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## Journalism and the Coming of Mass Markets

### Introduction

It would be no exaggeration to say that modern journalism began in 1896 – on 4 May 1896, to be precise. This was not because of any single innovation in a format or technology but in the way that Alfred Harmsworth's *Daily Mail*, launched on that day, managed to draw a complex range of technical, commercial and textual features into one publication. An astute awareness of the requirements of advertisers, a recognition of the social aspirations of a class of new reader, an ability to produce economies of scale in production and the organisational genius to be able to distribute this rapidly and effectively enabled it to become the first truly mass circulation paper, to the extent that by 1900 it was selling in excess of a million copies per day. Chalaby has claimed that with the *Daily Mail*, Harmsworth brought the daily newspaper into the twentieth century and modernized journalism in the process (Chalaby, 2000: 34). However, none of this emerged from a vacuum. Harmsworth was simply a brilliant co-ordinator of these various elements.

This revolution also ushered in what we may call the popular century, where developments in the popular newspaper began to drive the practices of the entire press and where these commercial concerns consolidated their dominance as ever more channels of communication became available. Yet the *Daily Mail* which was to have such a profound effect on the structure of the journalism of the next century was the culmination of a sequence of events that had started with a government decision to abolish taxes on newspapers in 1855. This chapter will set out the chronology and debates around the emergence of mass popular markets from the late nineteenth century and show how these were to influence all subsequent mainstream journalism.

### Picking Up the Commercial Pace

This abolition of taxes on newspapers in 1855 had begun to release the full force of competition into newspaper production. Elements of sensationalism and entertainment which had hitherto been prominent in the Sunday market were now to be included in the most successful launch of the period, the *Daily Telegraph*, in the very same year as the taxes were lifted. Henceforth newspapers would survive as

commercial concerns or not at all. They would do so by maximizing their profits through targeting a topical miscellany aimed at specific readerships that were to be addressed with increasing efficiency. Of course this did not occur overnight, but the process which would lead to a full appreciation of the commercial potential of journalism had nevertheless been unleashed.

This commercialization contributed to a longer-term shift from a genteel view of journalism as an occupation for men of letters to one which saw it as predominantly to do with the satisfaction of market needs. Yet journalism has moved in a complex and sometimes surprising fashion from 1855 and its liberalization after the lifting of taxes to the twenty-first century, despite the fact that certain patterns have remained persistent. The economics of the market, for example, have combined with technological innovations to produce significant changes in journalism's organization, distribution and content. However, this is no straightforward narrative of either triumph or decline, as these changes continue to pose profound challenges – particularly for print journalism – even today. Taking this perspective on the centrality of change to any history of journalism, Smith sees it as being determined by its own structural shortcomings in reaching its self-declared goals:

*In the course of four hundred years the newspaper press has not finally dealt with the issues into which it was born. Its methods of production and distribution are always inadequate to the ideals and purposes which appear to rise from the activities of collecting news. Every century or so they undergo a major alteration ... (1978: 183)*

If the contemporary age can provide evidence of an on-going major reassessment of how the commercial needs of journalism continue to match its 'ideals and purposes', then these were first highlighted in the mid-Victorian era. This continuity from 1855 to the present has been remarked upon by Negrine, who observed how according to the great historian of political journalism, Koss, there were concerns in the Victorian era about issues which still have a very contemporary ring to them: '... the commercialism of the press, the effect of advertising, the trend to sensationalism, concentration of ownership, and the reduction of political coverage' (Negrine, 1994: 39).

While some would characterize the changes which followed on from 1855 as the decline of a golden age of journalism (Ensor, 1968), others would argue more pragmatically that what had hitherto provided a discourse of public dialogue was from that point onwards replaced by a much more systematically commodified discourse which created what we now recognize as the modern variety of journalism (Chalaby, 1998: 66) – one which was targeted on the public only insofar as the public constituted a market that could be exploited commercially. Some nineteenth-century commentators applauded these developments and saw this period as providing a rejuvenation in journalism:

*... in the early sixties ... Journalism was at a turning point. A poor order of things was passing away; a better order of things ... by the attraction of many fresh, bright, strong, and scholarly minds to journalism as a power – was coming in, and coming in on well prepared ground. (Greenwood, 1897: 708)*

