Creating people and places
How the journalistic narrative shapes our image of the world

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Abstract
Media is one of the most important gateways to the world beyond for most people. Every day we are presented with images of distant places and peoples and the events they are a part of. During the years the way these news events have been presented to the public has changed but still they create images within us of these distant places and peoples.
This paper discusses how the journalistic narrative is built up based on some theories describing media and how is used and/or uses the society it is a part of. The paper tries to answer questions on how the image of the distant places and peoples is built up, based on these theories and discussions within the journalistic community.
The process from source to print is complex. Several part takers have an interest in putting out their view of the world to the public. This creates a complex web of dependencies between the media and different groups in society. In the end the image presented is a side effect of how the journalistic text is built up, where the narrative has to be firmly rooted with individuals and places to gain acceptance with the public, and where people and places described often become artifacts, rooted in very specific events.

Nyckelord: Socialantropologi, Journalistik, plats, den andre, fiendebilder, flyktingen

Keywords: Social Anthropology, Journalism, Place, the distant other, enemy images, the refugee.
Innehållsförteckning

INTRODUCTION.....................................................................................................................1
PURPOSE..................................................................................................................................2
NARRATIVES, PEOPLES AND PLACES............................................................................4
CREATING DISCOURSE.......................................................................................................8
   The Gathering ......................................................................................................................9
   The Filtering .....................................................................................................................13
   The Presentation ............................................................................................................19
THE DISTANT PLACES.......................................................................................................21
THE DISTANT PEOPLES ....................................................................................................25
SUMMARY .............................................................................................................................33
BIBLIOGRAPHY ...................................................................................................................36
Introduction

A group of journalism students have a heated discussion about a topical subject one evening over a dinner. Especially two of them come into a heated discussion and after a while one asks the other: “where did you get your facts from?” whereas the other answers “I read it in the newspaper”. Just as he finished the sentence he looks around and realizes he has lost the argument.

I had this story told to me a few years ago by a colleague who saw this happen during her university studies. In a way this anecdote describes an attitude towards media and especially the printed media of newspapers and magazines, and in a way it shows my own attitudes towards media. “I can’t trust them... but still I do...”. This rather contradictory claim inspired me to make this investigation.

News media is one of the major shapers of our image of distant places. Few people will ever travel to the places we read about in the foreign news sections in the newspaper or see on the television news programs. We get our images of the distant places and peoples shaped by the images created by journalists, journalists that have an expectation to be objective in their description of the distant places and people.

Many describe this age as the age of globalization, not just the globalization of market forces and flow of people but also the flow of information. Never has so much information been sent between the distant places of earth.

The previously localized news media now has access to an almost unlimited source of foreign news, but the cost of news still has made news more localized in the newspapers. A reason to this is said to be the ever-increasing cost of keeping foreign correspondents on place where “it happens”. (Hannerz 2004: 23-25)

As a contrast to the localized newspapers and TV channels we can see the international news channels like CNN and BBC world, even though specialized to a specific language in their news reporting, their contents is not specialized to a specific region. But still they reflect a discourse of the culture within which they have their origin. In the end the western media describe the world based on a western discourse. And even if they try to be culturally unbiased, in the end it is the reader or viewer who interprets what is aid by the journalists and fits the narratives into their worldview.

As I read through articles from newspapers from 1928 in search for articles to use in this thesis I got fascinated by the stories they told. The almost naïve tales of airships, the fascination they showed for these ships of the sky. The foretelling of how they would rule the sky in the future. Then I realized that these articles showed the same fascination we today
show for the technological buzzwords of today. I was reading these articles out of context. To fully understand them I had to put them into context. The same must be said about articles that are not so obvious. They have to be read “in context” with the society that produced them. Discussions, terminology and how people reacted to these are specific to the society that produced the texts. But it also shows a hint of what is said about the journalistic narrative, that it is a product of a society and its discourse.

Media has conveyed us images of the world, created beliefs of what happens out there and how it happens. During the first Gulf war an image of the “Surgical War” was created through the media. We saw press conferences where military officials showed movie clips, usually black and white and very impersonal of bombs hitting buildings and bridges. The war was fought with these intelligent weapons. Later I heard that 90% of the weapons used where traditional. A minority of the weapons used was intelligent.

Media in both Gulf war were in one way or the other controlled. In the second Gulf war the phrase “embedded journalist” was coined. A journalist travelling with the soldiers and at a first glance created an image of the independent journalist that with a critical eye scrutinized the war. But in my opinion the information they managed to get out was just as controlled as the information sent out in the first Gulf war.

In my work with my C-level thesis I came into contact with discussion whether the war in Yugoslavia could be called an “ethnic conflict”. Some claimed this was a creation of the media that in the lack of a simple description after the fall of the communist block grabbed the first description they found.

So the questions I ask myself whenever I watch the news or read a newspaper is how true is the image conveyed to me? Is the journalist controlled by his sources, or is his story altered in its way from his pen to the printing press?

Purpose

The idea to this paper came when I interviewed people for my C-level thesis. The three immigrants from Yugoslavia each told how they related to the media both in Sweden and from their old home country. Stories about mistrust and a feeling that the image given of the conflict was subjective. Stories about propaganda and subjective reports painting an image of their home country they could not identify with.

The thought came to me. The image a journalist creates of a news event has often been presented being as close to an objective description it is possible. Is it so? Journalists are humans and humans interpret their world based on the social context they have grown up in
and live their lives in. In their narratives they describe people and places we would never otherwise come in contact with, how does that affect our view of the world? Because these images do not only affect the distant places they describe but it also shapes how we view the places within which we spend our days.

The purpose of this paper is to take a look at how the journalists create an image of the people and places they report from. I have selected two events in Yugoslavia during the 20th century:

The murder of Stepjan Radic in June 1928 and the subsequent crisis leading up to the coup d’état in the early 1929 and the occupation of Srebrenica by Bosnian-Serb forces in June 1995 and the following 2 weeks after that.

I have chosen these examples from Yugoslavia since this nation gone through some major events in the 20th century. Even if the events in the early 20th century had a small impact on media reporting the events in 1995 were the major media events of the late 20th century. This gives continuity and a possibility to study the same place and the same people and how they were described at these different events and times. These events will illustrate the discussions about place and people in the journalistic narrative.

I have looked through four Swedish newspapers, Svenska Dagbladet (hereafter I will use the acronym SvD, Dagens Nyheter (DN), Arbetet (Arb) and Arbetaren (Arn).

Svenska Dagbladet is one of Sweden’s largest morning papers, formally a local paper to the Stockholm area but in practice a national paper. Svenska Dagbladet has its political base in the conservative part of the political scale, however the paper is not affiliated to any political party.

Dagens Nyheter is as Svenska Dagbladet formally a paper local to Stockholm but in practice a national paper. Its political affiliation is liberal but is not tied to any political party.

Arbetet is a paper local to southern Sweden, mostly Malmö and Lund. Its political affiliation is Social Democratic.

Arbetaren, a weekly magazine since early 1950’s, before that a daily newspaper is closely related to the Syndicalists. For this newspaper I have decided only to use for the events in 1928.

In addition to the newspapers I have used the magazines “Journalisten” and “Gräv-Scoop” as sources for discussions within the journalistic community.

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1 Non-parliamentarian position that rejects all government and centralist power. Syndicalism is against all forms of parliamentarian work. The workers should by direct local actions like strikes, take control over the companies and in the end create a socialist state. (Nationalencyclopaedia)
I have translated all newspaper quotes to English.

In the process of gathering information to this paper I had as aim to get information from a number of foreign correspondents. For a time I exchanged email with a couple of them but sadly I in the end did not receive any information from them. This meant that the aim of this paper had to change. Instead of discussing the creation of people and places from the point of view of the journalist, with actual information from journalists I had to change scope.

Instead I had to discuss my thoughts about the journalistic narrative based on theories and to use the articles as illustration to these theories and discussions. Instead of having the words of real life journalists I had to make my own judgments based on theories, and use my interpretations of the articles. The paper that in the beginning was meant to be a discussion between me and journalists thus became much more theoretical. Theories used could not be discussed with the journalists and by that criticized. What theories to discuss was much based on previous works and referenced sources in those.

Another side effect of the lack of live sources is that some of the theories could not be fully investigated. Like the discussions of Chomsky and Herman, where aspects of their “filters” like “ownership of media” could not be investigated due to the lack of material.

The paper begins with a discussion about the journalistic narrative. I list a few theories and discussions followed by a discussion on how the journalist creates the stories and how the story is transformed to a news event. This discussion is followed by some examples of how the journalistic text creates a view of distant places and people.

**Narratives, peoples and places**

People create their social context in their everyday lives. The meetings between people forces us to define ourselves, create social identities in an attempt to organise our social space. We create society out of this social interaction. Our everyday discussions solidify our societies, new inventions, thoughts, events bring change to our perception of the world and we have to integrate these changes into our view of the world. We discuss them; create a common understanding with which these changes can be integrated into our common worldview, our discourse.

