

# MISTAKEN IDENTITIES: TABLOID AND BROADSHEET NEWS DISCOURSE

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## Abstract

The author discusses two important perspectives on “tabloidisation” and its supposed impact upon news discourses: the polarisation perspective attributes to the changes in news journalism a sharpening differentiation and polarisation between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, while according to the homogenising view, sensational journalism which once seemed to be confined to the lowbrow media, now spreads to all media. The article argues that tabloidisation debates often do not compare like with like, which results in mistaken conclusions. A case in point is fabulous reportage as a specific form of journalistic discourse that cannot be considered a trivial form of news discourse, but a discourse *sui generis*, a distinct genre. Consequently, it does not make sense to compare broadsheet news discourse with fabulous reportage in tabloid newspapers; a valid comparison is between tabloid news discourse with broadsheet news discourse. The article presents such a comparative content analysis of news discourses in five broadsheet and five tabloid newspapers in the UK. The analysis is focused on five features of the supposed homogenisation: the coverage of foreign news, the use of pictorial material, the “softening” of hard news, and changes in topical patterns. It shows that the “classical” news discourse has not been “tabloidised,” and this may also hold good for news discourse in tabloid newspapers.

## Introduction

In this essay I wish to discuss two important perspectives on “tabloidisation” and its supposed impact upon news discourses. I would like to suggest news discourse in tabloid newspapers is not what they have represented it to be, and not as different from news discourse in broadsheet papers as they have proposed. This does not mean, however, that as one of these perspectives asserts, news discourses in the broadsheets have been “tabloidised.” The misrepresentations have arisen, I think, because neither has compared like with like.

News discourse is, of course, not the only one to be found in British daily newspapers. There are several other orders of discourses in both tabloids and broadsheets, some of which I have referred to as fabulous reportage (Connell 1992). Fabulous reportage is not the debased and trivial form of news discourse that it has been made to seem. While it has some things in common with news discourse, it is not identical to it. Crucially it strikes me as having quite different communicative purposes, which for Swales, who has suggested that “the principal criterial feature that turns a collection of communicative events into a genre is some shared set of communicative purposes” (1990, 46), would be sufficient for it to qualify as a distinct genre. News discourse and fabulous reportage are distinct species or genres of journalistic writing.

Typically however it, rather than tabloid news discourse, has been compared with broadsheet news discourse, which is almost like comparing cartoon strips with essays on the globalisation of economic affairs, and regretting the former is not like the latter. The common assumption that fabulous reportage is a vulgar or degraded form of news discourse has, I would suggest, been the source of much confusion. Fabulous reportage does not pretend to be news discourse, and should not therefore be measured by the same criteria that we would wish to apply to news discourse. The main points about fabulous reportage that I shall attempt to develop and illustrate here are, first of all, that it is not just distinctive of broadsheet news discourse, but *also* of tabloid news discourse. Secondly, there is little evidence to suggest that it has transformed, still less contaminated, the popular tabloids’ news discourse, which remains much closer to broadsheet news discourse than is usually thought to be the case.

## Tabloidisation

Briefly stated, I understand the term “tabloidisation” to have been used to designate a series of processes that are transforming supposedly *rationalist* discourses into *sensationalist* discourses. There are, perhaps, several related processes involved, and they have not been just recently active. In the context of journalism, that which has been, at its best, a predominantly *reporting* discourse seems to have been steadily and progressively transformed into something akin to *narrative* discourse.<sup>1</sup> A species of report writing is becoming, or has largely already become, a species of story telling. It is now taken for granted, by both academics and many professionals, that news journalism generally consists of “stories” that exhibit “characters” and fairly conventional plot structures (Jacobs 1996).

It has been a long time since newspapers were vehicles for report writing alone, if indeed they ever were. Some are concerned, however, that as there appears to be a greater need for the navigational functions of “classical” journalism (Bardoel 1996), the conditions in which it is practised have become such that it is no longer equipped

to take on that responsibility. In both press and broadcasting, other, instrumental forms of journalism are in the ascendancy and threaten the capacity of “orienting” journalism whose functions are, ideally, to provide background, commentary, explanation, aggregation and civic correlation (Bardoel 1996; Blumler 1992). In newspapers, there is a growing amount of *procedural* writing (how-to-do-it writing, for example, articles on how to get the best from particular products or services or on how to improve this or that aspect of our lives). Allocutionary or *hortatory* forms of writing have escaped the confines of editors’ columns and in so doing have been transformed to become pep talk on our styles of living, what Eide (1997) refers to as “service journalism” or exhortation to support this or that “good” cause. But, so it seems, these genres do not merely co-exist with sober report writing. Not only are they eroding the space or airtime it occupies, they are also transforming it so that news journalism is progressively becoming a hybrid discourse — a combination of at least expository-explanatory and narrative forms with, perhaps, a dash of hortatory discourse. Residual forms of analytical and synthesising news journalism still exist (the BBC’s *Panorama*, for instance), but their marginal standing is reflected in the qualifiers “traditional” or “classical” that are used to describe them.

Related to the “narrativising” of news discourse is the “conversationalising” that has also apparently overhauled it. If it once mirrored and reproduced the impersonal and authoritative forms associated with the official discourses of government, law and public administration, it now seems to emulate popular oral idioms. “Use the language of everyday speech, not that of spokesmen, lawyers or bureaucrats,” commands *The Economist’s* style guide (1997, 5), even although it opens with reference to analysis. Using some version of “the language of everyday speech” may be, however, a more general development. Norman Fairclough, for instance, has proposed that “conversational discourse has been and is being projected from its primary domain, in the personal interactions of the private sphere, into the public sphere” (1992, 204). It has, he thinks, become a powerful model not just throughout printed news media and advertising, but also in the design of official documentation, encounters between professionals and their publics, and more generally in situations where the asymmetries of power and status are sharpest.

Moreover, while news discourse has long been regarded as one that has focused on the doings of significant individuals whose “newsworthiness” was granted by their public offices, it seems in more recent times to have become more thoroughly “personalised.” In other words, it not only features individuals, it is now also grounded in “personal” experience, upon which it draws to make sense of (rather than to explain) what it can observe of the world. Again, it is not just that there are now many columns in which first person narrators recount their feelings and frustrations about the ups and downs of their everyday chores. It is moreover that conventions of personalised narrative have begun to make inroads on news discourse, in which the reporting voice has been impersonal and often anonymous, even if its forms of appearance there are still somewhat muted. Authorial views may there not yet be marked by the use of such phrases as “What I think / feel about this is...” but instead by the use of “intensifying lexis” (White 1997) or “attitudinally loaded lexical items” (Eggins and Martin 1997).