Driven forward by the improved climate for commercial newspapers after 1855, the penny press of the middle Victorian era was beginning to experiment with a lighter style and more human interest, perhaps best characterized by the ‘Telegraphese’ of George Augustus Sala and the influential gossip column ‘The Flaneur’ by Edmund Yates in Samuel Lucas’s penny *Morning Star*, founded in 1856. At the same time the respectable, upmarket papers such as *The Times* and the *Morning Post* maintained a sober and anonymous gravitas in their journalism, bringing ‘a heavy overdose of politics’ (Herd, 1952: 222) with verbatim accounts of Parliament that were composed in blocks of solid and unbroken type and without the sort of banner headlines with which we are familiar today. The tradition of anonymous authorship in journalism was gradually being eroded via the naming of writers in the more popular magazines and by the 1870s correspondence columns, signed articles and personal details were being used at the cheaper end of the daily newspaper market as well. This had the effect of introducing an apparent pluralism made up of many authors and spokespeople in place of a single authority and the voice of the newspaper as an institution, which had been the implicit norm up to this point in Victorian journalism (Jackson, 2001: 145).

A transatlantic cable was laid in 1866 and telegraphed dispatches then became an accepted part of a more internationalized news-gathering operation, meaning that ‘henceforth daily journalism operated within a new tense ... of the instantaneous present’ (Smith, 1978: 167). In fact it was the increasingly efficient exploitation of the telegraph in combination with the newly created category of the sub-editor that signalled the only substantive improvement of these years through the extinction of the old ‘penny-a-liner’, ‘a very inferior race of reporters’ (Lee, 1976: 112) who provided cheap copy to make up pages, often copied from secondary sources and with little journalistic merit. A sub-editor was employed to shape, reduce and revise reports to fit within the spaces left by advertisements and bolder headlines while matching the identity of the particular paper.

By the 1880s, a combination of stylistic experiments, technological innovations, political advances such as the extension of the franchise to enable a larger proportion of the working population to vote and improved economic conditions after the recessionary 1870s were to transform the ambition and content of journalism and orientate it irretrievably to mass audiences via the New Journalism. The Foster Education Act of 1870 which made education compulsory and freely available to primary-aged children also helped to fuel a new level of literacy which would soon translate into increased sales of popular publications. The introduction of the telegraph, telephone, typewriter, high-speed rotary press and half-tone photographic block began to change the look of printed material as journalism became a more visualized practice. After 1875, there was a reconstruction of the newspaper industry following a more economically integrated pattern, which encouraged a more considered and methodical capital investment in technology and more attention being paid to circulation figures and advertising revenue. The technological advances which promised a more attractive and profitable product for a wider audience brought new commercial entrepreneurs into an industry which offered increasing returns on their investment through

wider distribution and a more astute harnessing of advertising. Above all else, it was the broadening of the franchise through the Third Reform Act in 1884 which meant that this New Journalism was able to address the people as having a stake in public affairs like never before, meaning that '... the New Journalism acquired a political resonance which had been largely lacking in press discourse during the previous 50 years' (Jones, 1996: 132).

## Newnes – Preparing the Ground for Mass Market Papers

George Newnes was the first to draw together these strands, testing and creating new territories for journalism in a wide range of journals including *Tit-Bits* (1881), *The Strand Magazine* (1891), *The Million* (1892), *The Westminster Gazette* (1893), *The World Wide Magazine* (1898), *The Ladies' Field* (1898) and *The Captain* (1899). Of these, it was the first, *Tit-Bits*, which was to become the model that would have the most profound influence on the daily press.

