnijenhuis, 1991: 516-518). The same article also mentions that highly educated readers tend to read more complex newspapers (*ibid.*).

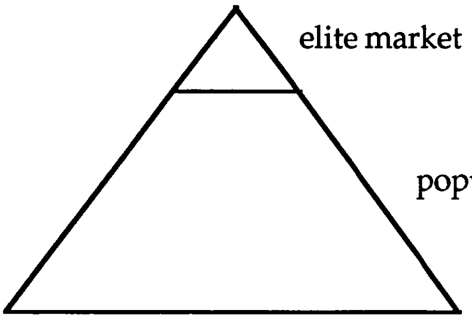
IV

Dualism, as a global discursive phenomenon characterising the mediatic discourse, also differentiates this textual class from the public discourse. *Discursively,* nothing distinguished the middle class from the working class pre-market press. The two presses were opposed to each other on the ground of ideology only. In the public discursive sphere the quality of the press is equal for all publics. The working class unstampeds were as much the quality papers of their time as the middle class stampeds or the official press of the ruling bourgeoisie. On the ground of their ideological differences, public newspapers may be categorised according to the public who read them:

working class public	middle class public	other publics

The Ideological Differences between Public Texts

On the contrary, the dualism of the mediatic discourse points to a *hierarchisation* of the texts which compose this textual class. According to the market they are aimed at (elite or popular), modern newspapers differ in the discursive quality of their texts. Popular newspapers (e.g. tabloids) are written with discursive practices and are the result of discursive strategies which make them less informative and more irrational than their quality counterparts:



The Textual Dualism of the Mediatic Discourse

This difference between the texts written for a popular market (mostly composed of working and low middle class persons) and for the elite market (mostly composed of the bourgeoisie) is the result of competitive struggles and related market mechanisms which dispossessed the dominated classes of their quality papers. To the emotionalism and the trivialism of the mediatic popular press must be opposed the rationalism and the political will of the unstampeds of the 1830s.

In a class society, several goods are unequally distributed, notably, money, culture, and information. In the same way the bourgeoisie dominates the proletariat both by greater economic and cultural capitals, its *capital in information* is also larger. To the *accumulation of capitals* (e.g. cultural or economic), the bourgeoisie add the *cumulation of capitals*. These cumulations interact with each other and this interaction helps the bourgeoisie to accumulate different capitals. This cumulation of capitals is illustrated by the bourgeois who reads the financial pages of quality papers (who needs to accumulate a certain capital in information in order to accumulate economic capital), and the working class person who reads the sport pages of the *Daily Mirror*, who does not need as much information (sport is not information but entertainment) since this person does not possess economic capital. A certain amount of economic capital creates the need for information. Then, the accumulation of information increases the possibility of the accumulation of economic capital. Not only does one type of capital call for the other, but the cumulation of capitals (in this case economic capital and information) facilitates the accumulation of other capitals. There is a synergy between different types of capitals.

What the dualism of the mediatic discourse reflects is the division between social classes, more specifically the opposition between the different relations to the world of those who occupy a different position in the world; the opposition between those "who make politics and policy, in deeds, in words or in thought, and those who undergo it, between active opinion and opinion that is acted upon", "between the sovereign viewpoint of those who dominate the social world in practice or in thought ... and the blind, narrow, partial vision (that of the ordinary soldier lost in the battle) of those who are dominated by this world" (Bourdieu, 1984b: 444).

V

The phenomenon of dualism helps to explain an aspect of the production of the ideological means of reproduction.

On the one hand, capitalism needs continuous political regulation. Contrary to current assertions of the watchdogs of capitalist interests (we may note that the ideological effect of their theories has extended to the point that they are fully institutionalised and no longer perceived as ideologies), capitalism is a system which needs help to help itself. In other words, the capitalist economic mechanisms are not self-regulating. They need to be politically sustained and maintained. For instance, although the phenomenon of dualism is the product of capitalist economic mechanisms, these mechanisms could be checked, and dualism suppressed, by political intervention[38].

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[38]The way the press could be «liberated» from capitalist economic mechanisms has been debated for several decades, and many schemes have already been proposed (cf. notably R.C.P, 1949: 155-161, where 12 classic propositions are examined; cf. also Curran, 1978: 1-11). From my point of view, the best means to check competitive struggles in the field of the press would be to reproduce the conditions of production which prevailed during World War II, and thus to make illegal newspapers of more than eight pages. The defence of this proposition would necessitate too long a discussion than is possible in the context of this research.

The political support that capitalist economic mechanisms need is illustrated by government policy towards the press. In Britain, this policy always consisted in allowing the maximum of freedom to market forces in the field. The first government commission on the press enunciated this principle that "free enterprise" is a "prerequisite of a free-press" (R.C.P., 1949: 155-156). It was confirmed in its judgements by the following commission. Its members warned against the "dangers of governmental interference with the press which we think would follow from other artificial attempts to regulate the incidence of market forces" (R.C.P., 1962: 98). This is called the «freedom of the press». But both commissions were engaged in the protection of the economic mechanisms which underlay the dual textual structure of the discourse which contributes, at its turn, to the reproduction of the actual economic system. Indeed, it is precisely the dualism of the mediatic discourse (as well as the political arbitrariness of the press) which contributes to the electoral success of political parties whose main preoccupation is to help capitalism to help itself. It is precisely the dual textual structure of the mediatic discourse which helps the election of political parties hostile to a policy which would check, in the press as in other fields, the force and impact of capitalist economic mechanisms. In other words, although the capitalist economic mechanisms are not self-regulating, they nonetheless help capitalism to reproduce itself.

So, on the other hand, capitalism can be conceptualised as a *system*. Indeed, this mode of production functions as a *logos*, that is, as a *force which generates its own force*: the economic mechanisms which characterise capitalism (e.g. economic competition) also contribute to its reproduction by creating the economic conditions which are at the basis of the production of the discourse which supports, ideologically, the reproduction of this system. In other words, capitalism reproduces itself in so far as its economic mechanisms ensure the economic conditions which create the ideological support necessary to its reproduction. In this aspect, capitalism works as a global internal tautology: the same economic mechanisms create simultaneously the economic conditions necessary to its symbolic support, and the symbolic support necessary to its reproduction as an economic system. The most obvious example of this is the phenomenon of dualism. These are purely capitalist economic mechanisms which created this global discursive phenomenon. Yet, this textual structure of the mediatic discourse is precisely what is needed by capitalism: while the bourgeoisie accumulate information and cumulate different types of capital, journalists give the dominated the means to carry on life. Popular journalism does not inform readers, even less educate them, but above all provide them the means to escape from reality. If this helps them to support their life conditions, it also prevents them from understanding what causes these conditions to be what they are. In other words, those whom capitalism materially dispossesses are also dispossessed of the symbolic means to realise the cause of their dispossession and to find alternative solutions to their dispossession (that is, to find other solutions to end their material dispossession than those proposed by the dominant classes (e.g. charities)). Capitalism, as a system *based on and producing* class inequalities, needs, in order to survive, to maintain this double - economic, and symbolic - inequality between social classes. The symbolic inequality being at the same time the result of the material one, and its condition of reproduction.