As people meet others in their everyday lives they are categorized either as an ally, a member of our own social structure or as the other. Members of our family are defined as part of our social structures; the people on the other side of the river are defined as the Other. This structuring of the people we meet is the basis in the creation of structures as Ethnicity, concepts as “the Enemy”. In other words “someone we are not”.

In the same way we try to define the physical places of our surroundings. Not just as physical spots on a map but structures of place and social meaning. Every place in our daily lives are defined out of the meaning they have in our lives, “Home”, “Work” and so on. These places are defined not just as physical place but also as a place with a social meaning. They become that because we move through them more or less daily, live our lives in them and thus we give them meaning.

Media has introduced another dimension to this. As media shows people and places and the events affecting them we are forced to relate to them. Just as our daily movement through places give them meaning we are now introduced to events and places, sometimes for just a short moment, but sometimes the events are either of great importance to us or our society, challenge our view of the world or they occur over a long period of time. The events become more or less important in our lives and with the images of place given to us by the journalists we connect the event to the that place.

People that we would not meet in any other way suddenly affect how we look at our reality. But the people and places we read about in the newspapers and see on the TV are introduced to us by the Journalists, humans as us, affected by the same mechanisms as we are. They are the mediators that create our image of the distant places and people. Thus the journalistic narrative is closely related to place. We hear news from places, Africa, Bosnia etc. Seldom are the news de-localised.

Place is a dichotomy of social construction and locality. To place history and narrative is tied and by it, it is remembered (Sheldrake 2001: 46-47). But to gain knowledge of place, it is not enough to hear the stories about that place; the stories have to be shaped so that they create a response with the reader/listener/viewer. This creates an emotional tie to that place; the reader has experienced an emotional response to a narrative describing a place, events taking place over there that in some way affected the individual. It has in some way become part of his social space, used in discussions with other individuals in his social surroundings or in another way become part of his social constructions. We talk about the events we read about, “did you read about what happened in...”. We engage in relief organizations. An example of this is the Vietnam movement in the 70’s that engaged in questions regarding this far away country that few heard of before the war. A war that has been said to be the war won on the battlefield but lost in media.

As people move through the places of their lives they gain the knowledge of that place. It’s meaning in a common social construction, shared by the groups within which the individual moves. Place is also what people share within their narratives. People spend time in
place but they also talk about place, thus keeping the place alive within their social space. Migrants keep their memories of their place of origin alive by sharing their memories of that place. Distant places are kept alive by narratives.

But when the person hears narratives from a distant place, the intricacies of that place will be lost. We need the physical presence of that specific place to make sense of its social intricacies. We learn about place by moving through it, learning as we go. Learning the social connections between places (Ingold 2000: 229). Benedict Andersson uses the strength of the written word when he describes the rise of the nation state as a social model. With the invention of the printing press the written word could be easily distributed and with that a common discourse could be created. The image of the nation as a viable construct could thus be created (Andersson 1991). The printing press gave the states a possibility to create a national discourse, a dedication to a common social order and thus create the imagined community that is the nation.

In his book “Modernity at Large” Appadurai described how the complex nature of today’s world can not be understood in terms of “push-pull”, “center-periphery” or other models and not even the more flexible models from (neo)-Marxist origin could explain the complex world of today’s global economy. (Appadurai 1996:32)

As a response Appadurai defined five concepts that define the mechanisms that affect peoples view of the world, concepts of ethnoscape, financescape and technoscape that define social, monetary and technological affects respectively, and two other scapes: mediascape and ideoscape.

These two closely related scapes are landscapes of images. Mediascape is about the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and spread information and the images of the world created by these media. Mediascape are the visions given to us by media of distant places and people. The mediascape creates our vision of the distant places and people. Media like newspapers and television, in Appadurai’s definition Mediascape is however mostly imagebased.

These mediascapes provide their audiences with a complex net of information, images, narratives and ethnoscapes in which events and commodities around the world are profoundly mixed. And according to Appadurai the audience regards media as a complex mix of print, celluloid etc. so that in the images these create, the border between reality and fiction becomes blurred. Those who experience them transform these often image-centered narratives into strips of reality or scripts of imagined lives (own and those of others). These scripts can
be disaggregated to complex sets of metaphors that people live by as they create narratives of the distant Others. (Appadurai 1996: 35-36)

Ideoscapes are as Mediascapes image based but these images are very often political and have to do with the ideologies of states and counter-ideologies of movements opposed to them. These ideoscapes are composed of the elements of the Enlightenment\(^2\) worldview, ideas of freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation, and as Appadurai writes, most importantly democracy. But as Appadurai says the distribution of these ideas across the world during the 19\(^{th}\) century has loosened the internal coherence that has made it possible for different nation states to organize themselves around different keywords (Appadurai 1996: 36).

It is hard see to how the ideascapes would not be affected by mediascapes and the other way round. The media creates our image of the world, but this image is not clean from the mediator’s ideoscape or not the least the readers/viewers. Just as any human that observes and studies the world around him, he interprets what he sees out of the social constructs he has been brought up with and lived by.

With globalization the news media has reached a penetration as never before. New peoples are introduced to us; new places are created in our minds as newspapers and Television send their images around the world. Globalization, the flow of people, ideas, finance and culture has brought about a vision of a cosmopolitan man that creates a vision of the world based on a more or less objective news media. But the question is whether media gives this objective image of the world, as traditional media as TV and Newspapers are given competition by new media, like Internet based news sources.

But with globalization has come the “emptying of space”, a concept described by Giddens as place has been separated from space. In pre-modern times space and place mostly coincided. Our social lives were constructed in locales in our close vicinity, locales within which we create our social realities. But with modernity has come the separation of place from space, were it has become more and more common to create relations with “absent others”, people locationally distant from possible “face-to-face” interaction. (Giddens 1990: 18)

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\(^2\) A European intellectual movement of the 17th and 18th centuries in which ideas concerning God, reason, nature, and man were synthesized into a worldview that gained wide assent and that instigated revolutionary developments in art, philosophy, and politics. Central to Enlightenment thought were the use and the celebration of reason, the power by which man understands the universe and improves his own condition. The goals of rational man were considered to be knowledge, freedom, and happiness. (Encyclopaedia Britannica)
So in the age of globalization it has been said that newsmedia has become essential for keeping both the idea of the nation state alive as its institutions, just as it in itself is an essential institution of an national state (Ståhlberg 2004: 57).

Creating discourse

It is not a simple task to understand the intricacies of the journalistic narrative. The text describes a distant place, often unknown to the reader, it describes distant peoples who’s cultural and social structures are unknown to us. Just as the anthropologist, the journalist deals with the other (Hannerz 1996: 113). The difference lays in how they deal with him.

As the anthropologist goes to the depth in explaining the other, trying to understand the culture and social structures, the journalist skims the surface. I could be said that the anthropologist describes the causes of an event while the journalist describes the event itself.

The journalistic text has an important role in creating our image of the world. The journalistic text is not just a disentangled description of events and places. The text is created in a social context where the journalist is affected from several different sources. Whenever the journalist observer the world around him, interact with the people in the place of an event, they affect him. But still we trust in the objectivity of the journalist.

Giddens talks about what he calls Expert Systems. With Expert Systems Giddens means “systems of technical accomplishment or professional expertise that organize large areas of the material and social environments in which we live today” (Giddens 1990: 27). Expert systems are the objects in our lives we use daily without questioning their reliability. Giddens uses the example of his house. He trusts those who built it to know what they did. He trusts that he can take the stairs to the second floor without falling through the floor. Behind the expert system are the experts, people we trust without the face-to-face meeting.

The same thing can be said about the journalistic text. We trust that the journalist knows what he is doing without the face-to-face meeting. We trust that the events he is describing really happened and happened the way he describes them. Even if we talk about how we mistrust the journalists from time to time, we still read their texts and see their reports on TV and trust the image they give us is not made up.

This further connects to the discussion of the news media as a creator of public discourse. It has become what Foucault calls a Power Technology (Hubert & Rabin 1983). The means with which a group in a power position with other groups within a society can control the discussion and thus create discourse.
But at the same time there is not one group in a power relation to others but many, thus the media creates several discourses a member of a society has to choose between. Based on his own political, religious or other social belief systems, he interprets these texts and creates his own view of the world; it is as the psychologist Dorothy Rowe says:

The news we see on TV and read about in the papers has no effect on us whatsoever. What we are affected by is not the news it is our interpretation of the news. (McNair 1998: 35, my emphasis)

But at the same time the shaping of the text, the selection of words, what is emphasized, selection of people they quote, all affect in the end what possible interpretations the text will have. Words have meaning, meaning created with associating the word with an emotional experience. Words like terrorist and freedom fighter can describe the same person but will give the reader completely different relations to that same person.

The process from the event to the reader can be split into three parts. The collection, where the journalist gathers information from sources to create a narrative of the event. He interacts with people in some way involved, sources close to groups in some way connected to the event or the places and/or people. The filtering, where editors or people or groups who are otherwise responsible for making sure the journalistic narrative reaches the public, selects what narratives should be printed or aired. And the third, the presentation, where the filtered journalistic text reaches the reader and the reader has to relate to the information.