## Breaking Out or Growing Apart

The two perspectives upon which I wish to comment do not necessarily reproduce all of these attributes in their accounts of tabloidisation. Both would probably accept, however, that its hallmarks include sensationalism and a linguistic, as well as an ideational populism. Fundamentally, both use “tabloid” journalism as a shorthand means to represent processes that are not only distinctive of, but also undermine the rationalist and enlightening potential that has long been so frustratingly attributed to news discourse. Both, for different reasons, assume that where these processes have been accomplished, the outcome is a “sensationalist” discourse. Both also assume that its bearers (producers and consumers for whom the tabloidised genre has become their salient model of reading, writing and viewing), are prevented from becoming aware of themselves as anything other than driven by their elemental emotions, or as tossed hither and thither by indifferent and fateful forces (Curran and Sparks 1991).

What mainly interests me, however, is their radically different perceptions of the direction in which news journalism appears to have been headed over the course of the last couple of decades. One attributes to the changes a sharpening differentiation and *polarisation*, and the other a growing *homogeneity*. In the latter, sensational, populist journalism, which once seemed to be largely confined to the papers and magazines read and the programmes watched mainly by working class consumers, now appears to have a wider reach.<sup>2</sup> It has spread to and “contaminates” all news media, those broadcast as well as those published creating as it has done so a new genre sometimes referred to as “infotainment.” The other perspective accepts that the news business has become evermore fiercely competitive, but suggests there has been simultaneously a fragmentation of the markets for news. This may have resulted in tabloid newspapers becoming more intensely or outrageously sensational and populist, but it has *not* led to a generalisation of their practices across the entire field of newspaper journalism. There has been instead a polarisation of news discourses. So, while there is some common ground between them, especially on their evaluation of the worthiness of tabloid journalism, the homogenising point of view (as represented below by Bob Franklin’s work) and the polarising one (as represented by Colin Sparks’ work) offer quite distinctive accounts of current developments.

### Homogeneity

Bob Franklin’s (1997) study of British news media strikes me as a good example of the homogenising view. Borrowing from Malcolm Muggeridge, he has referred to the major trends of tabloid journalism as “newszak,” that is news that has been converted into entertainment, and distinguishes it from “a campaigning and crusading traditional of popular journalism” which newszak has perverted. The main distinguishing features of this style journalism are its “insensitive conjoining of the sentimental and the sensational, the prurient and the populist” (1997, 3). References to “sensational human-interest stories,” “populist style,” “a prurient obsession for sexual detail” and “a schoolboy’s reliance on puns” occur throughout the book. Bob Franklin does not like “newszak,” and what concerns him is its seeming spread to broadsheet newspapers, giving rise to what he calls “broadloid” journalism.

He asserts that the news discourses of the broadsheet press and television have adopted “the tabloid agenda.” “Broadloid” journalism has much in common with

newszak, and is being moved closer to it, though there are still some distinctions between them. Broadsheet front pages now mimic those of the tabloids with similar banner headlines, “alliterative and “punny” headlines, large print, less text, shorter words, bigger pictures, colour pictures and more of them” (Franklin 1997, 7). It is the changes that have been made to broadsheet contents, however, which most exercises Franklin’s critical concern.

In his view of developments, there has been a general retreat from investigative journalism and the reporting of hard news stories, together with a wholesale change in editorial priorities. In British broadsheet, or “national morning quality,” papers (the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Times*, *Independent* and *The Times*), there is now less news, especially foreign news, parliamentary news and investigative stories about foreign and parliamentary matters. As to the retreat from international news, he agrees with Anthony Sampson that the wider world now appears to be disappearing from sight in the British press. Worse than this Franklin would have us accept that what foreign news remains is only that which can be given a human-interest spin and can be pictorially enhanced. Pictures of the suffering — starving and dying children, limitless victims of landmines, an endless trail of “helpless refugees” — are said to “litter the pages of newspapers.” Furthermore, broadsheets now allocate a high priority to stories that would have previously been dismissed and disdained as “merely” tabloid stories and are including many editorial features that previously were the exclusive preserve of the tabloids. So, they publish their own versions of the tabloid “problem page,” and Franklin cites the Private Lives column in *The Guardian* as an example. The vacuum created by the apparent retreat from “serious,” investigative journalism has not, in Franklin’s view, been wholly filled with exactly the preferred contents of British tabloid papers, but also by the opinions of “generalists, would-be renaissance figures, and members of the popular literati who routinely appear as guests on late-night chat shows and arts programmes.” In this account, then, broadsheet papers have adopted “the tabloid agenda,” which Franklin depicts as a wholesale move “downmarket” to the gutter, but they appear to have made it their own in some respects.

### Polarisation

Colin Sparks points us in a different direction. Like Raymond Williams, he has proposed that the British press has been polarising “between the quality and the popular, at the expense of those middle papers which we might term the ‘serious popular’” (1992, 37). One has to wonder a little about the accuracy of this, given that Williams had observed a “marked tendency, since the war, to split up general material into particular interests and tastes, rather than covering a general field in a single magazine or service” (1962, 88), and suggested a growing divide between “quality” papers and “popular” papers together with the steady disappearance of “middle” papers. When will those “middle” papers disappear? It may be, as Colin Sparks himself has suggested, the process has a much longer history than is usually thought. Anyway, those “middle” papers have not disappeared, however, nor has there been a steadily progressive decline in their circulation.

That aside Colin Sparks has drawn attention to a further distinction not so evident at the time Williams had been writing. He has likened publications such as the *Financial Times*, and *Wall Street Journal*, which produce international editions, to the major US news magazines and the British based *Economist* (1988, 218-219) and has suggested

that they have formed a distinctive internationalised press. This press operates with “a more global sense of news,” and appears to serve a supranational, cosmopolitan readership, one that has been formed with the apparent “globalisation” of economic activities. In this account, if tabloidisation were to be regarded as a progressive process it would be only in respect of popular publications and programmes as they attempt to outstrip one another in the necessarily perpetual process of maintaining market positions. It is precisely the consequences of this, and what it seems to entail for our sense of each other and our social relations, which have been among his main concerns.

In Colin Sparks’ account the agenda of tabloid journalism remains essentially as it was when Williams was writing about it, that is, filled with crime, sex, sport, personalities, entertainment and pictures (Williams 1962, 90). If tabloid papers have not by now banished political-economic content, they have been steadily marginalising it. He and James Curran argue (1991) that the British tabloids’ concentration on human-interest material and entertainment is “almost” exclusive and has robbed readers of the choice of reading news about political, social and economic affairs — “news in the traditional sense of the word.” They have judged it to be a press, effectively devoid of political-economic information, and therefore a press that dissolves hierarchy and class.