II: Outline of a Textual Class

For three reasons, the purely historical aspect of the process of commodification of the public discourse has not been looked at so far in this chapter. There is a good reason for this. First, and in opposition to journalists and historians, who narrate the history of the press from the XVIIth century to the present day as a long chronology of events, as the "march of journalism" (Herd, 1927), one had to establish the rupture between the two classes of texts. Second, neither the past nor the press have been studied for themselves, but in so far they explain the actual mediatic situation. Rather than narrate a series of historic events, the aim of the last chapter was to describe the development of discursive practices and strategies that are still employed today in more than one medium. Finally, contrary to the a-historical approach of semiology and content analysis, history is indeed a matter of importance, but to the extent that the mediatic discourse is considered as a *historical being*, historical because dependent upon historical relations of production. For these reasons, the products of history, rather than history itself, have been examined. The following pages, on the contrary, refer to the process of change itself, rather than its outcome. This section is an attempt to briefly describe the emergence of the mediatic textual class in its entirety. This explains why the argument goes in the direction opposite to the argument of the previous section. As opposed to looking at the differences between the discursive practices of journalists writing for a popular or elite market, this section examines what they have in common.

I

The process of commodification of the public discourse is similar, in its conceptualisation, to that of secularisation. Although this concept denotes the process whereby religion loses significance in modern Western societies, it does not claim that all forms and all manifestations of religiosity disappeared from modern societies, and that, from being totally religious, some societies became, suddenly, completely secular. In a similar way secularisation does not exclude religion from secularised societies, the concept of mediatic discourse does not exclude either some traces of publicity in some mediatic texts, or the production, in margins of the mediatic field, of some public texts.

Once again, those who try to judge «in the text» what is a public or mediatic segment of discourse might be mislead. The status of a text should not be decided from its content only, but also from the materiality of its condition. One class of texts supplanted the other when the internal rules of functioning of a field determined agent's discursive practices. The history of the mediatic field is also the history of a discursive specialisation called journalism. The fact itself of the emergence of this profession is of a great importance for the texts produced. In itself, the fact that journalism is a profession differentiates journalists from publicists. Journalists began to be salaried, to pursue careers, to write for different newspapers and occupy different positions, to meet at annual dinners, to receive awards, to belong to a union. Increasingly, some individuals perceived this discursive specialisation as a possible *vocation*. In between 1881 and 1901, the number of journalists increased by 81 percent. From 6,111 persons qualified as authors, editors, journalists, reporters and shorthand writers in the census of 1881, the figure rose to 11,060 (9,811 men and 1,249 women) in 1901 (Census of England & Wales, 1901: 257).

By the beginning of this century, the development of several institutions of the mediatic field was near completion. Among the prominent institutions of the field, the Newspaper Benevolent Fund was founded in 1864, the proprietors' association, (the National Association of Journalists), in 1886, the Institute of Journalists, in 1890 (Lee, 1976: 114-115), and the National Union of Journalists, in 1907. By 1902, journalism was taught at the University of London, a sure sign of the degree of professionalisation. This academic recognition also conferred status on the profession and helped it to get rid of the image of the journalist as a character mid-way between the bohemian and the dandy. The ambitious young Edwardian seeking advise on a career in the profession could choose between *Journalism as a Profession* (Shadwell, 1898; Lawrence, 1903), *Journalism as a Career* (A Veteran Journalist, 1898), or *How to Succeed in Journalism* (Pendleton, 1902), and a host of other books and articles written in the last three decades on many aspects of the profession. He or she could read *Writing for Money* (Guest, 1869), or, in case of doubt, *Does Writing Pay?* (Fitzgerald, 1881).

So, by these years, journalism was separating itself from literary or political occupations to become a distinct profession. An illustration of the growing distinction between two fields of activity, the mediatic and the political, is given by some aspects of H.V. Massingham's career. He is generally referred to as a «radical» (i.e. political) journalist. His life and career choices would, nevertheless, hardly be understandable without bearing in mind the force of attraction of the mediatic field to which he belonged. He did his apprenticeship between 1877 and 1883 at the Norwich *Eastern Daily Press*. He then moved to London in 1883, where he wrote for the *Norfolk News* and for the National Press Agency. In 1888 he joined the *Star* at its launch to become assistant editor and chief leader-writer. In 1890 he became editor of the paper only to resign after six months. For almost two years he wrote for some reviews and magazines, before joining, in 1891, the *Daily Chronicle* as a leader-writer. He eventually became editor, and had to resign in 1901. He then wrote for *The Times*, the *Daily News*, and the *Speaker*. This latter weekly eventually became Massingham's periodical the *Nation* (Havighurst, 1974: 1-119).

When he resigned from the *Star*, he joined the Fabian society, and was elected to its executive committee. At this point of his life, he could have chosen a political career. For several years, he had no fixed employment within the mediatic field, and could have grasped the opportunity to commit himself to politics. In 1891, however, he left the Fabian society to join the *Daily Chronicle*. According to his biographer, he joined the Fabian society mostly because he had the time to do so (Havighurst, 1974: 53). In other words, he became Fabian to remain busy between two journalistic appointments. So, although Massingham was one the most political of the prominent editors of the Edwardian decade, the logic of the mediatic field is clearly visible in his choices. The point is that he was a journalist with some political convictions, whereas a publicist was a politician with some writing abilities. The field creates, between the «radical» journalist and the publicist, however close they could be, irredeemable differences which can only be reflected in their texts. To use an analogy, a field of production can be compared with a planet in terms of its force of attraction, and the mediatic field was a new planet which was rapidly becoming a major force in the solar system of modernity.

In sum, when journalism became a profession, when the production of opinions and the transmission of news became the monopoly of an industrial field, the public discourse was supplanted by the texts produced by journalists and sold by press owners. What is being argued is that beyond real differences between at least two journalisms (elite and popular), the regularities of the field (which themselves create these differences) differentiate journalism, as such, from public texts. At a macro level, the mediatic discourse designates a particular sphere of modern society, the product of a discursive specialisation, of a division of labour between those who make events and those who report them. Whatever their ideological effects, mediatic texts, products of a general division of labour, are only an infinite commentary, more or less coherent, more or less argumentative, on the economic, social, political, or private activities of various agents in society.

So, what needs to be clarified, is that the division between newspapers for the elite and the popular press, the serious journalism and the stunt press, the heavy journalism and the cheap press, the high-brow newspapers and the gutter press, the high class papers and the mass press, is internal to the mediatic class of texts.

II

The eventful year of 1922 may be taken as a reference. The first group includes the papers whose status within the mediatic discourse has already been made clear, however partially. These are the *Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Daily Sketch, Evening News, Daily Express, Daily Dispatch, Evening Standard, Daily Graphic, Star, Daily News, Daily Chronicle* and *Westminster Gazette* (the latter being just converted popular). The group of quality papers includes *The Times, Daily Telegraph, Daily Herald, Manchester Guardian, Morning Post* and *Pall Mall Gazette.*

The dailies of the first group displayed all the discursive phenomena characteristic of the mediatic class of texts. None of them was primarily political. Although eight of them were labelled Conservative, and four Liberal, their *raison d'être* was commercial, not political. They provided readers with news rather than opinions, they sought to amuse them rather than instruct or educate them, and treated «all spheres of life» in the brightest possible way, some of them with pictures rather than words. It is the status of the quality papers which needs to be clarified. Less irrational, more informative, especially on public life, quality papers, because retaining some of the discursive properties of the public discourse, are closer to public texts than are popular dailies. The point to be made is that while this difference is enough to create a division within the mediatic class of texts, it is not enough for quality papers to constitute another textual class.