*Tit-bits from all the interesting Books, Periodicals, and Newspapers of the World* was launched as a penny weekly on 22 October 1881, with competitions, statistics, historical facts, bits of news, editorials, correspondence columns, fiction, anecdotes, jokes, legal general knowledge, competitions and lots of adverts. Portraits of and interviews with celebrities were also a prominent inclusion in each edition. It was a triumph of promotion, formatting and editorial flair and soon boasted 400,000 to 600,000 in weekly sales, leading Jackson to claim that: '... far from lowering the standards of popular journalism, it undoubtedly raised them' (2001: 55). It was widely imitated because of its success, most notably by *Answers to Correspondents* from Harmsworth who had learned his trade on Newnes's paper and by *Pearson's Weekly* which was published by the future proprietor of the *Daily Express*, both of which were aimed at the same market and towards securing similar sales figures, demonstrating the potential for this type of journal. Most importantly, Newnes developed a popular community within his paper through a 'sympathetic intimacy' (Jackson, 13: 2000) with his readers which anticipated much of popular journalism's subsequent rhetorical appeal. He even found ways of extending that projection of community into other areas of his readers' lives and embarked upon an astute commercial branding of his product that went beyond simply selling papers. In May 1885, for example, he used the paper to launch a life insurance scheme for anyone found dead with a copy of *Tit-Bits* on them in a railway accident and in 1889 at the Paris Exhibition he set up a pavilion and inquiry office in an extension of the textual space of his paper. Some have however been less than appreciative of Newnes's achievements:

*Newnes became aware that the new schooling was creating a class of potential readers – people who had been taught to decipher print without learning much else, and for whom the existing newspapers, with their long articles, long*

*paragraphs, and all-round demands on the intelligence and imagination, were quite unsuited. To give them what he felt they wanted, he started Tit-Bits. (Ensor, 1968: 311)*

## Stead – Pioneering the Popular Campaign

As economic forces were taking a larger role in the development of journalism, it was no coincidence that what became known as the New Journalism became crystalized in the practices of the London evening papers in their search for new readers. Competition in London had intensified as cheaper evening newspapers, such as the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *St James's Gazette*, reduced their prices from two pence to a penny in 1882 and it was in these papers, most notably the former, that the newer styles of journalism were introduced as a further commercial ploy to distinguish them from their more sedate morning relations. The genius of the *Pall Mall Gazette* (launched in 1865 by Greenwood) had been to bring the scope and variety of the more popular periodical reviews of magazines into daily journalism. It has been observed that 'Greenwood brought lightness, polish and intellectual alertness into daily journalism at a time when the morning papers had become heavy and tradition-bound' (Herd, 1952: 226).

The driving force behind this kind of journalism which sought social commitment through a wider readership and aimed for an influence on matters of public concern was the non-conformist and politically radical W.T. Stead. As early as 1880, writing on the Liberal Party's political programme, he had stressed both the 'political education' of the electorate and the 'prophetic character of the journalists' vocation' (Baylen, 1972: 373). He was a pioneer of investigative journalism being pursued for moral ends and saw the editor as expressed in his article 'Government by Journalism' as 'the uncrowned king of an educated democracy' (1886). For him, journalism had to simply aim to change the world. Some commentators have located him within a longer tradition of radical journalism:

*Stead's mercurial, hellfire temperament was that of the great pamphleteers. In his boldness and versatility, in his passionate belief in the constructive power of the pen, in so many of his opinions, even in his championship of women, he resembled Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. (Boston, 1990: 101)*

It was as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* from 1883 to 1889 that he reached the pinnacle of his national prominence. During his tenure he brought cross-headings to the paper, together with popular developments such as scoops and a flair for self-publicity which drew attention to his newspaper, the development of investigative, campaigning journalism in the pursuit of socially progressive causes and the use of emotive and colourful writing. The cross-head was a presentational development that he copied from American newspaper practice. In contrast to the dense columns of the morning newspapers, the *Pall Mall Gazette* could be henceforth scanned at

speed. He included the illustrations and line drawings that would further break up the monotony of the traditional printed page. He also employed specialist commentators to popularize knowledge of contemporary affairs and in his 'Character Sketch' he blended the interview, word picture and personality analysis. The social implications of these changes were clear, making '... the page accessible to less resolute reading at the end of the day and possibly by the family at home' (Brake, 1988: 19).

The development of the interview was again an American import, but Stead deployed it with aplomb in broadening the popular reach of his journalism. One major coup was his interview with General Gordon in January 1884 before he embarked for the Sudan. And as if to underline the growing importance of women to this newly personalized style of journalism, Stead employed Hulda Friedrich as the chief interviewer for his paper.