Polarisation between tabloids and broadsheets does not mean that they have split apart. There is talk of a “press spectrum,” which carries with it the notion that a common thread connects the ends of the spectrum. It implies the existence of a formal and perhaps also ideological unity that holds the spectrum together. So, tabloid and broadsheet news discourses might be species of the same genus. If they have been growing apart, there still remain sufficient fundamental similarities between tabloid and broadsheet news discourses to allocate them to the same set, or to see them as points on the *same* spectrum.

Because of this, there is a further position worthy of note. Anthony Smith suggested, some time ago, that modern circulation management has had both a polarising *and* a homogenising effect. He accepts “the solidification of the dichotomy between “quality” and the “popular” in journalism” but sees it as coupled with “competition taking place mainly, though by no means entirely, between newspapers within one group rather than between the two” (Smith 1978, 203). For competitive reasons, newspapers have “devised forms and political positions which would help them each make inroads into the readerships of other papers” (Smith 1978, 202), whilst at the same time differentiating themselves from those papers whose readerships are out of reach. In short, in this cultural sphere as in others, commercial competition would seem to have driven near competitors to adopt very similar if not the same formal strategies. This, however, would place tabloid and broadsheet news discourse in different camps, and for reasons I shall come to I don’t think this is right.

### Making Sense or Explaining

A further difference between the two perspectives is the extent to which tabloidised news is perceived to offer explanation or simply settle for making sense.

Abstractly and ideally news discourse ought to be an expository — explanatory one, hence the widespread reference to news “reports.” It should describe how things appear to be, and should moreover attempt to explain them with reference to the social forces and historically inherited structures that organise social affairs. This “rationalist” view of journalism does, of course, accept that all our social doings are

ultimately explicable, however difficult and complex that may be to do. It holds that there is an underlying unity to our bitty, fragmented lives, and that it is indeed possible to reconstruct that unity in all its complexity. Not much current journalism apparently does so, however, even in the broadsheets, which at best and only “at the surface level provide a fragmented picture of the world in which coherence and totality is the work of the reader” (Sparks 1992, 39).

Tabloidised news is considered to be the furthest removed from it. It is widely assumed that “measured judgement has succumbed to sensationalism” (Franklin). Graham Murdock (1992) thinks this can be attributed to advertisers’ need for mass sales, which he claims has “deformed public debate by pulling the popular press towards sensationalism.” The British popular press was, however, probably already well down this road before feeling the full impact of commercial forces, but had gone down it for political and ideological reasons.<sup>3</sup> The sensational can be so pervasive that tabloidised news is judged to be anti-rationalist. It can, at times, pronounce a situation beyond all explanation, and deride any attempts by others at explanation. It has clearly been more than tempting to think that tabloid writing does not offer explanation at all, but instead habitually evokes emotional response. So, for example, the purpose of international news that focuses on those suffering the effects disasters or conflicts is, according to Franklin, “less to inform than to elicit sympathy — a collective ‘Oh how dreadful’ — from the readership” (1997, 8), which is, of course, in his account a matter of concern.

Colin Sparks, however, accepts that tabloid journalism does engage in explanation, but is critical of the nature of the explanation he thinks it customarily offers. The tabloids’ preferred choice of entertainment and sport, and of the wayward doings of personalities rather than institutions not only betrays a form of attention that is “massively and systematically ‘depoliticised’” (Sparks 1988), but also one that is entrenched in experience. It does not, and quite possibly cannot, go beyond immediate experience. So, when explanation is attempted it is only in terms of the personal, or of a “sense” of things that is frequently projected as common, as that which “we all already knew.” In the face of reported situations that appear to defeat understanding, they are resolved if not explained by invoking “the arbitrary and anarchic unpredictability of chance” (Curran and Sparks 1991, 230). So, Colin Sparks, concludes that a “popular conception of the personal becomes the explanatory framework within which the social order is presented as transparent” (Sparks 1992, 39).

## Just What Differences Are There?

I am not convinced. Popular tabloids have not evacuated news discourse whose topics are political-economic in the narrower sense employed by Colin Sparks, and the forms of attention it brings to them are normally quite similar to that brought by the broadsheets. In both, there is still a considerable volume of news that has all the hallmarks of traditional or “classical” news discourse. For reasons I shall go into in a moment, it seems to me also that there is still a considerable amount of international news in British broadsheets *and* British tabloids, and that international news is not as Franklin has described it. Let me turn first to the matter of international news.

**International News.** On the evidence of a recent study of international news in the British and Polish presses (Connell et al. 1996) it would seem that Franklin exaggerates the retreat from the coverage of foreign news, and misrepresents the

character of what remains. The study was not an historical one, thus it is not possible on the basis of its results to say that there is now more or less international news than there was a decade or so ago. Nevertheless, there was a substantial amount of foreign news in the British press. The study recorded 10,877 items of international items<sup>4</sup> during the period of the survey.<sup>5</sup> The British publications contributed the majority of items (51.8 per cent). The data collected does allow conclusions to be drawn about the character of news discourse.

*The Financial Times*, was by far the most internationally oriented British publication. International items in it accounted for 13 per cent of the whole sample, and for one quarter (25 per cent) of the British total (n = 5,639), which was five times greater than the mean share (5 per cent). The mean share of international items for each set of publications was the same (5.0 per cent), but there was a notable difference in the standard deviations, 6.1 per cent in the British case, and 2.8 per cent for the Polish publications. This indicates the degree to which international items were less evenly distributed across the British publications than across the Polish ones, and something of the degree to which the majority were concentrated in just two British publications, *The Financial Times* and the *Economist*. Together they contributed 36.4% of the international items.

This would lend support to Colin Sparks' case that these two could be regarded as examples of an international, cosmopolitan press, were it not that the British tabloids would have to be similarly regarded given the degree to which their items featured topics from cosmopolitan popular culture. The British tabloids were not devoid of international news, although there was considerably less of it — *The Sun* (2.4% of the British total), *Daily Mirror* (2.1%) and *Daily Star* (3.0%). The majority of the items they carried featured cultural and human-interest topics, rather than political-economic ones.

**Illustration.** It has been proposed that there is a now greater use of pictorial material by broadsheet newspapers, and consequently fewer words. Some might be tempted to suggest that this mirrors a shift in the relative salience of semiotic modalities from verbal to visual semiosis. It may be so. The international items published during the survey period did not, however, seem to mirror this trend, and did not rely on accompanying pictorial or other illustrative material to the extent implied by Franklin. Indeed, the majority of the international items (60.8%) in the British press were *not* illustrated.