Before defending this argument, it should be recalled that whatever the status given to quality papers, the total circulation of this group was small, and only represents a modest part of the total discursive production of the mediatic field in the early 1920s. By 1922, circulation of the six quality papers (*The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Herald*, the *Morning Post*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Manchester Guardian*) totalled 560,000, while the rest of the national press reached 7,780,000 copies daily. Almost fourteen popular papers were being sold for every quality paper. A disproportion between the two groups which provides the background to many contemporary judgements, such as Garvin's description of the period as "the age of tabloid journalism" (Simonis, 1917: 127).

The reason of the decline of the quality papers was that most were losing money, being unable to *resist* the increasing pressure of competition. The *Westminster Gazette*, for the twenty-eight years of its existence as a morning quality paper (1893-1921), never for a single year made a profit, and cost its successive owners sixteen thousand pounds a year on average, £500,000 in all (Spender, 1927: 138-139). If *The Times* was saved by Northcliffe, who owned it between 1908 and 1922, most did not have this chance, and therefore disappeared. So, the six quality papers of 1922 were themselves the survivors of an endangered species. The *Standard* was bought in 1904 by Pearson who killed the paper, (1918), in trying to turn it popular, the *St. James Gazette* was amalgamated with the *Evening Standard* in 1905, the *Echo* died the same year. The *Globe* disappeared in 1921, the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1923, and the *Westminster Gazette* in 1928, after having become in 1921 a morning paper and being classified as "popular" by contemporary analysts (Labour Research Department, 1922: 5). The *Daily Herald* is placed in the 1922 quality group because its avowed partisanship and the amount of political news it published differentiated it from other popular newspapers. In the late 1920s however, it was bought by the Odhams group and turned into a tabloid to be able to compete for the popular market. So, the number of quality newspapers constantly declined during the first decades of the century. With the exception of the *Manchester Guardian*, which was gaining national prominence, no other daily could be added to the list. Since those which survived this economic selection did so at the price of a thorough adaptation, this selection contributed to the definitive depoliticisation and mediatisation of the discourse of the press.

A first extra-discursive reason why both groups of newspapers belong to the mediatic textual class is that both groups were connected in several ways. Many of the quality papers were owned by proprietors whose revenues came from the popular press. A typical illustration of the versatility of proprietors is George Newnes. Having launched a quality daily, the *Westminster Gazette*, he made a similar attempt to enter the popular market, in 1896, with the *Daily Courier*. The owner of the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Mail* and *Evening News* was Northcliffe, who bought *The Times*'s in 1908 for the prestige it conferred on him. By 1921, the Berrys possessed a series of dailies and Sundays both quality and popular. They owned the *Financial Times* and the *Sunday Times*, and also the *Daily Graphic* and the *Sunday Graphic*. Not only proprietors, but also journalists, were connected with the two types of newspaper. Arthur Mann who was the London editor of the *Daily Dispatch* (a popular illustrated daily), was also editor of the *Evening News*, before becoming editor of the *Yorkshire Post* (a quality provincial daily) (Andrews & Taylor, 1970: 115-125). E.T. Cook edited the *Westminster Gazette* before editing the *Daily News*. T.P. O'Connor wrote indiscriminately for the *Star*, the *Sun*, and the *Westminster Gazette*, and Hamilton Fyfe, who was secretary to the editor of *The Times*, (quality and Conservative) before becoming editor of the *Daily Mirror* (popular and Conservative), finally accepted the editorship of the *Daily Herald* (popular and Labour). These journalistic connections substantiate the claim that both types of newspaper were produced in the same field, and that one industrial field was catering for a public segmented into markets.

A second extra-discursive reason for which quality newspapers cannot be considered as being part of a public discourse is the privileged access to ownership of the quality papers. If this type of newspaper is not typically owned for economic profit, ownership nevertheless required large sums of economic capital. For this reason, only very few persons could afford the luxury of owning quality papers. A text is public if and only if all social classes and all social groups have had an *equal opportunity* of producing it. Without this equality, a text is not public. There is no justification for calling the quality papers «public» when their ownership was the exclusive privilege of the dominant class, when Beaverbrook could claim (to William Berry, future Viscount Camrose), that the House of Lords was the "real and rightful Newspaper Proprietors Association" (Koss, 1990: 744).

II.1: A Common Discursive Strategy

The arguments presented above form the extra-discursive reasons why quality papers should not be classified with public texts. If we now move from the point of view of the field to a discursive viewpoint, two answers are possible.

The first would be to argue that the journalistic discursive practices deployed in popular and quality journalisms were being homogenised. Indeed, not only did these two groups of newspaper share some similar discursive features, such as gossip and short tit-bits on public life, interviews and personality sketches, but the quality press was not devoid of discursive phenomena such as sensationalism. With less detail than popular newspapers, quality papers also reported suicides and executions. Headlines such as "Romantic Tragedy at Maidstone" or "The Melbourne Poisoning Mystery" for example were published by the *Westminster Gazette* (20 July 1894). A certain form of depoliticisation also affected quality journalism. An illustration is given by the *Observer*. James L. Garvin was the editor of this Sunday, owned by Northcliffe between 1908 and 1914. Northcliffe, without wanting to transform the quality Sunday into a popular illustrated, still aimed at a circulation of 100,000 for the *Observer*. He thus exhorted his editor to "interest more people", especially women. Since canvassing was costing the *Observer* £3,000 a year, Northcliffe warned that he should avoid "heavy politics", since politics, as he put it, "will prevent your getting circulation" (Koss, 1990: 531).

It needs to be said that this type of pressure, when the editor had to comply, transformed sometimes quality papers into popular ones. This was the case of the *Daily News*. Cadbury was the principal owner of the *Daily News*, since 1901, more for reasons of (Liberal) propaganda and for free space for advertisements than for direct profit. But in spite of its political intentions, he was much preoccupied by the circulation of the paper. In 1904, he asked Gardiner, his editor, to drastically reduce the market reports, the religious column and the correspondence. In the same letter, he argued that "a very small number of people ... have time to read the speeches delivered in the House of Commons. Probably 49 out of 50 of our readers are content with Massingham's summary" (G. Cadbury to Gardiner, 11 February 1904, Gardiner Papers, box 1/8). If Cadbury, a Sunday school teacher for fifty years was anxious to "educate men to think" through his *Daily News* (G. Cadbury to

Gardiner, 21 December 1914), the pressure of competition let little room for his Liberal ideals. Anxious to attain the large circulation reached by the *Daily Mail,* he asked Gardiner to publish more "topical portraits of men and women", a feature in the "daily illustrated papers" which proved popular (G. Cadbury to Gardiner, 10 June 1918). For the same reason, Cadbury asked for pictures in the paper: "we have allowed the *Mail* to capture it [our circulation] by having pictures every day on the back; ... unless we have them they are bound still to play into our circulation" (G. Cadbury to Gardiner, 1 April 1919). Finally, when, in 1921, the Cadburys asked him to "write non-politically" for a while, Gardiner resigned (Henry Cadbury to Gardiner, 6 March 1921).

