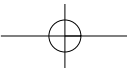
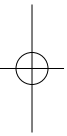


# Part 1



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# 1

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## THE HISTORICIZATION OF ALTERNATIVE JOURNALISM

Many historical accounts of journalism have been criticized for their preoccupation with great men or great technologies. Attention has been drawn to the ways in which such accounts unduly valorize individual exploits and validate the simplistic position that anyone determined (or great) enough to change the world can do so (Hardt, 1990; Hardt and Brennen, 1995). Many historical accounts of alternative journalism also suffer from the same pre-occupations, which has created great gaps in understanding (Hamilton and Atton, 2001). While narrowly focused biographies of individual publishers, writers, journalists, publications or organisations have yielded insights into specific episodes, the resulting patchwork collection of accounts prevents a broader understanding of the general media practices and necessary conditions upon which these individual cases rely.

Accordingly, this chapter provides an historical overview of the emergence of alternative journalism. However, instead of describing a series of specific people and separate projects, it emphasizes general practices and conditions. The key insight of this overview is that alternative journalism is not an unchanging, universal type of journalism, but is an ever-changing effort to respond critically to dominant conceptions of journalism. Accordingly, alternative journalism is best seen as a kind of activity instead of as a specific, definitive kind of news story, publication or mode of organization. What alternative journalism is at any given moment depends entirely on what it is responding to.

It is in this sense that this chapter is not simply a 'history' of events in the past disconnected from today, but instead is an effort to 'historicize' alternative journalism. This chapter does not present the history of alternative journalism as a neutral, complete set of facts to recount (if only it were so easy!). Rather, it seeks to understand the historicity of alternative journalism – its relational, always changing nature as a response to and a struggle against an equally changing dominant journalism within changing conditions. To

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adequately grasp alternative journalism in all its complexity, one must constitute and understand it not only in relation to today's conception of the alternative as simply the opposite of the mainstream, but also in relation to its own complex development, which calls into question the viability of such a conceptual map.

We first describe the emergence of bourgeois journalism, which assisted the successful challenge to royal and ecclesiastical authority by a mercantile and later capitalist bourgeoisie. While acknowledging the contributions of many European developments, the chapter focuses on Anglo-America as a centre not only of the emergence of journalism as a mode of writing and public debate, but also of capitalism, which has proven to be such a formative force not only for journalism but for world affairs in the past 400 years. We trace the breakdown of the authority of bourgeois journalism as the accepted form of public debate, which culminates in the development of new forms of journalistic writing and new modes of journalistic organization and practice. The amalgam referred to today as alternative journalism is determined in all its variety by these contexts.

While a single chapter cannot do justice to the depth and complexity of the developments noted here, the purpose is to outline a general framework for understanding the development of alternative journalism in a way that resonates with concerns today. Expanded accounts are given in the many detailed historical studies already available.

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### The Absorption of the Radical-Popular

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Any account of the emergence of alternative journalism that purports to be historical in the sense outlined above must begin by noting a supreme irony, which underscores the necessity of seeing alternative journalism as constituted by its social and historical context. Although disparaged today (and often for good reason), the development of what we refer to today as the 'dominant' or 'mainstream' mode of journalism was initially a critical (dare we say 'alternative?') response in its day to an earlier dominant.

Raymond Williams's influential reinterpretation of the contours of the historical development of the press in Britain helps explain this irony (Williams, 1970; Williams, 1978a; Williams, 1978b). It may seem baffling at first how a committed socialist such as Williams recognized 'the achievement of the bourgeoisie in the creation of the modern press [... as] a major historical break-through' of great significance for radical-democratic politics (Williams, 1979: 310–311). What explains this seeming contradiction is that, for Williams, no essential, pure types of journalism exist. Rather, journalism – like all forms of popular culture – 'is always an uneasy mixture of two very different elements: the maintenance of an independent popular

identity, often linked with political radicalism, resistance to the establishment and movements for social change; and ways of adapting, from disadvantage, to a dominant social order, finding relief and satisfaction or diversion inside it' (Williams, 1970: 22).