The Gathering
As the journalist interacts with the people involved in the event he is covering, he is more or less affected by the views these people have. The people involved were in one way or the other taking part in the events. They formed their own view of what happened and they will forward this to the journalist.

The journalists often base their facts on “credible sources”, people and institutions that can be quoted as fact without further investigation. “The credibility of sources is established though institutionalized forms of authority and knowledge”, that is organizations and institutions create and authorize “knowers” to represent them and through them make sure their message is put out for the public eye (Ericsson 1998: 85). These knowers are the press agents and contacts with the sole purpose of making sure the organizations view of the world is presented for the journalists, in events like press conferences, press releases etc.

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky discuss this in their book describing how the concept of institutionalized knowers creates a dependency on the same institutions. The media
companies, in search of news to fill up their timeslots or pages become dependant on the institutions for this so that they start to accept information from them without the same scrutiny, as they would give information from other sources. (Herman & Chomsky 1994)

But there is also the news agency, companies like Reuters and the Swedish Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå (TT). Just like with other commodities that are traded all over the globe, news has in many ways become a similar commodity. Large international news agencies like Reuters buy and sell “events” to newspapers, TV stations and other mediating organizations, they buy local news that might be of interest in other parts of the world from local agencies, like the Swedish TT and resell them on the global market. McNair criticizes the commodification of journalism during the latter half of the twentieth century. It has according to him lead to that journalism has been adapted to the perceived demands of the audience, the readers and viewers. Where news stories with pseudo-events or highly speculative events are made into headline news, what he calls “bonk” news. This has according to him lead that to the ideals of the journalistic profession, as the “fourth estate”, a group dedicated to the preservation of democratic ideals, has been cast doubt upon. And in the end it has lead to the “dumbingdown” of the press combined with a commitment to right wing politics (McNair 1998: 112-114).

There is a level of trust between the journalist and the newspaper, TV station etc. The editors trust that the journalist presents his findings trustfully. The events and people he describes did really happen and happened in a way described. Usually this is so, but sometimes things go wrong. Either the person, the source of information for some reason or other invents the events. An example of this happened in Sweden in late 1990’s, early 2000. In the Swedish newspaper Sydsvenskan a man Sven Borg started to tell stories more or less invented by him. He had as he said “made storytelling to a means of livelihood”. During a number of years he had traveled around in northern Europe and sold his tell-tales to unsuspecting journalists that written about these events. However in September 2004 he came clean. (URL 2) This shows if nothing else two things, trust and the need of a “good story”. What triggered the journalists to believe in Sven? The stories he told grew more and more bizarre as time went by. Still they kept writing about them. The journalists decided to believe his stories, trusted the stories maybe because they saw the possibility for a “good story”.

Another time when trust is misused, this time between the Journalist and the Gatekeepers, is the case of Jayson Blair. He was a journalist working at New York Times. He had during his career copied articles and sometimes even fabricated events that he then wrote about in the well-reputed newspaper. He had already during his university year’s drawn
attention from fellow students but still he created a broad support basis among teachers and could after graduation choose between offers. However in 2004 he was found out as a journalist at a local paper recognized his article in New York Times with Jayson Blair name on it (URL 3).

This is an example of how the trust between journalists and gatekeepers are misused. The journalist, in need of writing good stories, for whatever reason invents, copies stories that he sends to the gatekeeper. Gatekeepers, holding on to the trust accept these stories for facts and publish them. In the end the result from these two examples are the same. Somewhere in the process between source and print, the process has failed. Trust has been misused and a system heavily dependant on this, fails.

There is a question that has to be asked: “What events become news?”. According to McNair, news is deviation. It is a “selective account of reality”. The journalist works out of a well-defined script that defines newsworthiness, events that will strike a cord with readers and the gatekeepers. McNair among other things points out a well-known “fact” about news, the closer the event the higher probability it will become news. Hannerz in turn says the word “news” is ambiguous. It can refer to something that just happened or something we simply haven’t come across yet. It could very well be an event or practice that in its locality is an everyday event, which few people on place react to or even think about. But for a journalist from a distant place reacts to since it in some way or form contrast to his own social understandings. Thus news becomes a social deviation seen from the social belonging of the journalist (Hannerz 2004: 31). There is “hard news”, events that in the mind of the journalist and their audience are major and unique events that will have effects on their perception of the world. When no events takes place so called enterprise stories might take the place of these “hard news”, as Hannerz claims depending on whether these stories are tied to the “hard news” of the time. This according to Hannerz keeps the memory of the place in peoples minds as in between the “hard events” that become the “hard news” (Hannerz 2004: 31-32).

The statement that “the closer the event the greater the news” is however contested by Chomsky and Herman who claim that you have to take in account things like political and social aspects of the event and involved parties. As an example of this they use two events that happened in different parts of the world during the 1980’s. The murder of the polish catholic priest Jerzy Popieluzko by polish police, and the murder of dissidents in Central America during the same time period. According to Chomsky and Herman these events got very different coverage, the murder of the polish priest by the hands of polish police officers got a much wider coverage, as they claim because of the political situation in the world at that
time. And in their theories the distance to an event has less impact on the newsworthiness than the “worthiness of the victim” (Chomsky & Herman 1994: chapter 2). They continue to fit this into their propaganda model:

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill [sic] this role requires systematic propaganda. (Chomsky & Herman 1994: 1)

This description of media can be both criticized and agreed with. Appadurai’s ideoscope describes how our society works out of a collection of ideas, images of how the world should be organized. Chomsky and Herman say in some respects the same thing, however in their model the indoctrination into this view of the world is based much on a Marxist model, a struggle between groups who want to control the discourse of a society, while in Appadurai’s model the society has during the long years that passed since the Enlightenment been soaked in these ideas. It has become so natural to us to think in terms of “the value of human life”, “basic human rights” etc. Chomsky’s ad Hermans view is also in a sense defended by the views of Foucalt and his “Power Technologies”, in this case media is used to control the relation to other groups in the society to control the discourse and discussions within a society.

McNair in turn criticizes Hermans and Chomskys propaganda model. He compares two of the main theories describing the media society, the competitive model that describes the media world from a capitalist liberal point of view as a number of more or less equal groups that uses the media to perpetuate their ideas and thoughts to the society. While the dominance paradigm describes the media as part of a system trying to maintain the power structures of a society, very similar to Chomskys and Hermans propaganda model (McNair 1998: 19-28). But he refutes both theories. According to him neither idea has proven able to describe the complex realities of post-modern capitalism (McNair 1998: 28).

What can be said with some confidence is that journalism is a disseminator of values as well as facts; that is narratives are built around assumptions which producers and consumers take for granted; that journalism is a moral and ideological force as well as a source for cognitive data (McNair 1998: 31)

With this quote from McNair we are back with Appadurais ideoscope. A society built around assumptions what is right and what is wrong and a media proliferating these ideas. So once again news becomes a disseminator of ideas based on societies ideas, it’s ideoscope.
In the end what is news? News is deviation; news is what in sense narratives that substantiate our beliefs, our ideoscape. It does that by either fortifying it by delivering us narratives about our own society, about at the first glance everyday events in our own society, text from or about people and groups of power and their view of the world who thus shape the readers view of the world. Or stories about deviations that challenge our view of the world and force us to relate. Stories about criminality, wars and atrocities, events that challenge our ideoscape and thus will trigger a reaction. Which in turn will give the media a response, either as increased sale of copies of their newspaper, or awards heightening their status or whatever response that is seen positively.

The Filtering
In the early 20th century there was a clear opinion among Swedish journalist about the purpose of journalism: to mould and reflect the public opinion (see Journalisten 1:1926 and 3:1926). This shows how the journalist gave themselves the mission to reflect the public opinion in the media, how their journalistic text were a reflection of how the public saw upon the world. And at the same time the shaped that same image of the world.

This fits quite well into Appadurais thoughts about mediascape and ideoscape. The opinions they talk about are the ideascape of the society that uses the media to perpetrate the ideologies and opinions of the society. The journalists see themselves as the mediators of ideas and opinions. As the journalistic text goes through the process of being turned into a newspaper article it goes through several filters, as described by Chomsky and Herman.

These filters, used by the gatekeepers (editors etc.), conform the articles published to the newspapers ruling social and political standing.

The five filters of Chomsky and Herman can be criticised from many angles but the basic idea behind them is sensible. They describe aspects of publishing that a gatekeeper has to consider when deciding whether a story goes to print or not. Chomsky and Herman describe the filters from a Marxist point of view. A view where the struggle between groups is key in the description of a society. An image that has come to be criticised by many as a too simplified mechanism that cannot fully describe the complexity of our world. But still the main idea behind, where a gatekeeper in one way or the other, intentionally or unintentionally uses these filters in his decision is still sound.