Since there still exist quality and popular newspapers, the problem however is more complex, and a second answer is more to the point. In spite of a relative homogenisation, there are of course many differences, as already indicated, between quality and popular dailies. Michael Schudson, differentiating the New York dailies with an ideal of "factuality" and those with an ideal of "entertainment" even referred to the existence of "two journalisms" (Schudson, 1978: 89 & 91). The fact however is that these discursive differences are not absolute. They are the product of a common discursive strategy, the product of a *differential similarity.* This concept is used in an attempt to conceptualise the fact that both quality and popular journalists consciously and purposively adapted their discursive production to their respective markets. It is not argued that quality and popular journalists wrote with identical discursive practices (although they were homogenised to a certain extent), but that their practices are induced by a common discursive strategy, i.e. the same adaptive disposition. One may refer to the distinction between quality and popular newspapers not as a difference between two classes of texts but as the bi-product of the same strategy to adapt the discursive production to different markets.

This similarity in strategy is reflected in the discursive fact that quality and popular newspapers propose sometimes the same discursive products but adapted to different markets. The following examples of differential similarity are taken from two dailies representing the extremity of each type of newspaper, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Westminster Gazette* (before its conversion). In 1893, the *Westminster Gazette* preceded many popular newspapers, among them the *Daily Mirror*, in the daily publication of a serial. If then both newspapers published serials (with a similar aim of retaining readers from day to day) each editor selected them according to the tastes of their respective readerships. Sport was an important topic in both newspapers. Like the *Daily Mirror*, the *Westminster Gazette* ran during the appropriate season two columns entitled *To-day's racing* and *To-day's cricket*. In addition to these columns of results, it generally had one or two columns of news on yachting, cycling, stag-hunting, golf, rugby or field sports. Golfers and cricket players were also invited to write on their respective sports. The similarity between both newspapers was the attention they devoted to sport. The difference within this similarity resided in the treatment and selection of news in the respective sport sections. There was for instance more football in the pages of the illustrated daily and more yachting in the *Westminster Gazette*. Finally, both papers ran competitions. The difference was that competitions were adapted to the skills and activities of both groups of readers. While, during a summer month, the *Daily Mirror* proposed to its readers to build sand castles on the beach, the editor of the *Westminster Gazette* proposed to his readers to deploy their skills on Greek and Latin verse.

These differences within similarities suggest that these newspapers are the product of the same discursive strategy. It was a strategy which developed different discursive practices adapted to the needs and desires of specific and homogeneous markets. This is the nodal point of this research. This discursive strategy, (whose internal mechanism is the object of the next and final chapter), is also the source of the rationalisation of agents' discursive practices which was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (section I.1). Because of this strategy, each mediatic text became increasingly the product of a rational calculation whose aim is the best possible adaptation of the text to its market. A mediatic text became a commodity adapted to the desires, needs, and cognitive capabilities of the average reader for whom this text is written.

What needs to be illustrated now is the fact that this strategy was applied to both quality and popular newspapers. This illustration is provided by the abundant correspondence between Northcliffe and the staff on his newspapers. Among these was the *Daily Mail* and *The Times*. Concerning the *Daily Mail,* it is not necessary to quote at length this correspondence, since the character of this newspaper has already been examined. It is enough to know that, by 1922, Northcliffe, (who defined his proprietorship as a "super-editorship" (Koss, 1990: 692)), sent 6459 messages to the staff of the *Daily Mail,* sometimes criticising the paper "page by page" (Clarke, 1931: 288). Progressively, Northcliffe adopted the same procedure with the staff of *The Times*: "whether at home or abroad, he [Northcliffe] showered, often in duplicate, upon the editor of *The Times* (as of the *Daily Mail* and other Northcliffe journals) letters and telegrams of enquiry, admonition, complaint, blame, suggestion and sometimes praise" (The Office of *The Times*, 1952: 12). To the editorial staff of *The Times,* he asked for more topicality, more «readability», lighter contents, and "fewer and shorter articles on politics" (1952: 140-141). A typical telegram for instance read: "Humbly beg for a light leading article daily until I return - Chief" (1952: 141). If this correspondence epitomises the growing rationalisation of the process of production of mediatic texts, every article being scrutinised, the fact that Northcliffe sent his messages "in duplicate" illustrates above all that this strategy was at work in both markets[39]. Journalists had to be *educated* into modern journalism, through proprietors - personification of the commercialisation of the field -

[39]The fact that Northcliffe ordered the staff of *The Times* to depoliticise the paper also reflects a certain homogenisation of the discursive practices deployed in popular and quality newspapers. Nevertheless, he did not tell the journalists of *The Times* to imitate those of the *Daily Mail,* but simply to become more competitive in the elite market, by becoming for instance more attractive to the readers of the *Daily Telegraph* and of the *Morning Post, The Times*'s two rivals.

forcing them to transform their discursive practices and to adapt their texts to the specificity of each market.

So, agents competing for different markets were subject to the same discursive strategy: what was common to both newspapers was the necessity for their journalists to adapt to the tastes and intellectual capabilities of a particular market. It can even be said therefore that this common discursive strategy does not annihilate the distinction between quality and popular papers, but on the contrary creates the dualism of the mediatic discourse by forcing journalists' discursive practices to incorporate and anticipate the tastes, needs and desires of specific and homogeneous groups of readers.

In sum, the distinction between quality papers catering for the political elite and those catering for the working classes and small bourgeoisie should not be taken for a difference between two discourses, public and mediatic. Although the quality papers still bore some traces of publicity, such as longer parliamentary reports, better political coverage and more outspoken political opinions, they were first and foremost journalistic products, albeit catering for those who take political decisions and make this world. It is vital to accept that this dualism is a fundamental element of the mediatic discourse, and to accept that both types of newspaper belong to the same class of texts: the dualism of this discourse reflects another dualism, that of the social structure, the division between the dominant and dominated social classes. To the hierarchies of the social world, correspond the hierarchies of the texts which form the mediatic discourse. What distinguishes journalists from publicists is the journalistic effort and aptitude to adapt the discursive production to a specific public, to talk *to* someone, to aim *at* someone. "The first rule in journalism is that you must be clear what public you are aiming at and pursue it with an undivided mind", wrote the editor of the *Westminster Gazette* (Spender, 1925: 102-103). It is this rule that the next chapter attempts to comprehend.

CHAPTER VIII
OPEN AND CLOSED DISCOURSES

One task remains to be completed, to examine this adaptive skill which is a common characteristic of all journalistic discursive practices. This peculiarity may first be illustrated by the comparison of two versions of an old English fairy tale. The first version, the original, symbolises the public discourse; the second, transformed by Walt Disney, symbolises the mediatic discourse.

The first version of *The Three Little Pigs* goes something like the following: Once upon a time there was an old sow who sent her three little pigs out into the world to seek their fortune. The first little pig hastily built a house of straw. When the wolf came, he huffed and puffed and blew the house down and ate the little pig. The second built his house with sticks. When the wolf came, he again blew the house down and ate the little pig. The third little pig built his house with more care, as he did it with bricks. When the wolf came, he could not blow that house down. After several unsuccessful attempts to attract the little pig out of his house, he threatened to get the little pig by coming down the chimney. As soon as the little pig heard this, he built a blazing fire to boil a large pot of water. The wolf, descending the chimney fell into it and was boiled and eaten by the little pig who lived happily ever after.