Williams's general argument is worth recalling here. In early nineteenth-century England and before the formation of a commercial journalism industry, comparatively clear class antagonisms delineated, on the one hand, independent radical newspapers as the 'popular press' of the day in the sense of their 'staking a new claim, articulating a new voice, in a situation in which otherwise there would have been silence'; on the other hand, 'established newspapers' addressed a narrowly defined readership composed of business and political leaders (Williams, 1970: 17; see also Hollis, 1970; for the case in France, see Skuncke, 2005 and Trinkle, 2002).

This opposition began to collapse as authoritarian repression of the independent radical papers gave way to absorption and incorporation by the emerging commercial popular press. To siphon readers into this new commercial 'popular', the commercial press adopted long-standing popular forms of chapbooks, ballads and pamphlets as well as selected 'radical social and political attitudes'. What enhanced the replacement of the radical-popular by the commercial-popular was the consolidation of the newspaper business into groups and chains and the securing of advertising revenue at a scale unimaginable only a short time previously, both of which gave the commercial-popular a productive capacity that moved it on to a level entirely different from the radical-popular. As a result, 'the control of popular journalism passed into the hands of successful large-scale entrepreneurs, who alone now could reach a majority of the public quickly and attractively and cheaply, on a national scale, but who by their very ability to do this, by their control of resources, were separated from or opposed to the people whom this popular journalism served' (Williams, 1970: 23).

The result of this extremely complex process was that 'what had once been popular, in the political sense, was absorbed or deflected into "popular" in quite other senses', with 'market journalism replac[ing] the journalism of a community or movement' (Williams, 1970: 20–21). What we call in this book 'alternative journalism', then, was not simply repressed or stamped out in England, although clear and sustained efforts were made to do so, as Curran (1978) has described. Today in most countries, and particularly on the Internet, we can indeed find and read 'a press of bewildering variety' (Williams, 1970: 24). However, at the same time, radical-popular journalism (in Williams's terms) or alternative journalism (in our terms) has been effectively isolated from what is taken today to be the 'popular', not only in that it lacks the resources of the commercial-popular but also in cultural terms as now being seen largely as specialized, idiosyncratic, 'sectarian and strange' (Williams, 1970: 22).

## The Rise of Bourgeois Journalism

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Williams's reinterpretation serves well as a means of further organizing an understanding of the complex development of alternative journalism. Indeed, the accomplishment of this reinterpretation is the greater specificity and complexity granted to the general category of alternative journalism, and an analysis that explains it not by fixing a definition, but by viewing it as entirely determined by its relation to that against which it struggles. Williams's provocative interpretation thus serves well as the link between developments that preceded it and those that followed. Let us first address developments prior to the point at which Williams's account begins.

### The Rise of the Bourgeoisie

The 'established' press that Williams refers to can be more overtly linked to its class basis by calling it 'bourgeois journalism'. The term 'bourgeois' or 'bourgeoisie' refers generally to a property-owning class whose resources and influence come not from royal decree or royally granted monopoly but through capital generated by an expanding capitalist economy. What must be addressed first in an account of bourgeois journalism is the rise of the economic system that made this class possible. While one could characterize this new system as simply one in which the amount of goods produced and sold increased dramatically, what was more novel and important was the corresponding, fitful and often contentious reorganization of society from mercantilist to capitalist. Hawkes summarizes the decisive change as the institutionalization of a 'system of production for exchange rather than for use', which the increasing internationalization of finance and production helped bring about and support (Hawkes, 2001: 15).

Assisting the emergence of capitalism was increased state involvement in empire-building and colonialism. By the mid-seventeenth century and the establishment of the Protectorate headed by Cromwell, the government had already become 'a proactive authority in commercial matters', with a good portion of its involvement related to matters of colonization and trade beyond the confines of Europe which, as Loades argues, was where 'the most spectacular changes took place' (2000: 215–219). Such involvement helped lay the groundwork not only for social, political and economic changes in England, but also for the intertwining of capitalism with colonialism and imperialism in an increasingly worldwide political and economic project that presaged today's intensely globalized and polarized world.