The first filter, ownership of media. Here they talk about how the structure of ownership is reflected in their messages. Media companies have ties to not only political organisations but also complex structures of ownership with companies not directly in the
area of news media. This ownership creates bond of loyalty and will in one way or the other create discourses within the media company that affect how and hat is reported. (Chomsky & Herman 1994: 3-14).

The second filter is advertisement. All media is in one way or the other dependant on advertisement. A newspaper would by quite more expensive than it is if we would have to pay for the whole production cost, printing, wages etc. By taking in advertisements the price for a single copy can be kept down. This however creates according to Chomsky and Herman a dependency between the newspaper and the company paying for the ad. What would happen if the newspaper writes something unfavourable about the company or in any other way projects an opinion dissimilar from those who pay for the ads? They take as an example what happened to the British newspapers that had their political affiliation to the left. The companies, who’s political affiliation usually was to the middle and right preferred to buy advertisement space in papers in that same political space, thus the papers to the left got problems getting enough incomes to subsidise the price of the paper.

The third filter, relationship with sources. This filter is about the need for a newspaper to be able to quote the credible sources mentioned earlier. This is about more than being able to fill the pages of the newspaper. It becomes often a symbiotic relationship, where the newspapers write stories for the sources and by that create interest for the source and thus create a need for stories.

The fourth filter is, the public opinion. This is about the paper and its reaction to the public opinion. What can they write that will sell and please the public. Writing news that upsets their readers might lead to these abandoning the paper. But it is also to find the news that will find the readers through the huge amount of media noise.

One aspect of this is the professional thinker. People with no or little connection to the media industry but who more or less continuously write texts in these papers. At on hand journalists interview them, but in that role they are rather “knowers” more or less independent from organisational influences. In this case it is people with a political or social agenda who write articles about subjects they want to have out in the open. During the weeks in 1995 I looked at there were several of these articles about the situation in Bosnia. They become a representation of the people’s voice; well informed a well initiated, but still they become “the voice of the people”. These are the people politicians talk about as they say: “this subject has to be put into an open debate”.

The last filter has to be put into its context. Chomsky and Herman wrote this book partly during the 1980’s when the political landscape was dominated by the East/West
conflict. The fifth filter, Communism as enemy has to be adapted to new circumstances, something like “A common enemy”. This is about reaching out with a message through the ever-increasing media noise. We are continuously surrounded by news. Television, newspapers, Internet etc. A news event has to stick out to get an ever media weary publics attention. This requires that the journalistic text is easily attainable by the reader. That is free of complex models of reality. But it is also about our ideoscape. The enemy in this case is the person or group who by action or message challenges our view of the world. He is the culprit of deed that does not fit into our view of what is regarded as proper behaviour.

Not all filters are used at all time; some filters affect some stories, while other stories are affected by a completely different set. And there are also personal aspects of these filters. For some editors, some filters have a greater weight than others. Some care about the opinions of owners others about the public opinion.

The filters describe a complex dependency between the media and groups of power within a society. This relates closely to Foucault’s thought about power and power relations. What Foucault says is that power is about how a group in a power relation controls the discourse within a society by controlling the discussions within a society (Hubert & Rabin 1983).

But in a western democracy it is not the privilege of a single group within a society to create discourse. With the freedom of speech, nowadays the norm in western democracies comes the possibility of several groups to try to influence the discourse of a society. The gatekeepers are thus put into a position where they have to weigh several possible interpretations of a story against each other. It is at the same time a symbiotic relationship, media is dependant on the power groups for sources of information but the power groups are in the same extent dependant on the media to get their stories out.

…what if the media conspired for one day not to report anything the president said? How could the president communicate with the nation? Perhaps the chief executive could go out in the backyard of the White House and yell at the milling tourists on the grounds of the Washington monument and ask them to pass the word around (Neuman 1990: 159)

Political groups need the media to get their message out to the people, companies need the media to present their products and so on. This creates a symbiosis where media uses these groups to create news, believing the events will spark an interest amongst people. They buy the newspapers and watch the TV shows. An example of this is the tabloids and their headlines about reality shows in Swedish Television. Newspapers use these shows to create more or less pseudo-events, believing their readers wants to read about it. By that they give
these shows publicity, creating more interest, giving the shows higher ratings and so on. It becomes a symbiotic circle feeding itself.

Sometimes the availability of images from a conflict decides whether the conflict becomes an event worthy of news coverage, “the main principle is: no pictures no serious coverage of a conflict”. (Carruthers 2000: 230). This shows if in no other way the business need of images in addition to the written text in the journalistic narrative. This has in many ways to do with the ever increasing competition from the largely image based television news media. But this has also created a new kind of persistent symbols, the “iconic image”. We have almost all seen these images, the raising of the American flag on Okinawa during the Second World War, the raising of the flag on the Reichstag in Berlin, as Berlin was conquered by the Russians towards the end of the European War. Both these events were more or less manufactured, the raising of the flag on the Reichstag was recreated in front of the camera as during the real event, fighting was still going on and filming it would have been suicide. And the importance of these iconic images can be seen in more recent events as the US Army tried to create an iconic image connected to the second Iraq war. We all remember the scene where Iraqi citizens asked the crew of an Abrahms tank for help in pulling down a statue of Saddam Hussein in central Baghdad. This event was later shown to have been a staged event, a trial to create an iconic image with the same popular penetration as the raising of the American flag on Okinawa had. A reason to start to question the veracity of many of the images we see in every day media (Jens Assur on Kulturnyhetera on SVT 1 on May 3, 2006, 23.45)

Some of the above mentioned aspects of political and other considerations could be seen in articles about the situation in Yugoslavia between July 1928 and February 1929.

In January 1929 the Yugoslav king Alexandr II carried through a coup d’état after a longer time of political upheaval in Yugoslavia. This event was described in all the four newspapers, with small differences.

The headline on the first page in Dagens Nyheter on the 8:th of January 1929 was:

Dictatorship in Southslavia: the parliament sent home. (DN January 8, 1929, page 1)

In contrast to that conservative Svenska Dagbladet decided to quote an unknown source:

Calm rules in the whole of Yugoslavia. Jubilation in Croatia. Like his namesake, king Alexander [sic] has cut the Gordian knot. (SvD January 8, 1929, page 3)

In Svenska Dagbladet they decide to use a quote where king Alexandr is compared with Alexander the Great, as well as showing the positive reactions from the Croats. Dagens
Nyheter on the other hand decided to have a somewhat critical headline, describing the instigation of a dictatorship.

When Svenska Dagbladet decided to let their headlines project the positive effects of coup d’état they are painting up a picture where the coup is something positive. With that they are creating an opinion of the coup towards the newspapers readers. They have to either accept the opinion or reject it. It is up to the reader to take the newspapers opinion and fit it into their overall opinions and see whether it fits in, “Is it right for a king to take political control over a nation?”. In addition Dagens Nyheter decides to use the word Dictatorship (sv. Diktatur) in the headline, a word that always had a negative connotation in the Swedish language. This difference can be seen further in the text where Svenska Dagbladet in addition to describing the coup also adds comments from other newspapers, all giving support to the coup, while Dagens Nyheter decides not to do that. These examples show how the same event can be shown in different light. Svenska Dagbladet describes the events with clearly positive connotations, comparing the king to Alexander the Great, describing how he managed to solve the problems the country faced during the previous months, while Dagens nyheter instead chooses to describe the event as a blow to democracy, where the legally elected parliament is dissolved and the king made a dictator.

An even bigger contrast is made in the syndicalist Arbetaren:

The Reactions [sic] grasp for power in Yugoslavia. A murderer of kings as the dictator. The Yugoslav people are more without rights than ever. (Arn January 8, 1929, page 7)

Here the political standpoint of the paper becomes clearly visible. In the following text they describe how after the Croat boycott of the “parliament of murderers”, the king, fearing a victory for the opposition in an election, refused this and instead decided to go through with the coup.

The events described are the same in each newspaper. The difference lies in how the events have been described. All papers have the same view on what the causes for the coup d’état was. Political unrest, the inability of the parliament to function because of this, spreading unrest amongst the different groups within the country. But the different way the papers decide to describe the events, Svenska Dagbladet uses Alexander the Great as comparison to show the drive of the king. Dagens Nyheters takes side seeing the coup as a blow to democracy. In difference to Svenska Dagbladet, Dagens Nyheter sees the conflict more of a conflict between nationalities than political groupings. By studying an article about a month before, on December 22, 1928 a hint of the papers standpoint can be seen.
The article is an analysis of the situation in Yugoslavia, an article with the title:

The demands of the Croats and the resistance of the Serbs. A complex conflict, that threatens to escalate. *Serbia has not understood its historical mission.* (DN, December 22, 1928, page 20, my emphasis)

This article describes, much from a Croatian point of view how the Serbian rulers instead of trying to give each group equal saying in the ruling of the country, they taken upon themselves the “role of the conqueror”. Svenska Dagbladet on the other hand has no deeper discussions about the situation in Yugoslavia during this time. This shows how Dagens Nyheter tries to describe the situation as a struggle between Serbian and Croat national interests. How Serbia sees themselves as conquerors, while the Croats tries to win an equal share of power within the Yugoslav state. Dagens Nyheter clearly states that Raditj never had as an intention to split Yugoslavia, he only wanted equal rights to the Croats.