Many of Walt Disney's cartoons are derived from popular European fairy tales. As the story of *The Three Little Pigs* shows, the American corporation always transformed them[40]. In this particular case, the major difference in the Disney's version is that none of the little pigs is eaten. Both have the time, when the wolf blows down their house, to escape to their last brother's house.

One of the possible meanings of the original version of this tale is that the houses symbolise one's character, or one's self, while the

[40]It is worth noting that Northcliffe, like Walt Disney, also used to adapt to readers' tastes the popular stories he published in his numerous magazines.

wolf symbolises the dangers and difficulties of life. The moral therefore would be that one has to have the patience and the courage to build up character in order to favourably overcome life's difficulties. Many other fairy tales, notably the German ones collected by the Grimm brothers, convey a similar general moral. In the Disney version, however, the fairy tale loses its original meaning: the message conveyed to children about the necessity of building character disappears. Regardless of character, it is suggested they will be able to escape danger.

Our concern is with the discursive strategy which mediated the transformation. Disney eliminated what was considered the tale's most «violent» element, (in spite of the fact that without it the tale loses its symbolic structure). The motivation behind the softer version is probably the fear that the butchering of a little pig would not be to mothers' tastes, or to tastes of children themselves. The American corporation calculated that consumers would be horrified to see themselves or their children being eaten. This anticipation of what is thought to be people's tastes and needs is also very characteristic of the discursive strategy which informs journalistic discursive practices. Although journalists' discursive practices should not be reduced to this element, it has been selected because, being common to most journalistic practices, it is what differentiate the best the activities of publicists and those of journalists.

I: The Principle of Seduction

To generalise, from these premises, about the differences between the two classes of text, the public discourse may be described as *open discourse,* along with the mythical and scientific discourses. The mediatic discourse as *closed discourse,* along with religious discourse. The basis of the distinction between the two types of discourse, closed and open, lies in the fact that the *discursive practices productive of closed discourse are informed by strategies of seduction*. Closed discourses are seductive.

There exists an analogy between the religious and mediatic discourses, and one may see, in this latter, the same elements that Spinoza and Nietzsche noticed in religious discourse[41]. In order for Scripture to be understood by the masses, (to "imprint in their minds obedience and devotion" (Spinoza, 1989: 120)), they had to be written for the faculty of the common people, and adapted to the understanding of the crowd (1989: 120-121). To attract the crowd, added Nietzsche, the Bible had not only to be simple to understand, but also to be seductive. Nietzsche saw in these texts the same will to seduction that is present in the mediatic discourse. It may be examined now how, specifically, this strategy of seduction is articulated in the mediatic discursive practices.

I

The difference between the public and mediatic class of texts may be briefly restated by comparing two similar historical situations when two social groups strove to gain the franchise. In the 1830s, the unstampeds built working-class consciousness around the Reform crisis, channelled and publicised the political opinions of the members of this social class in the making, and finally helped to organise the political struggle for universal suffrage. In the 1910s, the *Daily Mirror*, on the contrary, a journal specifically aimed at women, far from even supporting their efforts to gain the right to vote, sporadically reported the suffragette's efforts with condescending, sometimes hostile, comments. In this second case, an apparent paradox needs to be explained: at the same time Northcliffe "made extraordinary efforts to attract women readers" (Clarke, 1950: 149), publishing serials, women's stories in each news page, and special magazine pages, his paper completely ignored their political struggle. The difference between these two attitudes

[41]This analogy does not make of the mediatic discourse a religion. It does not even imply that the rules of production of both discourses are similar.

goes beyond the matter of political opinion. The difference, as exemplified by the tale's two versions, is a result of two discursive strategies. Publicists spoke *for* a social group. They aimed at transforming the economic and political situation and social identity of dominated social groups, helping them, in sum, to *construct* a better world. Many journalists writing for a popular readership speak *to* a social group, aim at helping them to *escape* their daily life as a dominated group. The public discourse is a political *vector*, carrying the social group whose interests it expresses towards greater political freedom, the mediatic discourse is a *refuge* from exploitation and oppression which are the results of this absence of political freedom.

Regarding to this difference, it is useful to compare how publicists and journalists conceived their respective discursive practices. Publicists were aware that their discursive acts were a political activity. This is illustrated by an advertisement for his *Political Letters* Carpenter published in a middle class newspaper: "In the present conjuncture of national affairs, when all men are impelled to *inquire* into the *origin and remedy of popular distress*, it is unnecessary to dilate on the necessity or the advantages of a *medium* through which the people would derive adequate *political information*. Nothing is more to be dreaded at the present period than *political ignorance*, ... To supply that *practical intelligence*, which alone can *guide people* in the proper management of *their efforts* for national relief and parliamentary reform; ..." (*The Ballot*, 16 January 1831, my emphasis). Similar statements were made regularly by working class publicists. O'Brien distinguished between "trash" knowledge which makes people more "obedient" and "dutiful", and the knowledge that he gave to the "working people" which "makes them more dissatisfied, and makes them worse slaves" (*The Destructive*, 7 June 1834). Hetherington criticised the attempt of Charles Knight to divert working classes from politics by the publication of the *Penny Magazine*, specialised in illustrated accounts of the antiquity of beer, the dormouse, or Charing Cross station. To this sort of knowledge, "namby-pamby stuff published expressly to stultify the minds of the working people, and make them the spiritless and unresisting victims of a system of plunder and oppression", he opposed the knowledge he propagated, "calculated *to make [them] free*" (*Poor Man's Guardian*, 14 April 1832).

Some Victorian journalists already referred to their discursive practice quite differently, and before the complete emergence of the mediatic discourse, journalists perceived that they had to entertain as much as to inform, or to inform as long as it is entertaining. It was to Stead for instance that Newnes explained his conception of journalism, as giving "wholesome and harmless entertainment to crowds of hard-working people craving for a little fun and amusement" (Schults, 1972: 195). This statement, redundant by 1900, suggests as much the rupture between two discursive practices as the awareness of this rupture. The economy of the emerging practice remains to be explained.

If mediatic texts are the commodified form of public ones, they must be produced as any other commodity. What distinguishes a commodity from another ordinary object, i.e. a non-economic good, is its exchangeability. The exchange value of an object is relatively autonomous from its use value. In order to transform an object into a commodity, the exchange value must be purposely created. In other words, since an object is not necessarily produced to become a commodity, and since the exchange value only transforms it into a commodity, it is necessary that exchange value must be taken into account during the process of production of an object, if this object is to become a commodity. As Marx wrote: "This division of the product of labour into a useful thing and a thing possessing value appears in practice only when exchange has already acquired a sufficient extension and importance to allow useful things to be produced for the purpose of being exchanged, *so that their character as values has already to be taken into consideration during production*" (Marx, 1976: 166, my emphasis). It is this change in the process of production which commodified public texts (principle of externality), developed a new discourse whose texts have common philological properties (coherence), and determined the distinctive philological value of this new class of texts (specificity). The texts which composed the public discourse were produced as useful objects, because written in function of the political needs of a specific social group. In these texts, publicists expressed their political beliefs and "communicate[d] their intellectual being" (Marx, 1975: 177). A new class of texts emerged as a result of an economically motivated discursive strategy. This strategy has as its objective to transform an ordinary object - a text - into a commodity. This discursive strategy, therefore, not only integrates, within the moment of production, the exchange value of an object, but creates it.