His most famous exposé was the 'Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' story, which exposed Victorian hypocrisy on child prostitution in a series of articles from 6 July 1885. This synthesized all the ambition contained within Stead's journalism and campaigning fervour. It was a sensation, boosting sales to 100,000, and its notoriety led him to be imprisoned for three months for the alleged procurement of the 13 year old girl, Lisa Armstrong, who was used as the bait in the sting which exposed the realities of under-age sexual exploitation in his undercover investigation. Stead's goal was both a moral and a political one. His passionate opposition to the wrongs of society was in keeping with much of the tradition of the 'old corruption' (Hollis, 1970), as it seemed to imply that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the status quo that could not be resolved by the actions of good men and women. The 'old corruption' analysis tends to foreground individual failings and neglect deeper systemic issues and critics such as Hollis maintain that it lacks any sustained political conviction. Onto his confidence in the reforming potential of the Victorian governing classes Stead grafted a moral purpose and wrapped this within a well-developed commercial pragmatism. He was a forerunner of a more personalized variety of what we might call today a 'journalism of attachment' from a deeply religious perspective. There are those however who are more cautious about his sensationalizing of sexual mores and its implications for journalism:

*'Sex' had long been a journalistic staple. Stead not only brought it into a 'respectable' middle-class paper. He made it central to journalism as political intervention. (Beetham, 1996: 125)*

At the time, there were also some critics who were concerned about its substance. In a journal article in 1887, Arnold named the new phenomenon which was becoming such a prominent issue in public debate the 'New Journalism':

*We have had opportunities of observing a new journalism which a clever and energetic man has lately invented. It has much to recommend it; it is full of ability, novelty variety, sensation, sympathy, generous instincts; its one great fault is that it is feather-brained. (1887: 638-9)*

The success of Stead's paper encouraged a proliferation of penny newspapers in London, all of which attempted to exploit the market for the sort of journalism he had pioneered, and their success in turn undermined the circulation of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. This suffered a further blow when much of his revenue was lost because advertisers were anxious about being associated with the scandalous reputation it had acquired. However, his significance for modern journalism goes beyond the technical details of his paper's innovations and the moral mission which informed his work. His 'government by journalism' (Stead, 1886) meant that the civic responsibilities of the journalist and increasingly of the editor were forced to the forefront of the agenda. Stead was particularly prominent in this, using his imprisonment as a campaigning weapon to have the issues raised by the 'Maiden Tribute' story aired in public meetings up and down the country and to bring well-known figures to contribute to the debate he had started. The editor in the most melodramatic way had become the news.

## The Extension of the New Journalism

The New Journalism was a combination of already existing features but these had been made more commercially attractive for a wider readership. In vehement opposition to the crusading conviction of Stead, Arnold believed that his New Journalism was the very antithesis of a medium which stimulated and elevated the masses (Baylen, 1972: 367) and was committed instead to the idea that it was commercially driven to find the basest tastes and opinions of the largest possible readership. In the way that the moment of its definition provided a fresh impetus to both the self-rationalization and the resulting critiques of journalism, it could be argued that the New Journalism was a discursive moment in the history of journalism. The clearest expression of its motivations were from Stead himself, spectacularly championing his own cause from prison and claiming the function of government by journalism as 'anybody paying a penny could cast a "vote" for a particular paper' (Stead, 1886: 655). Yet others saw the New Journalism as the natural extension of the traditions of the Fourth Estate:

*... the newspaper press is the only strong means of keeping in check that prodigious evil, the decomposition of political probity ... its natural position of complete independency. (Greenwood, 1890: 118)*

Much of the concern encapsulated in Arnold's article represented a kind of middle-class 'moral panic' that this sort of populist writing would incite the newly extended electorate and this continued to reverberate into the new century. It was claimed that a shift in emphasis in the newspapers had meant that 'Instead of being the instructors of the people, many of our newspapers have become mere ministers to the passions of the people' (Adams, 1903: 584), while Perkin has commented retrospectively that it consisted of:



*A knack of clever writing, great enterprise in bringing together the kind of information which amuses or interests the public, tact in catching and following the first symptoms of changes of opinion, a skilful pandering to popular prejudice. (1981: 51)*