While the absence of illustration was a feature of both broadsheets and tabloids, considerably more broadsheet items were published without illustration. With the exception of the *Independent*, the proportion of items illustrated in the other broadsheets was a good deal smaller than the proportion for the sample as a whole. The least illustrated of all were those in *The Financial Times*, nearly three quarters of which (74.8%) appeared without illustration.

Table 1: Illustration in Broadsheet Items

	Total	<i>Financial Times</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Times</i>
N=100%	5639	1411	543	530	586	540
Illustrated	38.9	25.2	42.4	30.9	29.2	37.4
Not illustrated	60.8	74.8	57.6	69.1	70.8	62.6



Even in the *Independent*, the broadsheet that pioneered a greater use of pictorial material, the majority of international items were not illustrated.

Table 2: Illustration in Tabloid Items

	Total	Mid-market dailies		Popular Dailies		
		<i>Daily Express</i>	<i>Daily Mail</i>	<i>Daily Star</i>	<i>Daily Mirror</i>	<i>The Sun</i>
N=100%	5639	209	211	169	118	134
Illustrated	38.9	63.2	53.1	44.4	42.4	45.5
Not illustrated	60.8	36.8	46.9	55.6	57.6	54.5

Interestingly, *The Economist*, arguably the most analytical of the British publications, was the one in which items were most likely to be illustrated. Just over 60 per cent of its international items were illustrated, normally with charts and diagrams, however, rather than with pictorial material.

In the popular tabloids too the majority of items were without illustration, although the differences between those illustrated and those not were generally smaller than with the broadsheets. The only daily papers in which the proportion of illustrated items exceeded those not illustrated were the two mid market dailies, the *Express* and the *Daily Mail*.

**Tabloidising “Hard News.”** Another feature of the homogenising case is that there has been a “softening” of hard news stories. As we have seen, Franklin argues of the remaining international news that it prefers a human-interest angle. What evidence is there for this proposition?

The comparative study on which I am drawing collected data for topic. Coders classified stories with reference to a list of specified topical categories that included “human-interest” (see below). An item would be classified as articulating a human-interest topic when it focused on everyday life, lived experiences or human costs. Not surprisingly, coders found it difficult to specify just one topic as the main one of the stories they were reading. They were allowed, therefore, to nominate up to three candidates as main topics, and so it is possible to say whether a given story combined a political topic, with an economic one, and perhaps also a human-interest topic. As it turns out, however, this is an unlikely combination.

Overall the results indicated that “politics” (defined narrowly to include references to actions of governments and political parties) was the most frequently occurring “main topic” in the UK press. There were differences, however, between the daily broadsheets and the daily tabloids. In seven of the British publications, all the daily broadsheets except *The Financial Times* and the political weeklies, politics was the most frequently occurring topic of international news, by a considerable margin. In the *Financial Times*, perhaps not surprisingly, economic topics (industry and agriculture) were the most frequent, followed by those on business.

In the popular and the mid-market tabloids politics was displaced as the most frequently mentioned topic by human-interest topics. Political-economic topics were clearly rarer in the popular tabloids than in the mid-market dailies, but they did still occur. They occurred less often than cultural topics (usually, stories focusing on events which had befallen “personalities” in one of the branches of the international

**Table 3: Main Topics in British International Items**

MAIN TOPIC	All UK Publications	
	%	Rank
Politics	33.9	1
Business	22.7	2
Human Interest	15.2	3
Finance	13.8	4
Social Issues	9.7	5
Other <sup>6</sup>	9.6	6
Industry/Agriculture	9.2	7
Culture	6.5	8
Science & technology	2.6	9
Religion	2.3	10
Mean	12.55	
Standard Deviation	9.64	

entertainment industry) and miscellaneous other topics. Concentration on human-interest material and “personality” news (subsumed within the cultural category) seems to be still largely a feature of the British tabloid press. Human-interest topics did feature quite prominently in two of the British daily broadsheets, *The Times* (15.2 per cent of its items), and *The Independent* (14.2 per cent, where in terms of frequency they ranked second after politics).

**Table 4: Main Topics in Broadsheet Items**

MAIN TOPICS	Total	<i>Financial Times</i>		<i>Independent</i>		<i>Daily Telegraph</i>		<i>Guardian</i>		<i>Times</i>	
N=100%	5639	1411		543		530		586		540	
		%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Politics	33.9	26.7	[3]	43.3	[1]	38.5	[1]	45.9	[1]	42	[1]
Business	9.2	14.1	[4]	6.8	[7]	6.2	[7]	8.9	[6]	5	[8]
Finance	13.8	31.8	[2]	11.8	[4]	9.4	[6]	3.9	[8]	7	[6]
Economy	22.7	50.7	[1]	11.6	[5]	17.2	[2]	14.3	[3]	14.1	[3]
Social issues	9.7	4.3	[6]	10.7	[6]	10.9	[5]	15.2	[2]	12.2	[4]
Religion	2.3	0.1	[10]	0.9	[10]	1.1	[10]	0.2	[10]	0.7	[10]
Culture	6.5	1.9	[8]	5.5	[8]	3.8	[9]	6.5	[7]	6.1	[7]

**Table 5: Main Topics in Tabloid Items**

MAIN TOPICS	Total	Mid-market Dailies				Popular dailies					
		<i>Daily Express</i>		<i>Daily Mail</i>		<i>Daily Star</i>		<i>Daily Mirror</i>		<i>The Sun</i>	
N=100%	5639	209		211		169		118		134	
		%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Politics	33.9	26.3	[2]	23.2	[2]	5.9	[5]	11.9	[3]	13.4	[4]
Business	9.2	5.3	[7]	2.4	[8]	2.4	[7]	1.7	[7]	2.2	[8]
Finance	13.8	4.3	[8]	8.1	[6]	1.2	[9]	2.5	[6]	5.2	[7]
Economy	22.7	7.2	[5]	15.2	[3]	5.3	[6]	5.1	[5]	8.2	[5]
Social issues	9.7	6.7	[6]	10.4	[4]	7.1	[4]	10.2	[4]	7.5	[6]
Religion	2.3	0.0	[10]	0.9	[9]	0.0	[10]	1.7	[7]	0.0	[10]
Culture	6.5	12.0	[4]	9.5	[5]	19.5	[2]	19.5	[2]	17.9	[2]
Scitech	2.6	2.9	[9]	2.8	[7]	1.8	[8]	0.8	[8]	1.5	[9]
Human	15.2	34.9	[1]	38.9	[1]	56.2	[1]	40.7	[1]	38.8	[1]
Other	9.6	14.8	[3]	15.2	[3]	11.2	[3]	19.5	[2]	14.2	[3]

**Topical Patterns.** Broadsheets plainly covered “traditional” contents, but did they give them a tabloid spin? Is there evidence of a combination of human-interest topics and political ones, as has been suggested? Well, there is some evidence, but it does not appear to be present in the tabloids.