How is the exchange value materialised in mediatic texts? First, the way production for the exchange value (i.e. the creation of the exchange value) is linked to economic competition within a field of discursive production must be established. In the case of the press, this extension of exchange mentioned by Marx was, precisely, the result of the 1855 repeal of the stamp duty which immediately opened the penny market, and half-penny market in the long term. These prices were affordable for the masses who could henceforth afford to buy a daily, that is, a newspaper each day of the week. These readers formed a market for which agents of the mediatic field competed. The production for exchange value therefore is the outcome of production for a market.

A market is a public which represents, for the producer, an economic capital which can quantitatively increase, or decrease, depending of how it is dealt with. For this reason the consumption of the product and the immediate satisfaction of consumers become the ultimate end of production. So, *because the moment of consumption is integrated and anticipated in the moment of production,* a discursive strategy developed which forced discursive practices to anticipate readers' subjective desires and to adapt to readers' subjective cognitive abilities.

Kennedy Jones's favourite dictum which he addressed to journalists was "don't forget you are writing for the meanest intelligence" (Jones, 1919: 145). He also had a precise idea of what the public wanted: "We found that what the public wanted ... was the story of life as a whole, told in simple language and illustrated by intelligible pictures" (1919: 306). Blumenfeld, editor of the *Daily Express*, had no doubt on the fact that "modern newspapers give the public what it wants" (Blumenfeld, 1933: 59), that is, "thrills, sensations, frivolities" (1933: 209). Northcliffe explained to an audience of journalists that people like "to imagine themselves £1,000-a-year people", and knowing that was knowing "how to report things to their liking" (Clarke, 1950: 153). The reader, he insisted, likes reading news about successful people: "he sees himself as one of them eventually and he's flattered" (1950: 153). The goal of this manoeuvre, Northcliffe reckoned, was flattery ("Flattery, my boy ... flattery") (1950: 153). Another thing Northcliffe thought his readers liked was to see someone prominent "echoing his own opinions" (*ibid.*). Opinions, "or prejudices", suggested a journalist: "Well, most of the ordinary man's prejudices are my prejudices ... and are therefore the prejudices of my newspapers" (*ibid.*).

Lingard, the *Daily Mail* circulation manager, discovered (after a market research conducted by his department), that the selection of news of the *Weekly Dispatch* "still does not satisfy the Sunday reader" (Lingard to Harmsworth, 16 November 1905, Northcliffe Papers, Add. MSS. 62,211). Lingard consequently advised the editorial department "to take care that the contents of the paper satisfy the requirements of the reader" (*ibid.*). His successor, Valentine Smith, acknowledged that "it is a sad thing when the general public want paltry pictures", but that in order to publish large pictures "certain news will have to be sacrificed" (Valentine Smith to Northcliffe, 6 August 1913, Northcliffe Papers, Add. MSS. 62,211). Smith was intensively aware of the "competition" from halfpenny papers such as the *Daily News*, *Daily Chronicle* and *Daily Express*, and of the "serious menace" of the *Daily Sketch* and *Daily Mirror* (*ibid.*). For this reason, he emphasised to Northcliffe that "unless we [the *Daily Mail*] give them what they want [paltry pictures] we shall not progress as we ought" (*ibid.*). An editor of the *Daily Mirror* confirmed in his memoirs that "nothing could be too silly, too vulgar or too sensational to print if it was reported to be what a particular public wanted" (Fyfe, 1949: 60).

It is this discursive attitude which produced the phenomena described in the last chapter. This attitude was much criticised, and, by the 1930s, the «give them what they want» was a generic expression designating the commercialisation of the press. Most of the critics came from the dominant classes who were as much concerned by these discursive trends as by the tastes they were pandering to. The «give them what they want» critique included accusations of pandering to low instincts, debasing public taste, and providing the masses with what they asked for. J. L. Garvin, Conservative, editor of the *Observer*, knew he would provoke a response when he claimed that his Sunday would give the public what it "did not want" (Simonis, 1917: 127). J. A. Spender, Liberal and editor of the *Westminster Gazette* between 1896 and 1921, was virulent in his attacks against journalists who attempted to please the public "in its varying moods ... to keep it amused and not to add the intellectual fatigue of too much thinking to the heavy labours of the day" (Spender, 1925: 100). He accused «new journalists» of making opinion "conform to the supposed prejudices of reader" (1925: 108), of seeing "no objection to giving the public what the public is supposed to want" (1925: 109); that is, "crime, sport, gambling, adultery and every sort of vulgarity" (1925: 103). H. W. Steed, editor of *The Times* under Northcliffe, wrote at length on the press which gives "the public «what the public wants»", and, consequently, "«play down» to the public" (Steed, 1938: 16-17). W. Harris, editor of the *Spectator*, raised the question of "how far it is the function of the press to give the public what the public wants" (Harris, 1943: 11).

Does the press really give the public what it wants? Even though these elitist critiques reveal an aspect of this discursive attitude, four arguments limit the validity of these critiques. First, this discursive practice is indeed characterised by an effort at adapting to the limited tastes and desires of a market, but provided these desires contribute to the profits of newspapers. In 1904 the

Daily Mirror organised a competition where readers were asked to suggest what they would like the paper to be. Readers were responsive and sent many original demands. One reader for instance proposed that the paper be scented with a different perfume every day. The paper however stopped the competition and complained that readers "thought not so much of the development of the *Daily Mirror* as a whole - in other words what would be calculated most to appeal to all sections of readers - as of their own individual desires" (*Daily Mirror*, 28 January 1904). This remark illustrates that readers' desires were taken into account as long as they conformed to newspaper owners' own desire of profit.

Second, we saw that, by the Edwardian years, the «opinion of the press» was autonomous from the opinion of many readers. In the early 1920s, the «give them what they want» press was overwhelmingly Conservative, despite the fact that more than four million people voted Labour in 1922. So, if editors gave their readers what they wanted, this was on a limited range of topics, and these topics did not include political opinion.

Third, the public cannot be taken as responsible for the influence of competitive struggles on the discursive production of the agents of the mediatic field. The central hypothesis of this research is that the mediatic discourse is determined by the relations of production within the field. The Cadbury/Gardiner correspondence showed that the external constraint of competition could force an unwilling editor and proprietor to publish pictures and to reduce the amount of parliamentary reports. How could the *Daily News*, still publishing some politicians' speeches in the 1900s, compete with rivals who were printing pictures of them playing golf? Struggles within the field, such as the pursuit of the greatest readership, forced editors to constantly «brighten», «lighten» and simplify their newspapers' contents. In the *Daily Mirror*'s own words, competition forced them to *calculate* what would appeal to the greatest number of readers. Competition between newspapers made the discourse they produced part of a strategy of seduction. So, to the extent that readership became a means for economic success, journalists were forced to integrate into texts some of the readers' desires, such as their love of sensation. Without competitive struggles however, this desire would never have been taken into account. In fact, when these competitive struggles were intense, sensationalism in the press developed well beyond readers' presumed desire for sensation. In this case, they had much more than what they wanted. Without competitive struggles, journalists would have maintained the pedagogical role of the publicist: writing to educate, not to please, to instruct, not to amuse, to convince, not to entertain.