Stead was the champion of what Wiener sees as a longer process of the Americanization of the British press between 1830–1914 (Wiener, 1996: 61). Gossip, display advertising, sports news, human interest, fast stories transmitted by telegraph, cheap and increasingly visual newspapers, summary leads and front page news were all introduced to England in the 1890s. Many cheaper weekly publications, especially the Sunday papers, had adopted some of these features from the 1840s onwards in England but Stead had brought them to a daily readership. Stead, as well as being an innovator associated with the New Journalism, was an exception within the growing trend of the commercialized discourse of journalism as it widened its scope to broader and more profitable markets to the exclusion of social aims. Hampton (2004) has expressed this change in the emphasis and goal of journalism in terms of a shift from an ‘educational ideal’ to a ‘representative’ one, whereby newspapers stopped, in the main, trying to educate their readers and preferred instead to pander to what they considered were their already existing tastes. It was a shift from a didactic (i.e. explicitly setting out an educational agenda for readers) to a consumerist emphasis within journalism. Passion, moral indignation and political conviction were ousted by the more pragmatic requirements of a commercialized industry in order to maintain the interest and support of regular readers on behalf of the advertisers who provided the finance essential to its success. The dividing point at which he stood is well captured in the following:

*The duty of journalism in the first half of the nineteenth century ... was not to discover the truth. The emphasis was on the polemical power of the writer's pen. Opinion and commentary were the essence of good journalism – except in the recording of parliamentary activity where accuracy was considered vital ... By the end of the century, technology and commercial need had elevated accuracy and reliability, as well as the ability to meet the daily news deadlines, to the heart of [the] profession of journalism. (Williams, 1998: 54–55)*

It was this tension between the altruistic and commercial ambitions of journalism which was to shape the continuity of discourses around journalism to the present. By the end of the 1880s, Stead’s idealistic vision for the New Journalism was obsolete. His missionary zeal was not in keeping with the more commercially successful miscellanies of his rivals. The business acumen of Newnes and later Harmsworth and Pearson allowed them to generate huge financial resources from broad-based magazine and periodical publishing, which they then invested in the development of daily newspapers that were able to integrate technological and stylistic innovations with the staples of popular print culture (Conboy, 2002) in order to make possible a daily journalism with the highest possible popular, and therefore commercial, appeal. Competition meant that success in the popular market began to converge around one commercialized and dominant form of newspaper.



## Drawing in the Popular Audience

The *Star* extended this trend towards populism. Edited by T.P. O'Connor from 1888 until 1890, it was a halfpenny evening paper which was radical in both its politics and its layout and, as such, represented a continuation of the accelerating trends of the New Journalism but presented these in a more commercially acceptable form. O'Connor espoused a brighter method of writing, speed and human interest and also expressed a desire to demonstrate that: '... the journal is a weapon in the conflict of ideas ...'. In addition he was aware of journalism's need to gain the attention of the reader in a world of accelerating distractions:

*We live in an age of hurry and of multitudinous newspapers ... To get your ideas across through the hurried eyes into the whirling brains that are employed in the reading of a newspaper there must be no mistake about your meaning: to use a somewhat familiar phrase, you must strike your reader right between the eyes. (O'Connor, 1889: 434)*

Its radicalism, following the style of the popular Sunday newspapers, and especially *Reynolds's Newspaper*, was leavened with human interest on a daily basis. Its layout broke up information much in the style of *Answers* and *Tit-Bits*, but with a news-oriented content that distinguished it from these papers. Its innovations included the Stop Press and lower case type for its cross-heads and lesser headlines. Its essential novelty, according to Williams, was that from the date of its publication the New Journalism began to look like what it was (Williams, 1961: 221).

The style of the New Journalism encapsulated the changing relationship between reader and newspaper. There was more sport, crime and entertainment and less politics, all in a livelier style and laid out more clearly in an attempt to be more broadly accessible and therefore more profitable. There was also a commercial imperative to cultivate a consistent editorial identity that was expressed as a more individual 'voice' within this new breed of popular paper. Familiarity bred profit. Salmon interprets the way in which the 'discourse of journalism should so insistently declare its personalized character' (200: 29) as inevitable at this point in the commercialization of journalism, as a rhetorical strategy standing in for its lack of any authentic relationship with its readers. A political irony here with implications which continue to resonate within popular journalism today is that as readers were increasingly addressed in a more personal tone about matters which touched the everyday in their newspapers, they were correspondingly being marginalized from politics in those same newspapers (Hampton, 2001: 227). Above all, journalism in the daily press began to accommodate a more complete range of human experience as part of the spectrum of journalism's output, including the trivial and the sensational confirmation that 'it is the sound principle to which we shall all come at last in literature and journalism, that everything that can be talked about can also be written about' (O'Connor, 1889: 430).