Across the tabloids the topical categories normally associated with “hard news” — politics, business, financial, and industrial / agricultural topics — appear to be kept quite *separate* from human-interest and cultural topics. Calculating the degree to which selection of hard news topical categories varied with the selection of human-interest and cultural topics produced quite high, negative values. So for instance, the correlation coefficient for human-interest and political topics was -0.81, for human-interest and financial topics it was -0.64, and for human-interest and business topics it was -0.40. Human-interest topics were more likely to be selected with cultural topics (cosmopolitan entertainment, fashion and sport) than with any other. If tabloid news discourse presented other topics along with a political topic these would most likely be drawn from *within* the familiar hard news set of topics.<sup>7</sup>

Another indicator of the detachment of political-economic affairs in the tabloids is the relative absence of reference to “ordinary people” in political items. Only just over 9 per cent of references to ordinary people occurred in tabloid political items. The distribution of ordinary people between political and other items in the broadsheets was more even: 37 per cent occurred with political topics, 67 per cent with one of the other topics. Tabloid “political” items largely featured prime ministers, presidents and members of parliament.

The British broadsheets have a different topical pattern, however. There, too, hard news topics accompany other hard news topics, but only in respect of economic topics in the broadest sense (business, financial and industrial/agricultural topics). Political topics were, however, *negatively* correlated with these economic topics.<sup>8</sup> In the broadsheets, so far as international news is concerned, there would seem to be a quite marked *separation* of the political and the economic, something not found in the tabloids. Political topics were, however, very positively correlated with social issue topics (0.95), with cultural topics (0.96) and to a slightly lesser extent with human-interest topics (0.88). While this looks like a pattern one would predict from the proposition that hard news in broadsheets has been “softened” by tabloidisation, it is *not* a pattern to be found in the British tabloids, and it is difficult to imagine, therefore, that it has been derived from.

## News Discourse and Fabulous Reportage

*Tennis ace Steffi Graf is turning to voodoo to help her cope after the jailing of her manager dad for tax offences.*

*American soul trio TLC’s former singer, Crystal, who left the group before they hit the big time is now a stripper in her home town of Atlanta.*

*Supermodel Cindy Crawford ordered a props man on the set of her first movie to write out 100 times “I must not call Cindy fat” after he teased her about her weight.*

*The Stinky Feet Society of America now claims to have acquired 3,000 members — but nearly all of them have been nominated by long-suffering partners.*

These are opening paragraphs, elements from the nuclei<sup>9</sup> of some the items recorded during the international study to which I have been referring. Nuclei (headlines and opening sentences or paragraphs) establish core ideational and interpersonal meanings. Their satellites, subsequent paragraphs, do not usually introduce new meanings but qualify, elaborate, explain and appraise those already presented in the opening nuclei.<sup>10</sup> The core meanings those above establish are just what those worried about tabloidisation would expect. These examples of fabulous reportage are not the only kinds of items in the tabloids. Others look more like conventional, tabloid news discourse. For example:

*Terrorist chiefs are ready to back the Ulster peace plan by handing in some of their weapons.*

*John Major yesterday shook the United Nations 50th birthday party with a devastating attack on waste and corruption in the organisation.*

*Tony Blair laid claim to the political centre ground last night by promising to give people the chance to grow wealthy.*

On the face of it they seem pretty similar to tabloids' fabulous reportage. The register tends toward the colloquial (Fowler 1991). Individuals or groups (Supermodel Cindy Crawford, Terrorist chiefs, Tony Blair), not issues or forces, are in focal positions. Furthermore, they are event oriented rather than issue oriented in as much as they aver what has happened, states of being, and so on rather than establish issues or problems, as might be expected of broadsheet news discourse. There are, however, important differences.

In writing about social actors, there are two fundamental choices that can be made, but a wide variety of ways realising them. Social actors can become textual participants either as Agents — those capable of purposeful and/or effective action — or as Patients — those to whom things happen, often but not always as consequence of what others have done or said. In fabulous reportage, although actors are placed in the focal position, which would encourage expectations that what is to follow will predicate something about them, they are usually patients (affected participants) rather than agents.

*POP superstar Gloria Estefan's son has been expelled from his £10,000-a-year school for allegedly making crank calls to classmates' parents.*

*DISTRAUGHT actor George C. Scott has quit a Broadway show after being sued for sexual harassment by his personal assistant.*

Gloria Estefan's son although grammatical subject is the affected participant. An action has befallen him. He has been expelled, though the agent of this act is not revealed. George C. Scott is an agent, whose quitting will undoubtedly have had an impact on the Broadway show. The following clause indicates that another has occasioned his action. It is a consequence of the legal action being brought by his personal assistant. In the nuclei of news items, however, political actors, like John Major and Tony Blair in the examples above, are *not* represented as patients, nor are their actions conditioned by the actions of others, at least not in the nuclei.

Although the focus management of these items gives prominence to the actors, only the fabulous items are about the actors and the fates that have caused them to act. In tabloid news discourse the agents' actions affect, or have the potential to affect

others. The action is not oriented to or on them, as it often is with the participants in fabulous reportage, and subsequent elaboration refers to the actions, their consequences or responses to them.

A further difference occurs with the action itself. In tabloid news discourse agents are more likely to be “sayers,” that is to be involved in some kind of speech act. When they are, however, there is tendency to transform the speech verbs into material action. So, Tony Blair did not claim, but *laid claim* to the centre ground, and John Major did not “attack” the UN, but *shook* it with a devastating attack. Speech act verbs are frequently nominalised and occur after a material action. The “personalities” of fabulous reportage are considerably less likely to be involved in speech acts. In the examples so far only one is namely, *Supermodel Cindy Crawford* who *ordered* a prop’s man to write out lines. Instead, material action, processes and states of being are much more likely in the nuclei of fabulous reportage.

There are discernible rhetorical patterns to the way each type of item introduces the actors. Van Leeuwen (1996) has proposed that “social actors can be represented either in terms of their unique identity, by being nominated, or in terms of identities and functions they share with others (*categorised*)” (1996, 52). The evidence suggests that social actors who hold senior public office, and who are represented as agents, are usually nominated *and* categorised in the course of being introduced and when having quotes attributed to them. It is noteworthy, therefore, that both John Major and Tony Blair are (familarly) represented without categorisation. Only a handful of political figures are introduced in this way, usually Prime Ministers in domestic news and Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin in international news. So, the default form of introduction includes nomination and categorisation. For the majority of political actors, variation occurs only in the ordering of the attribution. In some contexts the nomination can occur initially, while in others the categorisation does.