The basis of bourgeois journalism in this new propertied class was significantly different from the royal-religious basis of knowledge and authority. In England and in Europe, sources of authority prior to the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie were rooted in combinations of divine right of rule and the

word of God. As a result, what we would regard today as arbitrary – if not capricious – rulings and decrees were justified by claims of absolute authority that was seen as beyond human ability to affect or change. While granting this, however, one should not assume that people of the day accepted such decisions and authority blindly and passively. As Hindle points out concerning early modern England, exercising rule was ‘a process in which subjects were intimately involved, one which they learned to manipulate, to criticize, and even to change’ (Hindle, 2000: 237). To give just one example, the many rebellions and riots during the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I alone suggest a far from quiescent populace (Fletcher and MacCulloch, 1997).

However, just as the emergence of capitalism and imperialism initiated growing social and economic inequalities, it also made possible the consolidation of the bourgeoisie, which was a countervailing source of power increasingly outside royal control. While royal monopolies, patronage, licensing and chartering in exchange for a share of revenues and for political support had been key ways of supporting commercial enterprises financially to ensure their political compliance, such controls were gradually superseded as independent commercial centres of finance and investment grew, diversified and internationalized. Thus, economic expansion and change in the context of empire-building helped produce and validate a new class of merchants, traders and financiers who were unbound by class rules of custom and traditional decorum and deference, and enabled through their control of capital.

### Bourgeois Journalism as Cultural Form

The production of a social class with sources of power outside direct royal or ecclesiastic control relied upon and enabled the rise of what we call today ‘journalism’. Indeed, the emergence of journalism is intimately tied to the emergence of capitalism and the class it both relied on for financing and catered to as readers and buyers. Journalism at this time represented a new kind of authoritative claim to knowledge about the world that was embodied in new kinds of writing.

Journalism as a way of writing and understanding is an amalgam of a number of sources, with one being empiricism. As influentially interpreted by Francis Bacon (Lord Chancellor in the court of James I), empiricism means gathering and cataloguing evidence from which to generalize and test universal cause-and-effect relationships (Farrington, 1964). Far from a process a single person can carry out, Bacon proposed a bureaucratized project whereby a veritable army of assistants would gather data according to Bacon’s highly standardized procedures, with the goal of generating knowledge useful to the crown and to industry. Importantly, the dependability of information was directly related to how closely specific rules for gathering data were followed – much like the need for professional journalists today

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to follow rules such as seeking out more than one side to a story, basing conclusions on multiple sources and setting one's personal views aside.

A second key source was the newly popular form of essays and commentary, in which claims to authority were based not on how much external evidence was gathered in support of a conclusion based on systematically gathered evidence, so much as on an individual writer's own powers of observation, reasoning and writing skill. A third source was reportage, a long-standing practice of hiring agents to travel to distant lands and report back to their benefactors (often diplomats and other government officials) regarding events or situations that had a bearing on their interests (Schneider, 2005; see also Shapiro, 2000: 77–78, 87). In addition to diplomatic reports and private handwritten newsletters, forerunners of reportage included town criers' announcements, broadsides, news pamphlets and manuscript newsletters (Raymond, 1996; Shapiro, 2000: 86).

A fourth source of journalism is found in the evolving standards of legal disputation, which increasingly codified rules for establishing valid evidence and legally sound claims. These rules included using details of time, place and circumstance; identifying and evaluating witnesses and their testimony; and rejecting second-hand accounts in favour of direct testimony and personal observation (Shapiro, 2000: 99–103). Such rules slowly became the standard for other purportedly 'factual' writing such as history, chorography, travel reporting and, of course, early journalism, which emphasized the use of credible sources, impartiality, a clear separation of the fictional from the factual, a distinction between reporting facts and speculation based on those facts, and the use of plain and unadorned prose (Shapiro, 2000: 86, 94; see also Clark, 1983: 99; Raymond, 1996: 130–133; and Davis, 1983). As Shapiro argues about the relationship between these four sources and early journalism, 'news genres ... played a role in transforming "fact" from a category limited to human actions and deeds into one that comprehended both human and natural phenomena' (Shapiro, 2000: 4). In other words, all of these sources combined to help produce a new basis for creating and presenting a truthful and thus authoritative account of the world.