In Arbetaren there was an article on June 20 about the situation in Yugoslavia. Instead of Dagens Nyheters theme of a Serbian people not knowing about its mission within the nation it takes a traditional Marxist look at the nation.

Yugoslavia – the fortified penitentiary state. 200,000 unemployed have to beg for their bread. The working class has been defeated and the men behind the throne now rule unrestricted. (Arn, June 20, 1928, page unknown)

Arbetaren describes the situation in Yugoslavia with a terminology based on a Marxist discourse, close to their political affiliation. Compared to Dagens Nyheter that decides to describe the conflict in terms of people (almost ethnic), or cultures in conflict. Arbetaren described this as a struggle between classes.

*Arbetaren continues the article with:*

All evil powers in Yugoslavia have gathered themselves to ruthlessly persecute the oppressed masses, who try to straighten their broken backs and claim a humane and dignified life. (Arbetaren June 20, 1928, page unknown)

The political message of this article is quite clear. A description of a class struggle between the oppressed masses and a small group of privileged people.

*Dagens Nyheter describes the causes of the conflict differently:*

A Considerable cause that the Southslav conflict again started to burn is that Serbia during these ten years has not understood its historical mission...Serbia against the new provinces feels like a conqueror with the advantages this gives... The formal cause to the conflict is however the Constitution. The Croats have given a number of sentimental and purely economical causes for a revision of this. (Dagens Nyheter, december 22, 1928, page 20)
This quote, as earlier said shows how Dagens Nyheter decides to describe the conflict as a conflict between two groups, societies or even nations. One peoples struggles against a Constitution not giving them their rights as citizens of a nation.

These two papers present the same place, the same nation in different ways. Arbetaren presents Yugoslavia as a nation gripped in a class struggle. Oppressed masses fighting a small group of privileged, doing whatever they can to keep their privileges intact. Dagens Nyheter describes the nation as a place in the grips of a struggle between people, Croats trying to get their rights against an oppressive Serbian population. This shows how the same event, place or situation can be presented in very different ways because of how the Gatekeepers decide to interpret the situation. It is the same locality they describe, the same people, but still the message that reaches the reader becomes different.

In the end this phase is about getting a message out. On the surface it is about “giving news to the people”. Presenting readers and viewers with account of people, places and events in the world they might find interesting. But the process is complex. There are many interested parties in this. Power groups who want to get their messages out to the public. Companies who want to make sure their products get highest possible exposure and ratings and so on. In the end it becomes the work of the journalists and gatekeepers to wade through this landscape of interested parties and try to fulfill what they themselves see as the essence of good journalism, objectivity and truth.

The Presentation
As the journalistic text passed through the filters of the gatekeepers, it will finally reach the readers. All the above steps will determine how the world is presented to the readers. How the journalist uses his knowledge of the people and places he writes about. Who he decides to interview, and what places he decides to visit in his gathering of information. And not the least the use of words, whether someone or something is introduced to us in terms that are in some way emotionally charged, as in the examples above will affect how the text will be interpreted.

Then comes the editorial decision. What texts will become “news” and what texts will be sent to the scrap heap because they are not seen as newsworthy and thus never reach the public. Some texts will pass through more or less intact, since the sources are seen as credible sources. This will make it possible for power structures in the society to get their messages out through government spokespersons, PR officers etc.
And last, how is the text presented in the paper. Will it become first page news or will it, as some say be buried somewhere deep inside the paper. Of the texts I looked at many of the events in Bosnia, especially the fall of Srebrenica became front-page news, the same with the assassinations in the Skuptnja in 1928 and the coup d’état in early 1929. This shows how the newspaper looks at these events. The readers will at a first glance see these headlines, interpret these events as important and thus relate to them differently as they would to other events without the first page headlines. These event will thus get a higher impact on the readers view of the world and if the same news event is repeated by other media and papers it will further increase the impact this event has with the general public. And as discussed below these events will help to define the distant people and places the reader meets in the journalistic narratives presented.

But there is also the aspect of the types of news the newspaper decides to publish. We have the papers I looked at who have a large section devoted to foreign news but also sections devoted to national news, economics etc. But there are also the smaller local papers, papers like Ösgöta Correspondenten or Bergslagsposten. These papers present a world fairly familiar to their readers, present them with places and people they probably already are familiar with. This fortifies our social spaces, introduces new aspects of them we can use in our daily lives.

The messages paint a picture of the world we live in and thus create images we live by. In earlier days, before mass communications and media, mass travel and migration, the places and people we interacted were in our close locality, mostly. Even if the percentage of migrants have stayed the same over the years, the simple fact that there today lives 6 billion people in this world of ours means that there is more people on the move today than ever before. Media has in modernity an important task in both creating an image of distant places and people plus keeping the people in Diaspora connected with their places of birth. But some claim that the amount of foreign news has decreased lately, some use market claims, since the prize of keeping foreign correspondents on place increased, others say that “The world is quiet place these days” (Hannerz 2004: 24-25).

Searching through microfilms of the newspapers I used in this study, does not fully agree with the claims above. In 1928 the newspaper had about 2 pages of foreign news articles of around a total 20. In 1995 about 5 - 8 of a total of 40. In a 2 week period one newspaper had as much articles from Yugoslavia as all four in 1928. You can’t make a direct comparison since the Balkan war was the major news event during the 1990’s while the events in Yugoslavia during this six-month period was fringe news and only the assassination, death of
Radic and the coup made front-page in the papers. Stories that in, one way or the other became descriptions of people and places in the distant.

The distant places

As we move through the world we create relations to the places we thread. We incorporate them into our social space. These localities are not just points on our maps but they are also containers for memories and social conventions. We use them to define ourselves in different social contexts, like social markers placing us on a common social map.

For the people of a locality the social meaning of places is self evident. As I come from outside I see the landscape. I see the buildings, the town square, and the hotel. But I don’t see the social significance of these places. I can’t see that the town square is the place where the young people meet to socialize. I don’t see the history of the buildings. I need time to understand the social meaning of the places in these peoples social space.

As new places are presented to us we are forced to relate to them, to put them into our social map so that we can relate to them if necessary. When friends and relatives talk to us about events in Yugoslavia or Africa or any other distant place we have no personal experience of we pull out the images we have been presented with, and use it to relate to them, images given to us often through media.

But as we get this information presented to us, the process of relating to it is not as simple as it at a first glance may look. As we read the texts we interpret the texts. We give the words meaning and thus create a relation between the emotional understanding of the words and the places presented to us.

Place is a duality of locality and to that locality attached emotions. As we move through the places of our world we create emotional ties to these places, they get a meaning in our lives. As the journalist describes places to us in his narratives he often uses word with strong emotional subtexts. An example of this can be found in the descriptions of the funeral ceremonies of Stepjan Radic in August 1928.

Sorrow in Croatia[...]

Agram, Thursday[...]

This afternoon the body of Stefan Raditj [sic] was carried from his villa to the palace of the peasants. All shops were closed and in their windows portraits of Raditj were dressed in black. From the houses black banners of sorrow hung. The streetlights were dressed in mourning crape and all lights were on. The coffin was carried on the back of farmers followed by an endless procession[...](DN August 10, 1928, page unknown)

This article gives a colorful description of the streets of Agram during the funeral procession held for Stepjan Radic. The description of the symbols of sorrow, black banners, mourning
crape will in the reader, one way or the other create an emotional response. This however dependant that the symbols described will trigger an emotional response with the reader. In Svenska Dagbladet the same event is described slightly differently:

100 000 peasants followed Raditj[sic] to his grave. Stefan Raditj funeral took place on Sunday in Zagreb with mass attendance from the population. [...] During the last few days 100 000 peasants from all parts of the country arrived to the city even from Bosnia, Dalmatia and Herzegovina delegations had arrived to join in the ceremonies [...] In the spacious yard of the Peasants Palace thousands of garlands had been laid down. The Croatian peasant rebel Cubetj had laid down a garland of thorns with ribbons in the Croatian national colors on which the bullets that wounded Raditj in the Skuptjina were attached (SvD, August 13, 1928, page 8)

In this text the journalist paints a picture of mass gatherings, people showing their respects, sorrow, masses of garlands laid out, signs of rebellion from Croatian separatists, using the bullets from the shooting in the Skuptjina as a symbol of the conflict between Croatia and Serbia.

In Arbetaren a similar description of the place is made as in Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet.

Agram, the Croat capital is in deepest sorrow. Businesses and cafés are closed, factories and workshops has closed their gates. The hectic life is almost dying on this hot august day. All over black banners flutter, banners of sorrow... Church bells ring and people bend their necks in silent sorrow. Stefan Raditsj [sic], the Croat revolutionary and peasant chieftain is dead. That’s why this deep, grave and powerful sorrow in Agram, yes in all of Croatia. (Arn, August 23 1928, page unknown)

Arbetaren goes almost into overdrive to describe the milieu and sentiments of the people on place. The almost literary way the event is described gives an almost photographic description of the place.