There are certainly differences between the ways in which actors are introduced in tabloid news discourse and in its fabulous reportage. It is not the case, however, that the latter makes use of only “personalised” introductions. Again introductions normally employ both a nominal *and* a categorical element, but the latter usually proceeds the former. The categorical element is also more elaborately constructed, and rarely includes only an “occupational” element, as in the introductions of political and business actors. In fabulous reportage the occupational element is a field of activity (Golf ace Nick Faldo, HOLLYWOOD honey Michelle Pfeiffer) or a programme or film (Baywatch dream girl Gena Lee Nolin) with which the named individual is associated. The chain of belonging set up here reverses those in the broadsheet press moving as they do from the general to the particular, rather than the other way round (as in Magnetti Marelli, a unit of Fiat of Italy). They can also include references to “personal” physical attributes such as outstanding appearance (Busty Elizabeth Berkley, Screen pin-up Keanu Reeves, Gladiator’s beauty Ulrika Jonsson ... the 28 year old Swedish stunner). Unlike news discourse (broadsheet or tabloid), they very rarely contain a “national” element (Paraguay’s President Juan Carlos Wasmoy, Danone, the French food giant). Fabulous reportage is not a “nationalising” discourse.<sup>11</sup> Finally the categorical element establishes their exceptional standing, their extra-ordinariness. These are not just models or even stars, but *supermodels* and *superstars*. Few of them are at all like us. What the item on George C. Scott’s actions also illustrate is that when fabulous reportage is concerned with misfortune an emotional condition can also be included in the categorical element.

On the matter of explanation, the two types are quite similar. But the first point to note is that in both cases we are dealing with expository *and* explanatory discourse. The majority of the nuclei do not merely assert that some action has been taken or that some state exists, they usually also say why or how, either by means of adverbial clauses or phrases or by using deictic terms as logical rather than temporal markers. Cindy Crawford's order was issued *after* the prop's man teased her, implying that she ordered him to do the lines *because* he had teased her. The use of "after" establishes a temporal and a logical (cause-and-effect) sequence. How did John Major "shake" the UN's birthday party? He did so "*with a devastating attack on waste and corruption in the organisation.*" And, Tony Blair effected his claim *by promising to give people the chance to grow wealthy.* In both types, explanation of the initially asserted outcomes in the nuclei does not amount to "reflection on the social and political structure" (Sparks 1992, 41), nor is there usually anything to suggest that subsequent elaboration of the explanation will go that far. These are altogether more immediate, *circumstantial* explanations, but not because they are dealing with "trivial" affairs.

They are perhaps so because they not only function as explanations of the initially averred action, but also as *justifications* for the averring. Most of us have no means of knowing what Tony Blair did "last night," except by way of what he is asserted to have done by such reports. The reference to what he has promised in the above example is also an assertion, but the use of "by" makes the initial assertion about claiming the middle ground seem felicitously objective — if we make a number of other assumptions about the nature of British political cultures. Perhaps, then, the containment of ideational explanation is over determined by the construction of textual meaning. In other words the need to appear "truthful" or "objective" takes priority over explanation.

## News Discourse in the Tabloids and Broadsheets

If there is, then a case for considering fabulous reportage as distinct from tabloid news discourse, how does the latter relate to broadsheet news discourse? Are they too distinctive of one another? There are differences, but they do not seem fundamental ones.

Earlier this year, the British press reported statements by the Home Secretary about arrangements for Freemasons in the criminal justice system to register their membership. A Home Office press release on the statements was circulated on 17 February 1998, and the stories developed from it appeared on the following morning. For this exercise I have selected for analysis just the nuclei of the coverage from the daily broadsheets and from the arch tabloid, *The Sun*.

The *Sun*'s reporting coverage was shortest of all, but in fact presented it twice. It first appeared on the top left-hand corner of page four, and at the end of it, readers were directed to page six to find "20 reasons why you don't want to be a mason," and to the paper's editorial column. Page six was a full-page spread of several elements. An introductory piece reproduced some of what had been written on page four. There was a column of passport sized portraits of prominent Masons (Prince Phillip, Bob Monkhouse, Oscar Wilde, Buzz Aldrin, and the Duke of Kent), and at the bottom of the page an invitation to readers to call in to say what they thought of the proposed register. The overall coverage by the *Sun* was therefore more extensive. It also included an interactive element absent from the broadsheets.

The following are the nuclei, the headlines and opening paragraphs, each paper published:

<i>Home Office Release</i>	Police and Judiciary to have a list of Freemasons — says Straw New recruits to the police, probation and prison services, as well as magistrates, judges and crown prosecutors will be required to register their membership of the Freemasons, announced Home Secretary, Jack Straw today. (341 words in total)
<i>FT</i>	Masons urged to reveal judiciary members Freemasons in England and Wales were yesterday challenged by the government to cast aside their traditional secrecy and release the names of members working in the criminal justice system. (332)
<i>Guardian</i>	Straw tells secret society to name members working in criminal justice system or face legal moves. Freemasons get ultimatum The Freemasons are to be challenged by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to hand over the names of members who are judges, magistrates or police officers or face legal moves to make registration compulsory. (552)
<i>Independent</i>	Masons escape forced exposure New recruits to the police, magistrates, prison and the Crown Prosecution Service will have to declare whether they are Freemasons in future, but most workers in the criminal justice system, particularly judges, are expected to escape compulsory registration. (590)
<i>Sun</i>	Straw to make Masons own up Judges, police and magistrates will be forced to reveal if they are freemasons under plans by Home Secretary Jack Straw. (162)
<i>Telegraph</i>	Judges must declare masonic link Judges, magistrates and police officers will in future have to declare whether they are freemasons, Jack Straw announced yesterday. (560)
<i>Times</i>	Straw to publish list of Masons joining police and judiciary New recruits to the judiciary and police service will have to disclose their Freemasonry membership for the first time under government plans to end secrecy surrounding Masonic influence. (904)

The first thing to note is that the core meanings established by the *Sun's* nucleus are not out of line with those established by most of the other broadsheet nuclei. Much the same participants are involved (see Table 6), the represented relations between them are much the same, as are the ideational meanings. There is, moreover, a high incidence of common “once-only” lexical items, which, as Johnson (1997) has proposed is strong evidence that particular texts are of a set. Just over 40% of the *Sun's* once-only vocabulary in its report is also found in at least one of the broadsheets. There are some differences, which are mainly to do with the reporting actions of the writing, but its report is indeed in the same ideational ballpark as the broadsheets’ reports.