Fourth, one needs to come back to the status of these desires. How do they originate? Are they autonomous? Are these desires those of individuals only? It may be said that individuals' needs and desires do not arise autonomously, but are a product of their life conditions. Since conditions of life are mostly determined by individuals' position in the social class structure, that is, by their place in the relations of production, it can be argued that their needs and desires are, ultimately, those of the conditions of production.

When Northcliffe explained that "everyone likes reading about people in better circumstances than his or her own", he had in mind the "factory girl" of Lancashire who prefers "stories of high life" rather than "serial or periodical stories of factory life" (Clarke, 1931: 201). Now, if this Lancashire girl felt the need to escape from her factory life, her need was determined by her life conditions, that is, her factory life. So, her need for escapism is determined by her life conditions, themselves an aspect of the conditions of production. Furthermore, when Northcliffe gave her «what she wanted» he was not only giving her what the conditions of production made her want, but what the factory owner (the conditions of production) wanted her to be given. Indeed, he undoubtedly felt more reassured by the factory girl individually fantasising about escape from her life conditions rather than trying to change them through collective action. Like Friedrich von Schiller, the factory owner had the intuition that even the weak, if united, become powerful. So, what the factory girl wanted was not only determined by the conditions of production, but, unlike collective revolts (or even other individual strategies of escape such as alcohol, drug or suicide), it was approved by the system of production. So, when it is said that the needs of people are those of the system production, it is not suggested only that these particular needs are determined by the conditions of production, but that these individuals' needs are those which the conditions of production need them to have.

Thus, the press would satisfy everyone's needs: those of the factory servants and those of the factory owner. The needs of the bourgeoisie are fulfilled since the mediatic discourse improves the reproducibility of the system of production. The needs of the working classes are also fulfilled because they can escape from their daily life. There is, however, a great difference between these two needs. Some are *real*, some are *false*. Those of the proletariat are false because the mediatic discourse is for them an artificial paradise. Mediatic texts can make them forget, for a short while, the reality of their life conditions, but the dreams and illusions that the mediatic discourse helps them to entertain cannot change their lives. To make these changes, the proletariat would have needed to transform the system of production, but this is not «what they wanted».

II: The Objectivation of the Third's Subjectivity

I

Journalists' discursive attitude creates the impression of giving the public what they want to the extent that journalists address readers in their subjectivity. This fundamental aspect of the discursive strategy corresponds to the process of the *objectivation of the third's subjectivity*[42]. First, the notion of third needs to be

[42]«Objectivation» has been chosen to designate the *projection* of the subjectivity of readers in mediatic texts. This term has no relationship with «objectification». «To objectivate» has been selected as the corresponding verb.

explained. The third is a mental abstraction in the mind of the producer of mediatic texts. It is the image that a producer has of his or her public. The term allows us to distinguish between an *imaginary* and a *real* public. The real public is the actual readership of a journal, while the third is the imaginary public, the public in the mind of the text producer. Unlike the notion of receiver, used by functionalists, the third includes both the receiver and the producer of the discourse. It refers to a *relationship*, to a *process of designation*: the third is not the receiver itself, but the receiver as imagined by the producer. The third is a construct in the producer's mind, like, for example, Northcliffe's factory girl.

It has been said above that to confer upon a text an exchange value (to transform it into a commodity) the producer must integrate this value into the text while writing it. The integration of the exchange value into the commodity/text is concretised by the consciousness at the moment of production of the moment of consumption. This consciousness is precisely what is meant by the third; the process of designation of the reader by the producer when this latter produces the text. The way the objectivation of the third's subjectivity functions can now be explained.

Journalists objectivate the third's subjectivity when they acquire the capacity to talk *to* someone. Publicists spoke to their public to the extent that they were speaking *for* them, but journalists talk *to* their readers, not for them. When Northcliffe asked his journalists to write their articles in appreciation of readers' desires to become richer, this order is an example of the objectivation of the third's subjectivity, in the sense that the subjective desire (subjective because each reader has, personally and for his or herself, the desire to become rich) is integrated within the articles. Publicists maintained a distance in their relationship to readers, whereas the mediatic discourse could be described as a *discourse of proximity*, journalists striving to write as close as possible to the psychology of their readers. Unlike public texts, which addressed the *social and common* consciousness of individuals, mediatic texts send back readers to their own fantasies, to their own illusions. Publicists used to address their readers as members of a wider entirety (e.g. as the members of a social class), whereas for journalists, a public (a market), is constituted of a series of separate units. A public, wrote one editor, "is a number of individuals considered in the mass" (Blumenfeld, 1933: 209-210).

The objectivation of the third's subjectivity is the specific process by which journalists adapt their discursive production (cf. chapter VII - section I.1). It is the principle which governs the rational and calculating discursive strategies which seek to maximise the adequacy of texts to their market. This principle informs the form and content of these texts, and also determines the inclusion and exclusion of topics in newspapers. Since journalists know that they must interest their readers, and that they consciously address a specific type of reader, they not only treat but also select news on the basis of their presumed interests. It means that the objectivation of the third's subjectivity is the mechanism which distributes the appearance of topics within the mediatic class of texts. Since subjects are selected according to readers' presumed interests, it is logical that quality and popular newspapers select and prioritise news in a different way.

If a subject appears in the news-columns only when sub-editors imagine readers might find it interesting, and if journalists feel they need to «wrap it up» so readers do not find their articles «dull», it follows that the ultimate *referent of mediatic texts is not reality but readers' subjectivity.* Since reality is taken into account if and only if it is supposed to interest readers, and since these «facts» are transformed and adapted to the desires of a readership, the mediatic discourse is not simply an interpretation of reality, but also an interpretation of readers' subjectivity. Unlike publicists, journalists are not only biased because of the social class to which they belong, but because they continuously make presumptions about readers' subjectivity. In a certain sense therefore, the objectivation of the third's subjectivity changes the philological nature of this class of texts, which is no longer a relatively objective discourse but a relatively subjective one. Since readers' subjectivity does not intervene as strongly as this in the formation of other textual classes (such as the public or academic discourse), this reversal characterises the mediatic discourse and helps to differentiate it from other textual classes.

II

Popular papers do not take the risk of publishing articles their readership would not be able to understand, or would not find interesting. In other words, editors, sub-editors and journalists take into account, during the production of the newspaper, the presumed cognitive abilities and presumed spheres of interest of their readerships. What they publish is what the smallest (meanest) middle reader is supposed to be able to grasp, or be interested in.

Contrary to publicists, for whom the extension of readers' knowledge was the ultimate goal, journalists define what might be called the *realm of knowledgeable,* i.e., the part of knowledge that they decide to transmit to readers. That which is knowledgeable, is in effect what journalists presume will excite the curiosity or raise the interest of their readers. Political speeches, theoretical doctrines, or economic facts, do not belong to the realm of knowledgeable in popular papers. The editor of the *Daily Mirror* explained that his prime objective was to "stir the sensations" of his readers (1949: 149). What was printed was not the "most important news", which was "apt to seem dull", but what could "thrill or ... amuse people" (1949: 149). Articles had to make sense instantaneously, at the moment of their reception, or to carry, intrinsically, their *raison d'être.* They were not published because of their educational value, but to provoke, for instance, "that «Gee whiz» emotion" (1949: 117).