The journalist creates in the texts images of the distant place. He uses a colorful language to create images with the reader and thus making him relate to this event and the location within which the events take place. The journalist describes events the reader can relate to, death, burial, and people in mourning and thus creates an emotional understanding. He describes the places and the reader creates images in his inner eye, images that has little to do with the real place but becomes a place in the readers mind. The reader can relate to the emotions of the people described, the relations they create to the place described.

But this creation of place is fleeting. The stronger the emotion the journalist can create within the reader, the stronger the image of place. As long as the reader can reconnect to the place described, new events, new articles, other sources of images of place, the image of the place is kept alive. It often happens a just Appadurai writes that the place becomes a
blur of images from different sources, a place that not always has a connection to the real
place in physical space. And often the image of place dies as the reader puts away the paper.

The events described above are more or less everyday events all over the world,
people die, and people who relate to them grieve. And if the person who dies is regarded is
some way to be a public personality whose death will affect society in any way, it becomes
news.

But sometimes the events described are not so everyday in the reader’s society. One
example is the events that took place in Yugoslavia during the summer of 1995. The civil war
had gone on for a couple of years and media had in many ways made this the news event of
the 1990’s.

One image of Srebrenica that was presented to us comes from Arbetet:

Srebrenica has fallen. 20 000 civilian Muslims and 400 UN soldiers flee in panic.
Srebrenica fell on Tuesday afternoon. At the same time as NATO aircraft bombed Serbian
tanks between 1000 and 1500 Bosnian-Serb soldiers marched into the town. Around 20
000 Muslim civilians fled in panic together with the 400 Dutch UN soldiers placed inside
the city and it’s surroundings. It was the first time one of the zones protected by the UN
has been conquered with force of arms. (Arbetaren, July 12, 1995, page unknown)

A first look at the headline, “Srebrenica has fallen” gives me the image of that something been
lost to an enemy. As the Bosnian-Serb forces attacked Srebrenica, they also attacked the UN
forces inside the town. Thus they attacked an organization that in many ways upholds the
ideoscape of our society. UN in many ways represents the ideoscape of the western societies;
ideas of freedom, human rights, etc. and by describing how the attacks were in some way
aimed at the UN, the Bosnian-Serb forces at the same time attacked the basic ideas behind the
western society. The city is in it self described as a haven for refugees, a place were the
“humanitarian situation is becoming dire”, a quote made from the UNHCR (Unite Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees) representative in Srebrenica.

Bosnia, a horrid parallel to the 30’s. UN and EU allow themselves to be disavowed and
the ugly mug of fascism is allowed to appear […] The great powers believed they could
rule by divide and conquer and gave violence legitimacy by allowing Hitler to cut up the
counties of Europe. One year later Europe was ablaze. The same powers are today playing
the same cynical game under the cover of supposed neutrality under the banners of UN
and EU… (SvD, July 19, 1995, page 4)

In this text, by a “professional thinker” as described above, the paper gives an opportunity for
this thinker to compare the Events in Bosnia to those of one of the most flagrant breaks of the
western ideoscape, nazism in 1930’s Germany and the following Second World War.
In this text the reader is presented with the image of Bosnia as a parallel to Nazi-Germany, a place that in modern times is often used as an anti-theses of modern western democracies and an example of what happens if the humanitarian ideals of our society are no longer the cornerstones of society. And this is just what happens in this text. Bosnia is presented as a place where the *enemy* has refuted these norms. This place is presented as a place were fundamental principles of our society is broken.

The same kind of comparison is made in *Arbetet* on July 14, this text as an editorial:

> Tens of thousands of refugees on the run on European roads. Starving people, despaired, terrified and with their executioners breathing on their necks. Terror, threats and broken families! A reality we thought ended with the Second World Wars fifty years ago. (Arb, July 14, 1995, page 2).

This text also continues with a comparison with 1930’s Europe. The text is illustrated with a drawing, the word “Bosnia” where hands reach out as if reaching for help from the letters. Once again the place is described as a place where fundamental principles of our society are broken.

As we read these descriptions we, in one way or the other, react to these images. We start to talk about them, “Did you read about what happened in Bosnia?”. As we meet to establish or reestablish new or old social connections we use these event as subjects for discussion. We read new articles; we commit ourselves to help these people. An example of this is an ad a few days later in *Svenska Dagbladet* by *Medecins Sans Frontieres*3 with the headline “Srebrenica has fallen”. The voluntary organization has identified the impact of this event and uses it to get contributions to its relief work in Bosnia. All this makes these places a part of our social space. They become subjects of discussion, imagined places where our social values in one way or the other has been broken and have to be reestablished, places that are different than those experienced by those who lived there all their lives. For the readers they are places were a few specific events took place, for those who lived there they are complex places where they lived out their lives, created their social lives and created their own values. But just as the journalists define these places to us, the people living there are made flesh and bone to us.

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3 International medical relief organization, founded in 1971 in Paris. Impartial and neutral organization giving help to victims of wars, starvation or natural disasters independent of their ethnic or political affiliation. (Nationalencyclopedin)
The distant peoples

It can be argued that the people presented in journalistic texts often are artifacts, easily put into predefined structures.

These peoples are introduced to us part-takers in the events presented by the journalists. As they are described to us it is only in the context of the events. A contextualised person, a person we relate to within a specific social context but when we meet them outside this context we become confused.

This person does not exist only as a media created artifact but also in our everyday lives. Who hasn’t seen someone we know so well but not been able to place her only to realize that this person is someone we met briefly in a specific place or during a specific event, a place or event with a meaning to us. Now he is displaced, out of context and thus we can’t relate to him.

The events become focused by the use of an individual in the journalistic text. Mostly the events described in the text in some way or the other circle around this individual, sometimes the journalist uses this individual to make the events more concrete for the readers. But it also shapes the image the reader gets of these individuals, the antagonists, portraying the enemy, protagonists, portraying the victim. They both become focal points for the reader, visualising the socially acceptable and unacceptable treats of our society more than the social reality of the place they depict.

On June 20, 1928 the Croat politician Stepjan Radic and several of his party colleagues were shot during a heated debate in the Skuptnija, the Yugoslav parliament. The shooter, Ratjitj, member of the Serbian radical party was described like this in Svenska Dagbladet the day after.

He is a komitadj nature, with whom the pistol and dagger sits loose. (SvD, June 21, 1928, page 3)

Here the reader is introduced to this person; he is described as a person who easily takes to violence. The term komitadji, (referencing a Macedonian guerilla, fighting the Turks in late nineteenth- early twentieth century) compares him to a group that didn’t accept people who didn’t share their goals and opinions. This paints him clearly as an antagonist, a person who violates principles that the society takes for granted. He deviates from the norm. But the image of this person is contextual; there is nowhere a deeper description if this individual. He is completely described within this context and thus becomes closely tied to the context.
On August 9, 1928 Stepjan Raditj dies from complications from the wound he got being shot in the Skuptnija. The day after the news makes it to the Swedish newspapers. All papers have a portrait of him, but the portrait is of Radic the politician.

Human identity is a social construct; we present ourselves using a suitable label within a context. Depending on the situation we are in we present ourselves to the people we interact with. For our family we are the father, the mother, and the brother. In this paper I am the anthropology student. In the same way we make ourselves images of the people we meet. Someone we only meet in the store will by us be identified as “that guy working in the store”. Place him somewhere else and we will, for a moment, be perplexed until he has given us a new identity-tag to be used. The journalistic narrative gives a narrow description of an individual. Presents him in a context of an event. We will identify the person within that narrative, within this context and if never again presented to us in any other way, that person will always be identified through that context.

In this case Radic was presented to the readers as Radic the politician. Nowhere was there a mention of any other aspects of his life. Nothing about hobbies, what books he liked to read, because that was outside the scope of the event. An article taking up these aspects would soon become more about the person, than an event. And in this case the event, the death of the symbol Radic was key. The same about Ratjitj, he is presented, as the one who shot Raditj and this is the image we get of him. They have become contextualized persons.

In the above examples the individual has been the focal point of the event. But often events affect a large population of individuals. Even here the journalistic narrative may use the individual to create identification.

In the latter half of the 20th century one of the main cornerstones of journalism, objectivity started to come in question. Was there anything like an objective journalistic narrative? One result of this discussion was what was called new journalism, a journalistic methodology that in part was in opposition to what they saw as a “fetishisation of objectivity” and a perceived limitation this demand of objectivity put on their work. A movement with personalities like Tom Wolfe, who said this movement was a desire to move beyond “hard news”, “scoops” and encouraged the involvement of the journalist in the narrative (McNair 1998: 73-75). This movement has much affected modern journalism and as McNair say:

What is certain… is that the best journalism of the new millennium will be that which acknowledges the limitations of objectivity and finds new ways to bypass those limitations while preserving the believability of journalistic discourse. (McNair 1998: 75)
The effect can be seen in much of what was written by journalists from Yugoslavia in the texts from 1995. The journalistic texts, in difference from 1928, were in many ways more involved in the individuals. The events in Yugoslavia in 1995 were in much written from an almost “cultural relativistic” point of view. Where the individuals, the victims, the enemies came forth in a much larger extent than in 1928.