### Implications of Bourgeois Journalism

Recalling the great importance Williams attributed to its emergence, the implications of the rise of bourgeois journalism for new forms of political resistance were immense. Together with other changes, bourgeois journalism helped validate plural, secular and individual routes to knowledge; solidify a challenge to the authority of divine rulers and institutionalized clergy; and challenge the monopoly of knowledge enjoyed by court and church (although such a 'monopoly' was never total or conclusively challenged.) As the seventeenth century merged into the eighteenth, it gradually became



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accepted that authoritative claims to knowledge could be gained through bourgeois journalism, by virtue of its writers' own observation, reasoning and argument. Assessments of the power and abilities of a certain class of readers rose similarly, in that passionately argued cases and detailed descriptions of events addressed readers as capable of evaluating claims and evidence for themselves and of drawing their own conclusions. While acknowledging the often severe limitations on who was allowed to participate (a point to be addressed in more detail below), determining what was plausible if not true became a comparatively more public process of debate – what Jürgen Habermas has influentially called the European bourgeois 'public sphere' (Habermas, 1989; for commentary and critiques, see Calhoun, 1992).

By the mid-eighteenth century, bourgeois journalism was firmly in place as the 'coin of the realm' for public debate in European countries and colonies, one that was employed by all sides that sought to be deemed 'legitimate'. And yet these sides were decidedly one-sided, with barriers of class, property, race, gender and others sifting from societies only those deemed capable or worthy of such participation. Such restrictions help explain the fit of journalism with European colonial expansion. Accounts of the emergence of journalism in a number of non-European areas suggests the degree to which it was a European invention exported to other countries as part of colonial and capitalist expansion. Whether serving a colonial occupation (as for example in India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Hawaii, Spanish colonies in the Americas and South Africa), a transnational capitalist class (such as in Japan), or an indigenous state elite (such as in Egypt), the establishment of journalism in non-European areas was intimately part of the colonial project and thus a European and capitalist effort at control rather than an indigenous effort. (Studies that address the emergence of journalism in non-Western countries include Adam, 1995; Akinfeleye, 1987; de Lange, 1998; Geracimos, 1996; González, 1993; Huffman, 1997; Kendall, 2006; Nair, 1987; Parthasarathy, 1989; Rugh, 2004; and Switzer and Adhikari, 2000.)

This class-based restriction suggests the degree to which bourgeois journalism as a means of public discourse – while indeed crucial for radical-democratic politics and radical-popular journalism in comparison with what had come before – was itself tied to a particular kind of social order, in this case the rising bourgeoisie that supported and worked within the emerging systems of capitalism and imperialism.

### The Consolidation of the Commercial-Popular

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Like the paradox that today's mainstream journalism is yesterday's critical response to monarchical and ecclesiastical authority, Williams's reinterpretation of how commercial-popular journalism absorbed and then replaced

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radical-popular journalism identifies a second paradox. On the one hand, commercial-popular journalism can indeed be said to have been more popular in that it extended more deeply into society and thus addressed the concerns and lives of a broader social stratum (although only in particular ways and not into all social strata, as will be discussed). But, on the other hand, it had become the new dominant and thus, less popular. Where bourgeois journalism had been a clear challenge to existing orders but not popular, commercial-popular journalism was more popular in that it engaged broader orders of society, but it no longer constituted a serious challenge.