The headline component of the *Sun's* nucleus is similar to those of the *Times* and the *Guardian* in both composition and meaning, inasmuch as *Straw* is identified as the agent of the action in each. It differs in being more explicit about the participants who will be affected by his materialised obligation. Its selection of *to make*, rather than to compel or oblige, is only partly done to appear more colloquial, for it also carries associations of doing. It is also more explicit in proposing that the affected participants, the *Masons*, have something to *own up* to. The headlines in the *FT* and *Telegraph* are, perhaps, more coy on this matter with their use of the verbs *reveal* and *declare*.

The clarity of the *Sun's* headline contrasts with the ambiguity of the HO release’s — Police and Judiciary to have a list of Freemasons — says Straw. By using the infinitive form, *to have*, the headline puts the matter beyond any doubt. Want it or not, they *will* have the list. If there is any measure of uncertainty it is about when they will. The *Sun's* headline is in this respect similarly ambiguous. There is further ambiguity in the

HO headline, however, one which the *Sun's* does resolve. The use of *to have* could be read to propose that a list of Freemasons be *given to* or *turned over* to the police and judiciary. Assuming we are not already familiar with the context, this seems a perfectly plausible reading, more likely perhaps than that members of the police and judiciary who are masons are to appear on a list. It seems so largely because of accumulated assumptions about the roles of the police, one of which is to receive information about groups under some kind of suspicion. If this reading were made, it would cast the Freemasons in a suspicious light, although not the police and judiciary who would be the recipients of the list.

Table 6: Participants

Actors	Home Office	Financial Times	Guardian	Independent	Sun	Telegraph	Times
New recruits	X			X			X
Police service/ Officers	X		X	X	X	X	X
Probation service	X						
Prison service	X			X			
Magistrates	X		X	X	X	X	
Judges/Judiciary	X		X	X	X	X	X
Crown prosecutors	X			X			
Home Secretary	X		X		X		
Jack Straw	X		X		X	X	
Government		X					
Freemasons		X	X	X	X		
Members in CJS		X					
Workers in CJS				X			

Though it resolves this potential ambiguity, the *Sun's* headline may not be accurate, not if the *Independent's* is accurate. If a headline stands out, it is the *Independent's*, that promises the elaboration of just how *Masons escape forced exposure*. While the other items refer to this theme in their satellite paragraphs no other paper elevated it to its nucleus. This headline raises questions about the accuracy of other nuclei, because its proposition is contrary to the core propositions made by them. It was formed from information in the release that the Home Secretary "will write formally to the Grand Lodge requesting their members who are already working in these professions to join a voluntary register." Only in the third paragraph of its report does it observe that "a compulsory system for all will come in if large numbers fail to own up." The *Sun* was not alone, however, in transforming a "request" to join a "voluntary register" into an obligation to do so.

The *Sun's* headline proposition becomes in the opening sentence that categories of legal employees *will be forced to reveal* whether or not they are Freemasons. This is close to those of the *Telegraph*, the *Times*, and the first part of the *Independent's*, wherein the same or similar categories of legal employee *will have to declare/disclose* whether they are Freemasons. The use of verbal groups that include the modal auxiliaries *will*, *be* and *have* with the *to-form* indicate that they are under some, as yet unspecified, obligation to undertake these actions. Indeed, Sinclair (1972) suggests that the *to be + to-form* carries the meaning of a very strict order. This would imply that the obligation couldn't be taken lightly. The *Independent's* nucleus also includes a challenge, however,



which is marked with the use of *but*. The challenge echoes the headline and makes of it an *expectation* that modifies the compulsion of the other papers' nuclei.

All of the press nuclei embed elements of the nucleus in the HO release, and the sense that legal employees will be obliged to register their membership of the Freemasons is derived from the statement in the HO release that they *will be required to register* their membership. At the same time, they transform it with their references to secrecy and with the use of verbs — *disclose, own up, reveal* — to imply deliberate attempts at secrecy. There is no explicit mention of this in the HO's nucleus, though there is in the immediately following paragraphs, which put the Home Secretary's remarks into context as a response to the Home Affairs Select Committee report, "Freemasonry in the Police and Judiciary." Satellite paragraphs asserted that the Home Secretary "agreed to the principal recommendation that membership to (*sic*) secret societies should be declarable" and that "Mr Straw said: 'Membership of secret societies such as freemasonry can raise suspicions of a lack of impartiality or objectivity. It is, therefore, important that the public knows the facts.'" This quote was reproduced by both the *Times* (paragraph 6) and the *Telegraph* (paragraph 4). The press, including the *Sun*, elevated the visibility of these references to secrecy, a theme that was not part of the release's nucleus, not part of its core information.

Apart from the transformation that occurs in the *Independent*, there are other similarly notable transformations in the *Guardian* and *The Financial Times*. They both elevated the theme of *challenge* to core information. Both nuclei open with passive clauses in which the patient (*Freemasons*) is given the syntactic position of subject, one normally associated with agents. The *Home Secretary, Jack Straw* in one and *the government* in the other are the agents, the doers of actions that will or have had an impact on the Freemasons (as in the *Sun's*). Given that professional abhors passive sentences and would certainly recommend strongly that they should not be employed in opening paragraphs (*The Economist* 1997; Keeble 1996), what are they doing here? What is the point of the passive transformation in these two examples?

The management of focus in these papers is similar to the *Sun's* in establishing Masons as affected participants and referents of the stories. Other papers introduce potential misreading by stating that *new recruits...will have to disclose their Freemasonry membership* (the *Times*), which implies *all* new recruits are Masons. The *Guardian*, *FT* and *Sun* avoid this potential misreading by clarifying that it is only those new recruits who are Masons that will have to register — even if they employed passives to do so.

One difference between them concerns the rhetorical management of reporting speech acts, a difference that suggests broadsheet news discourse is more issue oriented than tabloid news discourse.

One option open to writers when it comes to the "truthfulness" of averring is to transfer the averring role to another by quoting (Coulthard 1994, 4). Discourse representation (Fairclough 1992) or speech reporting can take one of three forms. Usually a distinction is drawn between direct ("But a ... spokeswoman said... 'It's going to close immediately.'") and indirect forms ("Mr X said the restructuring will result in the loss of 230 jobs..."). A third option — *embedded intertextuality* — occurs when attribution devices are deleted. Reporting and reported voices are distinguished to different degrees with the adoption of each, and with the third option, in the absence of access to the reported domains or to releases, there is no way of knowing what is the reporting and the reported voice.