Because the moment of consumption became prominent in the process of production, journalists acquired a different relationship to readers from that of publicists. Contrary to publicists who incessantly strove to increase readers' realm of knowledge and to extend their public's field of political possibilities, journalists refuse to go beyond the actual cognitive or cultural limitations of its readership: "We are what we are" wrote the editor of the *Evening*

News philosophically (Jones, 1919: 286). Most importantly, journalists do not attempt to transcend the limits of the *actual consciousness* of the group of readers they talk to. Publicists, on the contrary, constantly strove to expand the limits of the field of consciousness of their respective social group and continuously attempted to go beyond their actual consciousness to address their *possible consciousness* (*Zugerechte Bewusstein*).

This new relationship was reinforced by the force of habit. Readers, progressively, were used to the fact that journalists take into account their subjective desires. Knowing that journalists attempt to meet their expectations, readers expected the satisfaction of their expectations. Readers became predisposed to the tendency of journalists to reinforce their own prejudices, and, to a certain extent, to confirm their ignorance.

Since an editor can not educate the same readers that another is amusing, competitive struggles within the field forced journalists to produce a discourse without *cognitive gap* with the average reader of their respective readership. So, on the cognitive level also, the mediatic discourse is «subjective», since journalists take into account the subjective cognitive abilities of their respective readership. Readers learn only what journalists assume they can learn and know only what it is assumed they can know. By doing so, journalists do not open to readers new fields of knowledge and perception, but enclose them in their actual ignorance. In fact, they create a specific relationship to knowledge, by creating a false sense of understanding, even when the most complex economic or political facts are presented. Since the fear of being dull is constant, facts are over-simplified, and mediatic texts create an *illusion of knowledge*. In other words, not only do mediatic texts maintain readers in their ignorance, but this illusion of knowledge erases from their memory the infinity of the realm of knowledge. So, because of this illusion the realm of the knowledgeable appears to individuals as being the realm of knowledge itself. This illusion closes the horizon of knowledge and reduces it to the realm of knowledgeable. The reduction of the realm of knowledge to the realm of knowledgeable has suppressed the conditions of appropriation of knowledge and destroyed the means themselves of this intellectual appropriation. The mediatic discourse, by enclosing readers in their ignorance, and in their illusion of knowledge, annihilates the means of appropriation of knowledge and at the same time makes impossible the consciousness of this dispossession. This intellectual dispossession, and the lost of the consciousness of this dispossession, has several effects. It contributes to the impossibility for the dominated to understand the cause of their oppression; to the fact that they lost sight of the source of their alienation; and to the fact that, even their revolts, vain and naive, reinforce the power which oppresses them and the system which alienates them.

III: The Modern Opium

The mediatic discourse, however, has the effect not only of limiting the comprehension of reality, but, as already suggested, mediatic texts also help readers to escape this reality. When individuals, because of the limits imposed on them, as members of a dominated social group, cannot improve their social conditions of life and emancipate themselves from domination, they begin either to dream about the possibilities of immediate transformation of their life conditions, or to imagine that these life conditions are different of what they actually are. They develop, henceforth, either fantasies about unreal transformations of their life, or illusions about what their life really is. These fantasies and illusions are *false* because they not only stand in contrast with, but in contradiction to, the actuality of their life conditions. When readers' subjectivity is objectivated within mediatic texts, it is also these fantasies and illusions which are taken into account.

The fairy tale offers a good illustration of the process at work. The popular, and original, version of the fairy tale gave children a fair version of their situation: as a child, says the tale, you are weak, too weak for a world of adults, and you have therefore to grow up and to carefully build your self. So, the fairy tale warns children of the dangers of life (the wolf) to which they might succumb if they do not arm themselves properly (the houses). In contrast, since in the commercial variant the wolf does not eat the little pigs, and does not constitute a serious danger, this version does not prepare children for the natural change in their life conditions and for the difficulties, both psychic and social, caused by these changes. It only encourages them, first, to escape the reality of their actual conditions, second, to deny the fact that they will change. Since, in this version, danger can be easily overcome, children are treated as being stronger than they can be as children. This version therefore bypasses the reality of their condition as children. Then, by making children invulnerable and therefore unrealistically more powerful than they really are, it denies the necessity of making the effort to grow up. This variation illustrates the essence of the difference between the public and mediatic classes of texts. While publicists took into account the objective situation of the dominated and attempted to help them to collectively change this situation, journalists start from the immediate and subjective needs of the dominated to artificially escape their life conditions without making the effort to transform them. *While publicists wrote to help the dominated to transform the world, journalists simply write to artificially brighten it.*

Since the goal of working class publicists was to change the social, economic, and political situation of the dominated, they gave them a true image of their condition, and reminded them of the necessity of *collective struggle* and of the *liberating effort* necessary to change these conditions. Publicists did not pretend that the reality of their life was anything else than it actually was. On the contrary, they stressed the possibility of changing these life conditions and the necessity to act collectively to change them. Journalists, by contrast, objectivate, «realise», readers' personal fantasies of magically transforming their unsatisfactory life conditions. Their texts are a *projection* of the dreams of liberation and illusion of freedom of the dominated classes. If the public class of texts is essentially political, the mediatic discourse is religious: to the political and collective solution, it opposes a *magic* resolution to one's dominated situation. We reach now the ultimate difference between the public and mediatic discourses, a difference which may be extended to open and closed discourses. *Open discourses help individuals to become conscious of psychic and social conflicts.* They depict, describe and analyse these conflicts for them so they can try to solve them thanks to the consciousness and the knowledge they have of these conflicts. It is this consciousness and this knowledge that closed discourses deny to people, and thereby the possibility of solving these conflicts.

At an individual level, the mediatic discourse is, for the dominated social group, the *modern opium* which helps them escape reality. The problem with escapism, however, is that in artificially transforming reality, in making reality «brighter» than it really is, one does not change it for real. Dreams, said Nerval, are a second life, and this is what the mediatic discourse offers to the dominated, a second life. At the collective level, the mediatic discourse has the effect of preventing the dominated social group from uniting and acting collectively. Since their oppression can only be ended by the long effort of a collective struggle, publicists addressed readers' public and common mind. An essential element of this common mind, publicists thought, was reason, and this was what publicists appealed to. Journalists, who seduce rather than persuade, bypass the social dimension of individuals, reconstruct a world of illusions around readers' dreams, address the subjectivity of their fantasies, and therefore make the possibility for collective action by the dominated even more difficult. Not only because without public texts the dominated lack the will to act and the knowledge to do so efficiently and rationally, but because mediatic texts create the illusions which make life bearable for them. In between the hope of public texts and the illusions purveyed by mediatic ones stands social, political and economic reality, central to public texts, ignored in the mediatic discourse. But this reality cannot be ignored, since it constitutes the first element in the construction of a new one. Writing on the French revolution, Sartre thought that the bourgeoisie had a "clear consciousness of its exigencies and powers", that they were "*adult*" (Sartre, 1985: 93). Similar to the original version of the fairy tale, whose function was to help children to become adult, the aim of the public discourse is to help the dominated to become adult, too.

CONCLUSION

Competitive relations of production justify the structuralist approach, or at least a type of structuralism which does not deny the existence and presence to agents, but depicts them in their struggles and strategies. Competition constitutes an external constraint for agents and nowhere more so than in a situation of competitive struggle do agents depend more on others' strategies in their acts and decisions. This lack of autonomy of agents in a competitive system is the reason why advanced structuralism depicts quite accurately life under capitalism.

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