Williams's account makes clear that what transformed this erstwhile oppositional practice into a dominant one was its fit within burgeoning industrial capitalist societies, with the UK and the United States the harbinger of changes that were also afoot in other countries and regions. It was no accident that the form in which bourgeois journalism became incorporated was the commercial business and, more specifically, commercial companies in urban centres such as the so-called 'penny presses' in the United States which were based in New York City (Schudson, 1978; Barnhurst and Nerone, 2001) and the commercial-popular press in England (Wiener, 1988). This had not always been the case. Newspapers and the journalism they enabled had initially been funded by combinations of subscriptions and patronage, particularly in the form of the political press and, as Williams and others note, of the radical-popular press (Ames, 1972; Hollis, 1970; Smith, 1977).

By the end of the nineteenth century, commercial consolidation corresponded with a second development: the institutionalization of objectivity as both a writing technique and a professional creed (Kaplan, 2002). Far from being a new development, it was an enhancement and further institutionalization of core precepts of bourgeois journalism such as the emphasis on empirical evidence, clear and unadorned prose and judgements drawn from facts. But, in the commercial environment, objectivity had great value in that it enhanced the value and necessity of large-scale, professionalized organizations, which had the requisite resources and training for authoritative gathering of evidence in the first place, with the United States by the late nineteenth century perhaps the best exemplar of this trend (Salcetti, 1995; Solomon, 1995).

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### The Rise of Oppositional Journalism

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The emergence of the commercial-popular press helped instigate its own resistance, in the form of what we would recognize today as alternative journalism (although this term was not used at the time). The many oppositional presses of the nineteenth century were rooted in differing mixes of labour, foreign-language, suffrage and human rights interests both in the UK

and the United States (Ostertag, 2006; Streitmatter, 2001; Tusan, 2005; see also the review of key studies cited in DiCenzo, 2000 and Mercer, 2004) and in other areas of the world (for example, Tusan, 2003).

In addition to movement-based newspapers, community and small-town presses sought increasingly to bolster resistance to what was seen as the onslaught of urban mass culture. Claims that community media first took form in North America in the 1970s belies its much longer and broader development (Fuller, 2007). By adopting an expansive definition of community as a general form of association – and not simply as people who live in close geographical proximity – we can show how oppositional presses of whatever scale and scope worked as community journalism under widely varying conditions. Separate communities of geographical proximity also merged into a widely distributed diasporic community due to sharing, if not intentionally at least structurally, the same interests. For example, in the United States, the interests of separate communities defined by geographical proximity were bound together through the principle of localism, which defended the general value of popular control as an antidote to the commercial consolidation and centralization of media industries (Stavitsky, 1994). Indeed, a keen awareness existed at the time of what was seen as the corruption of the promise of bourgeois journalism due to commercialization, which has been a key theme in Anglo-American, European and other liberal and radical press criticism (Goldstein, 2007; McChesney and Scott, 2004; Theobald, 2004).

Despite their political opposition, however, the various oppositional presses relied upon the conception of bourgeois journalism used by the dominant. Until comparatively recently, bourgeois journalism itself was never the main target for challenge. Rather, it was the coin of the realm for legitimate public discourse and debate, regardless of the purpose or cause. The establishment and increasing institutionalization of objectivity and of professionalization as necessary features of 'legitimate' journalism were accepted by the dominant and the oppositional, with the former always much better placed to attain it than the latter.

The extent to which this was the case is suggested by efforts at the beginning of the twentieth century to establish radical counterparts to commercial newspapers by mirroring all commercial aspects, except for perspective. For example, as Shore notes, the reigning 'models for the radical press to follow [in the United States] while seeking to develop a large audience sometimes came from the successful mainstream press' (Shore, 1985: 158). As editor J.A. Wayland put it in a January 1903 issue of the *Appeal to Reason*, which grew into the largest-circulation socialist newspaper ever to be published in the United States, "the day has gone by for small mediums [*sic*] to tackle great under-takings, and we must prepare to propagate Socialism in just the proportions that Capitalism operates" (quoted in

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Shore, 1985: 158; see also Shore, 1988). The English suffrage newspaper *Votes for Women* is a second example of an effort to harness 'commercial tactics to a radical political agenda' (DiCenzo, 2000: 116; see also Finnegan, 1999). The need to adopt commercial forms and techniques is also implied – if not explicitly stated – in recent assessments of the anaemia of the alternative press based on its small size, meagre capitalization and resulting assumed ineffectuality (Clark and Van Slyke, 2006; Comedia, 1984).