Use of the direct and indirect forms enables the authorial voice to make comment upon the reported speech through the selection of speech reporting verbs. Caldas-Coulthard (1994, 1997) has usefully distinguished neutral from *meta-propositional* use of speech reporting verbs. Unmarked or neutral forms of speech reporting verbs include *said, told, asked, inquired, replied, and answered*. Commenting on the use of *said* from a professional point of view, Keeble has observed that it “is most commonly used to convey attribution. It is short, neutral and for these reasons is rapidly read over” (Keeble 1995, 81). While constant use would be, Keeble has advised that alternatives need to be used carefully because of the specific meanings they can engage. Caldas-Coulthard refers to the above verbs as neutral too, and does so because their use gives only the literal meaning (sense and reference in Austin’s terms) of the speech (1997, 92), and therefore, readers may concentrate on what is reported. They need not notice the nature of the speech situation when they are used. *Announced* is “meta-propositional” in that it glosses and inflects the speech (or observational) act. It draws attention to the nature of the speech situation and makes explicit the illocutionary force of the quote (1997, 92).

Tabloid news discourse does employ something of the repertoire that Caldas-Coulthard has isolated, but it does so more sparingly than broadsheet news. Textual analysis of nuclei in the international study mentioned above revealed extensive broadsheet use of such verbs, and noted that while assertive (*agreed, alleged, approved*) and directive verbs (*rejected, refused, ruled, warned*) were extensively used with political items, they did not occur with economic (business and finance) topics. On economic topics *announced* was, by a good margin, the most frequent. Apart from *said*, hardly any others were found for the tabloid press. This is, I think, largely for the reason that there is a tendency in tabloid news discourse to nominalise and materialise speech reporting. Where it would have *laid claim*, broadsheet news would have *claimed*. Where it would have *to make*, broadsheet discourse would have *to oblige* or *challenged*.

## Conclusions

Since I have presented a fairly limited amount of evidence I do not wish to make disproportionate claims by way of conclusion. What I hope to have done here, however, is provide enough of an evidenced argument to cause us to look again at some of the ways we have analytically represented news discourses, and at the ways in which we have accounted for recent development. On this last question I cannot see that so-called “classical” news discourse has been “tabloidised” to anything like the extent feared. Moreover, I would think it worth pursuing further just to what degree news discourse in tabloid outlets has been “tabloidised.” The growth of other types of journalism has probably broadened the range of options available, but has not necessarily transformed still less vulgarised classical news discourse.

Both broadsheet and tabloid versions of news discourse are explanatory. Neither settles for simply making sense. As I suggested, both versions are more concerned with circumstantial explanations. They most often work with dictionary and directory forms of knowledge – “descriptive categories (what is), their interrelations and integrations in the form of causal-analytical attributions” (Sackmann 1991, 35). Neither are strangers to causal-normative attributions – recipe knowledge on how things should work well, or to axiomatic knowledge, “ultimate,” “totalising” knowledge often delivered as nuggets of wisdom, especially in tabloid news discourse. It should not be

surprising that it is selective, contentious or problematic. Which explanation is not? But who reading this, who also read the *Sun's* report of the proposal to register Freemasons, took up its offer to let it know what they thought of the matter?

There are explanatory problems with classical news discourse, which do not stem, in my view, from its supposed populism, but rather from its ingrained pursuit of objectivity, which [a] has systemic preference over explanation and [b] binds it to an ideational mainstream that is in a state of flux. Because of [b], news discourse still lapses into "nationalism." It depicts international relations with realist assumptions about them that "the most important actors in world politics are territorially organised entities" (Keohane 1989, 38), that is nation states, which appear to behave as actors unified by rational intention. Fabulous reportage is less frequently a nationalising discourse. Its dependent relationship with entertainment means that it is often indifferent to national belonging, and that it more frequently occupies a cosmopolitan space than news discourse. Perhaps then we should also look again at the ways in which news discourse is being "internationalised."

## Notes:

1. Longacre (1983) distinguishes four types of prose discourse: narrative, expository, hortatory and procedural. The fundamental purpose of each is different and can be expressed in terms of performative verbs: narration employs recount in its notional structure, procedural discourse employs prescribe, expository explain, and hortatory discourse employs propose, suggest, urge or command (1983, 12).
2. It was probably Richard Hoggart who opened the way to viewing what is now termed tabloidisation as a more general phenomenon, with his suggestion that publications, which aimed to attract lower middle to middle class readers, were as trivial and as trivialising as those directed to working class readers were. Such publications were all the worse, in his view, because of the intellectual smugness, spiritual chauvinism and a cocktail-party polish which he detected in them (1957, 244-245).
3. Writing about this press, which he characterised as "the school in which the Chartist schoolmaster taught" (1974, 83), Harrison observed that radical publishers well knew by the 1830s that "news" and "all human life" were what sold newspapers, not just political sermonising. The adoption of such contents, had not been for commercial purposes, however. Hetherington plainly stated that his objective was "not to make money but to beat the government."
4. Those that involved action in countries other than Poland or the UK, or else actions in those countries, but by actors from locations other than Poland or the UK.
5. Between October 1995 and May 1996.
6. The prominence of the "other grouped" category merits comment. The proportions achieved by it are comparatively high, even in the British sample. The scores obtained by the "difficult to say" option for topic were just 0.8 per cent in the British case and 1.2 per cent in the Polish case, suggesting that the reason for the high scores was not topical ambiguity. Checking textually for those stories that were classified under "other" indicated that the majority was for topical categories not specified, for instance, war or crime topics.
7. The coefficients for politics and business, finance and economic (industrial / agricultural) topics were respectively 0.69, 0.71 and 0.59, that is quite high, positive values.
8. In each case, the correlation coefficients were strongly negative (politics and business, -0.76, politics and finance, -0.95, and politics and economic topics, -0.96).
9. I have taken "nucleus" and "satellite" from White (1997), whose model of the structure of hard news stories is an orbital one rather than the more usual sequential one.

10. Sub-components in White's model do not need to "link together to build a linear semantic pathway by which meaning is accumulated sequentially." Rather than building on what comes immediately before or preparing the way for what is to follow, each sub-component "reaches back to specify the headline / lead paragraph, which acts as the text's anchor point or textual centre of gravity. I think this is case only for some. Boundary segments, for instance, cannot be swapped around quite as freely as others, if at all. His model could therefore be improved by allowing for "bound" and "free" satellites.

11. This is another reason for looking again at the way in which Colin Sparks has distinguished an international press for it too has nationalising tendencies not present in fabulous reportage, which appears more cosmopolitan in its indifference to national belonging.

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