A Swedish journalist, Ingvar Oja tells about his experiences of this involving journalism.

When you as I often deliberately seek myself to the periphery of the great event, articles cannot be planned. They are born out of the meeting with people; maybe they are born out of a single line in a fleeting conversation. These articles of the periphery are closer to the truth than the analysis in the eye of the storm and it is therefore they engage the readers more than a never so well written and balanced article. (Ingvar Oja in Gräv-Scoop 1997, pp 7)

This reflects much of the ideas of the new journalism movement, the dispute of absolute objectivity. The stories comes from people more or less involved in the events, it is their stories the journalist should tell rather that an objective and “helicopter view” of the event.

An interesting aspect of this personal versus “helicopter view” of the refuge is discussed in Ellen Fairs and Lisa Parks article about how the portrayal of the refugee as either an anonymous mass or a personalized account affected how people reacted to the Hutu and Tutsi conflict in Rwanda and Zaire/Congo in 1996.

Relief agencies, in an attempt to encourage public support to instigate a relief operation by the US government made sure that a number of aerial photographs was released to the media showing the huge extent of the refugee crisis in that area. Hoping this would spark a reaction from the public demanding action. What happened was that, few news organizations used these images to explain the crisis. They, unlike the relief organizations understood that these kinds of images needed to be decoded and explained to the public. They presented the events as something very abstract in contrast to the personalized view of the camera on the ground.

The aerial image visually constructs refugees as an enigmatic nationless body, a moving target, a wandering collective rather than as a group of socially situated individuals with distinct histories and interests. [...] Where the television images expose and even fetishize refugees’ pain, the aerial image completely submerges it in the barren expanse of the panoramic view (Fair & Parks 2001: 46)

The image of the refugee, as news organizations has seen according to Fair and Parks, has to be personalized to have an impact on the readers/viewers. A person cannot relate to the anonymous mass, they need a person to relate to, a face, a name, or a life story. This need is in
many ways shown in events in Bosnia during the siege of Sarajevo. Shrapnel from an exploding grenade had wounded a young Bosnian girl, Irma. The shrapnel would, if not removed render the young girl paralyzed. But in the war torn country there were no appropriate treatment available. This young girl came into the knowledge of English media that started to write about her and the suffering she was in. This soon almost led to a frenzy in the British media, where different news organizations competed with each other on who would be able to help that little girl. Eventually this led to that the British government sent an airplane to fetch this little girl, and a couple of other injured for treatment in British hospitals. As a contrast beforehand it had been very hard for the relief organizations and UN to get the western countries to get involved in the relief work in Bosnia. The UN commander in Yugoslavia at that time, as a response to the media frenzy surrounding Irma, a bit cynically minted the acronym “IRMA” that stood for “Instant Response to Media Attention”.

This also shows how people, when given a face and name. A manifested, identifiable individual can relate. Suddenly the abstract conflict over there is made concrete. The people over there suddenly are made real. They are no longer abstract numbers or as Stalin once is supposed to have said: “One dead is a tragedy, a million dead is statistics”, meaning that when the death of individuals is made abstract by the sheer number of deaths we cannot relate. We need the individual to be able to relate to an event.

In the events in Bosnia during the summer of 1995 this could be seen. Articles about the streams of refugees from Srebrenica tell tales of mass amounts of refugees. But the images we see of the refugees are up and close. It is as Lars Fahlén and Jens Assur says:

It is the interaction between the text and the image that does the report. Without the text the reader might get lost, says Lars Fahlén. Jens Assur agrees.[...] It becomes absurd when the caption says the same thing as the picture shows. The text should be a complement but doesn’t have to be especially long. The image may dominate [Jens Assur]. Modern image journalism should have a sense of presence. (Valestrand in Grävscoop no 1 1997)

This shows the journalist view of the image. It should present the reader with a complement to the written narrative, an image of the place and people involved in the events described. Thus the reader will have the place but mostly the people introduced to them in other ways than a sometimes impersonal, textual description.

In the early days of the events in Srebrenica, Reuters and TT relayed reports from there. These texts had a rather impersonal tone. In large describing the events in place, no personal portraits of the people involved. But photographs complemented these texts. One example is a page from Svenska Dagbladet on the 17th of July. The page contains a number of
articles from Bosnia. The main article is relayed from TT, about the mass deportations from Srebrenica. Stories about tens of thousands fleeing the battles there. Included is a small map of the region showing Muslim and Serbian controlled areas and the movement of the refugees. Other articles are about the disbelief of the UN mandate and so on. All articles have a rather impersonal description of the war and the events in place. But a photograph of three men carrying a wounded woman on a makeshift stretcher dominates the page. The photo clearly shows the agony and suffering of the people. Makes you react to their apparent agony, a personalized agony.

But there is also the description of the refugees in their everyday lives. Texts describing how they try to make the best of their situation or how everyday activities become reflections of their suffering. There is a text in Arbetet.

Women in a nightmarish suspense.[...] The refugees in the 780 tents – almost only women and children – protected themselves in vain against the heat on the Sunday afternoon. They’ve opened the tents in all directions to catch a breath of wind and kept in the shade if they were not gathering around the water taps on the cisterns, to wash, to pound and rinse their clothes. (Arbetet on July 17, 1995, page 8)

The journalist describes the situation of the refugees. Describes how they hysterically wash their clothes to get off the smell of the travel. They have turned this everyday activity to something that in the journalists mind reflects the situation in Bosnia. The article continues with a description of how he walked around in the refugee camp, talking and looking at the refugees. Giving very personal stories of their experiences. What gives this article an even more personalized approach is the image that illustrates the text, an image of two women with a third in the background, all carrying crying children, all with agonized expressions on their faces.

The journalist creates with this text a possibility for identification. On the other hand there is the everyday activity of washing clothes, which has been turned to a reflection of the refugees situation. Then there are the personalized accounts of war, descriptions of individual experiences of the war in Bosnia. Instead of giving a helicopter view of the refugee camp, he describes the situation using individuals as focal points in his story, thus creating a possibility for identification with the individual refugee.

This introduces the anonymous refugee to the reader as a person in need of his compassion. Defines him as an individual, anonymous but still tangible in contrast to the anonymous an intangible numbers and maps in the textual descriptions. Just as the named
individual serves as a focal point in the description of the events there is the anonymous part-
taker, a person with whom we can feel sympathy or antipathy.

The refugee is the displaced person. A person both a threat and a focal point for compassion. The refuge knocking at our door is the threat. Someone threatening the order in our lives. The refugee “over there” never becomes that threat and can thus be related too.

Chomsky and Herman define what they call “Worthy Victims”: “A propaganda system will always portray people abused in enemy states as worthy victims…” (Herman & Chomsky 1994: 37). The worthy victim is someone who has been subject to a treatment that conflicts with our ideoscape. He is the representation of what could happen to us if this ideoscape would ever become threatened.

But with the victim or the refugee comes the enemy. A person or group that the media describes as the perpetrator of the crimes against the victims. As the force driving people into refuge. The enemy is often someone who breaks or defies the ideoscape of our society, challenges our belief in its components.

With the end of the cold war in early 1990’s a model for describing conflicts became obsolete. In previous years conflict had almost exclusively been described using an “East-West” conflict model. Conflicts were described as conflicts between two political systems, western capitalism and eastern communism. And the western media used this dichotomization as basis for the creation of clear enemy images. This drive was strong as one editor described using the Rwanda conflict as example “The first question would have been: who is on our side?” (Hannerz 2004).

The enemy or the Enemy Image is described in several disciplines, sociology, psychology etc. The psychological definition of an enemy image is based on a projection of needs and fears on an outside agent.

…the basic ideas is that the individual projects his fears, ambivalent experiences, and suppressed hopes and qualities on an object outside himself (Loustarinen 1989: 125)

The enemy in the journalistic text thus becomes a representation of the social antithesis that gives the reader a focal point when explaining the events in that distant place. In the end an enemy image is a notion that this enemy is a threat against his view of the world. (Loustarinen 1989: 125).

An example of how an enemy image is upkept can be seen in a couple of articles during the summer of 1995. The civil war has been going on for a few years and the western media has from start created an enemy out of the Bosnian Serbs and their leaders like
Karadzic and Mladic. On the leader column in Dagens Nyheter on July 13:th there is a caricature of Milosevic and photos of Mladic and Kratziec with the caption: “The criminals: Milosevic... Karadzic...Mladic”. The paper thus gives the abstract enemy three faces that people can use when creating their own image of the conflict.