### Challenges to Bourgeois Journalism

Although the existing model of bourgeois journalism was rarely challenged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries despite the severe political struggles waged, in the twentieth century its tacit acceptance as the coin of the realm for public discourse came to be overtly challenged amidst the consolidation of what is referred to as modernism. Various accounts of the rise of modernity cite such general developments as industrialization, urbanization, the rise of consumer culture, the arrival of electronic means of communications, the proliferation of new kinds of dislocation at once experiential and real, as well as attempts to 'make ourselves at home in a constantly changing world', marked perhaps most dramatically by the collective insanity of two world wars and the development of nuclear weapons capable of global annihilation (Berman, 1988: 6).

It should come as little surprise, then, that such an extensive reformation of conditions and experience included challenges to existing ways of addressing publics and establishing claims of authority. Recognizing the extent of this effort broadens our understanding of just what kind of challenge alternative journalism came to pose – in this case, from challenging a discrete, single political position to also challenging the very forms that knowledge can take. The development of alternative journalism thus came to refer not only to oppositional political, social, cultural and economic movements, but also to claims that bourgeois journalism and the accepted procedures and forms it relies upon were also increasingly suspect. In the wake of such challenges, less and less often could bourgeois journalism – as individual opinion and consensual empirical account – be considered as neutral, natural and 'common-sense'.

### The Modernist Critique of Bourgeois Journalism

Subject to a variety of pressures, the consensus acceptance of bourgeois journalism began to fragment. Alternative journalism came to mean not only challenging the dominant social order politically, but also challenging and remaking the very bases of bourgeois journalism itself. The focus of

sustained attack was the premise deriving at least from Locke that people can know only what comes to them through direct sensory experience (Peters, 1989). By contrast, the work of Darwin, Marx and Freud refuted claims of human rationality as well as the truth of direct appearances by focusing on forces beyond the control and direct observation of individual humans (evolution, material conditions and the unconscious, respectively), which they claimed to be the real shapers of human lives and actions.

Such criticisms were part of a more politicized critique not only of empiricism and objectivity, but of professionalization. Hierarchical, commercial bureaucracies were seen increasingly as beholden to the interests of their advertisers and, through them, to the social and political elite, and thus as unresponsive to the full range of concerns of readers (Goldstein, 2007; McChesney and Scott, 2004; Theobald, 2004). By contrast, radical republicanism, socialist workerism, anarchism and various other forms of collective and egalitarian organization were seen as viable and often preferable options for organizing journalistic work (Downing, 2003a; Lasch, 1991: 168–225; Thompson, 1966: 87–101).

Criticisms of bourgeois journalism became more global in the wake of decolonization projects of the 1950s and 1960s, joining a much broader critique of Eurocentrism. By this is meant the argument that the suppositions and assumptions underlying not only capitalism but the dominance of Western countries (until recently) in the affairs of the world were directly implicated in the misery experienced by the majority of the world's peoples. The critique of Eurocentrism became the basis for such varied and mixed positions as a critique of colonialism (that the expansion and fortunes of Western societies were built on the back of subjugated and exploited non-Western populations); of capitalism (that European-derived knowledge provided the means and the rationale for dominating people); of patriarchal society as unchallengeable authority (particularly in the form of professionalization and bureaucracy); of racist society as a society in which large segments of the population are systematically and actively disenfranchised and marginalized; and of mass culture and consumer society as hastening both the mass diversion of attention from issues of immense importance and the exhaustion of resources of the natural world to the point of global catastrophe.