“Bizarre feeling of psychosis in Pale” (DN July 9 1995, page A 7)

This is the headline on an article in DN about the Bosnian Serb dominated city of Pale a few days before the fall of Srebrenica. The subtitle continues: “In the rebel stronghold of the Bosnian-Serbs everyone carries a feeling of being unfairly treated”. The Journalists choice to describe the feeling of the Bosnian Serbs of being wrongfully treated by the western media with words like “Bizarre” and “Psychosis” disarms their claims. The claim can no longer be true, as it is compared with these terms. Anyone claiming to be wrongfully treated is thus in a sense described as being psychotic, “A Collective term for psychological disorders where the values and views of reality has been altered” (URL 1).

The article continues with comparing Pale to the beleaguered Sarajevo. Sarajevo as the example of a true victim of the war, the city:

“...where the people now scrape the last supplies to survive... where grenades and snipers kill people every day... the unreality is total, here [Pale] peace, flower, youths... there ruins, war, snipers and starvation” (DN July 9 1995, page A 7)

The journalist compares the quiet Pale with the war torn Sarajevo. One place is flowers and peace the other the opposite, war and starvation. The people in this place of peace are thus compared with the people of Sarajevo, the Worthy Victims. By creating this dichotomy the journalist refutes their claims of being victims since the worthy victims are those of Sarajevo. The comparison thus serves the journalist in his claims of the “absurdity of their claims”.

There is a similar attempt at keeping an image of the enemy alive in SvD on the 20:th of July:

If it hadn’t sounded so obscene thinking of what is happening just now in Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde, you could call Belgrade a city under siege. (SvD July 20 1995, page 5, my emphasis)

Here the journalist writes about the absurdity of calling the capital of the Serbs a city under siege, again comparing it with places that in his mind deserves to be called that.

The journalists have in this created an image of a worthy victim, in this case a place more than a person. This image is used to either defy a group of their claim of being a victim
or just as an example why a claim of victimization sounds absurd. The people in Sarajevo are portrayed as worthy victims in this war in contrast to the peoples in Belgrade and Pale.

As the article from Pale continues, the journalist describes the life of a Muslim woman, married to a Bosnian Serb man who fled persecution in Sarajevo. He tells about how she tries to convince him about the reason for the war. How she describes who was responsible for the grenade that killed 70 people on a market square in February 1994.

She puts forward a longwinded line of circumstantial claims that shall prove the Muslim guilty to the act and claims [alt. alleges] she heard a single muzzle sound just before the grenade hit and killed 70 people in the center of the town. (DN July 9 1995, page A 7, my emphasis)

The way the journalist describes the proof as a longwinded (Swedish: omständlig) and circumstantial gives the reader a point where he can question the validity of the claims, she is not a credible source and thus her claims can be questioned. And once again the image of the enemy can be upheld. The journalist chooses to describe the woman’s testimony with words that gives the reader a possibility to call in question her claims and thus her claims that the worthy victim is not as worthy can be refuted.

The text continues with an interview with two 18 year old Bosnian Serb boys. One of the boys is described as an almost fanatic Serb nationalist while the other is described as somewhat more varied: “Rasa sounds just like the Great Serbian propaganda, while Vasko is somewhat more varied”.

Here the journalist describes the opinions of these to Bosnian-Serb men propaganda, even if the other man is described as somewhat more varied he is still portrayed as someone that has not understood the truth behind the conflict. With the text the journalist gives concrete form to the people afflicted by the “psychosis” in Pale. It is not just an abstract term hanging in the air; he has now presented three concrete individuals afflicted by this. People that can be pointed out, they exist thus the narrative must be “true”.

They are not clearly identified as the enemy; they are more defined as people afflicted by a faulty set of social convention, conventions violating our view of the world, artefacts defining an antithesis of our society and its norms.

But the creation of these artefacts is not the purpose of the narratives; it is about bringing people closer to us, people in the centre of the events. The journalistic narrative, where the individual has become the focal point of the stories in opposition to the anonymous masses, they create the image of the individuals in the distant. Artefacts that carry the narratives to the readers and with that create an imagined, contextual person in our minds.
People defined as *the refugee, the enemy, and the misguided*. An archetype or *contextualized individual* who only exists for the reader in this specific context and/or place.

**Summary**

The journalistic narrative that we read in newspapers or see on TV is subject to a complex process from the journalist to the print. Several interested parties, parties that want their specific view of the world to reach the public, affect the journalist.

The process from event to text is complex. Herman and Chomsky describe it through their propaganda model, a model criticized by McNair, who in turn uses a description related to Appadurai’s ideoscape. A description of the ideas that people living in societies use to relate to the world. Ideas with their source in the era of Enlightenment in Europe in the 1700’s, ideas based on humanitarianism, democracy, ideas we take for granted, that we use when we relate to the world around us.

The journalistic narrative, created by journalist with their source in this society, individuals who themselves relate to the world based on these ideas, create their texts based on these ideas. But the text is also based on trust, trust between the journalist and the source. Sources like people that in some way taken part of the events written about, or so-called “credible sources”, sources that can be trusted without further ado. Sources like government spokespersons etc. Sources that are some way earned the trust of the journalistic collective.

This relation is in many ways symbiotic. These organizations are dependant on the journalists to get their message out. The journalists are dependant on their sources to get stories. A dependency that sometimes creates news out of more or less pseudo-events, where both parties have an interest in getting “the story out”.

Chomsky and Herman look further into this as they define their filters. Five filters that specify what events becomes news. Filters that gatekeepers use as they decide what texts reach the public. It is possible to criticize their theories from several angels, possibly the strongest comes from McNair as he criticizes the dominance theories, closely related to Chomskys and Hermans ideas. Ideas he says are incapable of describing the complexity of the journalistic world. But mainly he criticizes their ideas of the propaganda model, instead describing ideas related to Appadurai’s ideoscape.

So in the end it becomes a process where an existing set of ideas and worldviews decide how an event is presented to the public. Whenever described events in some way deviates or challenges these ideas, the events are presented using terms, language constructs etc. that presents that event as a deviation. People are presented as “criminals”; an image of
“the enemy” is presented to the public. One example of this is the treatment of Bosnian Serb commanders and political leaders during the war in Bosnia. A treatment that did not end with these individuals, but was also used when describing the common member of that group. Their thoughts about the war, their worldview were described as deviant, or even psychotic. These people become the antitheses of our society, an example of people that does not share our view of the world, whose ideoscape has been corrupted by propaganda.

But in this process of describing the events of the world, the journalist presents us with the distant places and people of the world. They create images to us of these places and people in their texts and accompanying photos.

In the early texts from 1928, descriptions of the events took center place. It was the events that were the focal points of the texts. People were described very contextualized, and only people that were directly taking part of the events. But in the texts of 1995 the focal point of the journalistic texts are more about the people of the events rather than the events themselves, mostly that is.

Texts from news agencies still have a depersonalized way of describing the events. A way very similar to how the journalistic text was built up in 1928. But the way the news is presented to public still makes the event personal. Photos of the individuals taking part or being affected by the events. Clearly identifiable individuals, individuals the readers can identify with. Individuals they can either identify as enemies or refugees. People that either challenges our ideoscape or people that are affected by a deranged ideoscape.

This makes the people to artifacts, people we use in our daily conversations. People contextualized by the events they are part of. We know them as refugees or criminals, not as the complex individuals we socialize with in our daily lives.

The same thing can be said about the places we read about. They become closely tied to the events taking place. Events that affect our view of the world, events we talk about. The places thus become defined in that specific context of that specific event. It is not the complex places we move through in our every day lives. Places holding intricate connections to other places and people that create our social space.

In the end, the places and people created out of the journalistic narrative is more or less a side effect of how the journalist creates his texts. Events happen in places. We need a locality to be able to relate to an event, something clearly seen in the newspapers were often small maps accompanying the articles, placing the events in physical space.

The same thing can be said about people. The journalists have recognized that a story will be more likely to be accepted, by gatekeepers and the public if it contains a “human
angle”. As shown by the Rwandan example, the cold, impersonal description of mass refuge streams will not strike a cord with the public. When the Bosnian girl Irma was introduced to the public by British media, they got a reaction because now they had a name and a face to the victim. Thus they could relate, they could feel empathy, something hard to do with cold, impersonal numbers. It is about creating a reaction with the reader, making him react to the story. Thus for the media company creating income and for the journalist personal gratification.

But how important part does the journalist play in the creation of our view of the world? That is not a simple question to ask. People read the newspaper and watch the news on TV. The image this creates is by nature simplified, archetypal. But today we have the possibility to expand on that image. We can gather further information, travel to place and see by ourselves. But I claim most people do not do that. They are satisfied by the image they get from the paper and their favorite news program on Television.

This has only been a small scratch on the surface of the subject. There has been a lot written about journalism during the years, that, if nothing else, shows the complexity of the subject and what an important part this has in our lives.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arbetaren</th>
<th>1928-06-21</th>
<th>Jugoslavien – den befästade tukthusstaten</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928-08-23</td>
<td>Vad Stefan Raditsj betydde för sitt folk.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-01-08</td>
<td>Reaktionens maktombyte i Jugoslavien</td>
<td>pp. 7</td>
<td></td>
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