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### New Forms of Journalism

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In the wake of such criticism, not only were the claims of bourgeois journalism called into question, but new narrative forms were formulated and developed. The insufficiency of empiricism and naturalism (claims that one could aspire to neutral descriptions of things as they really are) suggested in turn that deeper realities could be apprehended only through seemingly

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unnatural means of representation. Artistic experimentation, particularly in painting, prefigured radical experiments in factual writing (Berger, 1993).

For example, the refusal to accept the long-standing distinction between fact and fiction paved the way for the rise by the 1950s of the 'documentary novel' and by the 1960s of the 'new journalism' as a non-fictional and authoritative means of representation that relied upon techniques pioneered in ostensibly fictional prose (Wolfe, 1973). Such challenges were also launched in other parts of the world. For example, the *crónica* of Latin America emerged in the 1960s in the wake of North American new journalism, blending 'very extensive popular cultural traditions, from song to television programs' (Bielsa, 2006: xiii). Receptive, non-professionalized organizations such as the underground presses of the 1960s proved to be fertile ground for the development of alternative modes of factual writing (Bizot, 2006; Glessing, 1970; Leamer, 1972; Reed, 1989; Peck, 1985). Variations continue to be practiced in the service of a variety of new social movements (McKay, 1998; Reed, 2005).

Challenges to European bourgeois journalism also manifested themselves in other parts of the world. For example, professionalized elitism was set aside in the popular correspondents' movement in revolutionary Nicaragua during the 1980s. The movement was enabled by institutional support from oppositional political parties, open access to various outlets and the availability of training, the last of which was crucial to a group who had typically ended schooling at the age of eight or nine (Rodriguez, 2001: 70). Large-scale organization and capitalization was set aside in the dissident media of 1970s Iran. In a context in which institutionalized oppositional politics was made impossible by the royalist dictatorship, so-called 'small media' (not only photocopied leaflets and audiocassette tapes but also their grassroots composition and circulation) helped 'foster an imaginative social solidarity, often as a precursor for actual physical mobilization' (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, 1994: 24). In addition to critiquing professionalism and institutionalization, Eastern European samizdat (defined by Skilling as 'the distribution of uncensored writings on one's own, without the medium of a publishing house and without permission of authorities') also broadened the sense of what constituted forms of political engagement beyond traditional reportage (Skilling, 1989: 3). Means of production included typewriters and carbon copiers, mimeographing, photography and hand-copying. Samizdat in 1970s Poland drew significantly on worker correspondence instead of professional journalism. Forms of representation in pre-1989 Czechoslovak samizdat included 'novels, short stories, poetry, plays, literary criticism, historical and philosophical essays, and, more rarely, political essays or studies' (Skilling, 1989: 11–12). What Sibeko called 'clandestine propaganda' had similar importance in pre-revolution South Africa (Sibeko, 1983).

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Other more institutionalized efforts have sought to develop a model different from the commercial media company. Developmental journalism emerged in the wake of Western decolonization as a means of consolidating new nations. Such early efforts constituted a critique of Western-style objectivity by setting aside the professional creed due to its ostensible inability to form a national consensus needed for development in favour of often unabashedly single-sided promotion of government programmes of modernization. Through such projects, forms of bourgeois journalism were critiqued, but the rationales and forms for development journalism often came from Westerners too and were implemented at the expense of robust public discussion and debate (Ebo, 1994; Pye, 1964; Schramm, 1964).

In the face of such problems, non-Western efforts have more recently reformed into what is often called participatory journalism, which more clearly embodies an organizational critique (Shah, 1996). These projects often rely on indigenous oral traditions as well as the availability of portable radio and video to put recorders and cameras in the hands of people so that they may produce their own stories (Rodriguez, 2001: 109–128; White et al., 1994).

## Conclusion

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The historical trajectory of ‘alternative journalism’ can be best understood as a continual response and challenge to dominant practices. As the dominant has changed, the alternative that challenges it has changed as well. The twentieth-century proliferation of different ways of writing and of organizing the production and distribution of alternative journalism so apparent today emerged from a deep and fundamental challenge to the very bases of journalism itself.