## Creating a Mass Daily Publication: Harmsworth's *Daily Mail*

The *Daily Mail* was launched as THE BUSY MAN'S DAILY JOURNAL and was an immediate commercial success, backed by the fortune Harmsworth had amassed in periodical publication and an appreciation of the importance of the link between advertising, capital investment and circulation. It was presented not as a cheap newspaper but as a bargain, well worth the small outlay: 'A Penny Newspaper for One Halfpenny'. It was traditional in that it carried advertisements but no news on its front page. In terms of its layout, headings and subheadings allowed for the gist of a piece to be taken in at speed. It contained no long articles as each piece was broken down into short sections with a great variety of coverage and lots for idealized woman readers who had been hitherto a neglected part of the daily newspaper's audience. The daily women's column soon became a whole page and soon after they were targeted specifically and regularly in the Daily Magazine section.

Chalaby (2000: 33) argues the case for Northcliffe's position as the creator of a newly commercial form of journalism based on his combination of managerial and editorial skills. He certainly provided more news than rival publications, famously setting out his priorities in the following terms: 'It is hard news which captures readers ... and it is features which hold them' (English, 1996: 6). He insisted that his reporters wrote in a lively and engaging fashion no matter what the topic in order to differentiate his newspapers from the dull routine transmissions coming from the news agencies. There was news of sensations and disasters and crime reporting, all of which were successfully grafted onto his daily newspapers from the tradition of the Sunday press. Despite its emphasis on news there was, in fact, less politics than in any other daily paper. This has been reported as characteristic of his overall approach to the balance of content within his papers: 'We must not let politics dominate the paper ... [t]reat politics as you treat all other news - on its merits. It has no 'divine right' on newspaper space' (Clarke, 1931: 127), arguing that, through this emphasis on variety and topicality, newspapers should 'touch life at as many points as possible' (Fyfe, 1930: 270).

Yet his *Daily Mail* did not sensationalize by the standards of the day, certainly in comparison with the most popular Sunday newspapers, and moved to positions it was confident would gain the support of his lower middle-class readership. It reached its first million in daily sales by 1900 in large part stimulated by an exaggerated patriotic chauvinism that was termed 'jingoism', in particular relating to the Boer War (Hughes, 1986) which had by this point become a common feature of the New Journalism (Wiener, 1988b: 56). Such jingoism fulfilled all the overt attraction of banal nationalism for a mass audience (Billig, 1995) and Harmsworth turned the mediated of that national community into commercial gold. Under him, the ownership of newspapers had become a crucial element in the development of journalism (Chalaby, 2000: 29) and whereas the content had always been of central importance he now orientated the appeal of his paper predominantly towards the advertisers

through its mass circulation, charging them rates based on every 1,000 copies sold, and in doing so he turned a mass audience into a source of institutional and personal wealth as well as of political power (Smith, 1973: 27). The genius of Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe after 1907) lay in his ability to harness consumption, circulation and profit rather than any journalistic experimentation, confirming that:

*Whereas the 'New Journalism' had been a radical alternative to the more conservative newspapers, Northcliffe created a popular journalism which was less interested in political and social action per se than as the means to increase circulation. (Goodbody, 1985: 23)*

## Harmsworth's First Imitator: The *Daily Express*

Harmsworth's approach, hugely successful as it was on its own, was also to have an effect on the shape and content of journalism across the twentieth century because the very scale of his success left other proprietors little choice but to adapt the content of their newspapers to match or improve upon the pattern he had set, in order to achieve the profits which he had established as being of paramount importance to the commercial viability of any newspaper.

On 26 April 1900 the *Daily Express* was launched as a rival to the *Daily Mail* to exploit the new mass market for popular daily journalism which Harmsworth had opened. It innovated itself with regular news on the first page from 1901, a feature which had first been seen in 1892 in the *Morning* (Wiener, 1996) as part of this evening newspaper's distinctive shift from the respectable attraction of daily morning newspapers to the commercial classes and much more of a move towards market appeal and daily sales on the street.

## Adapting the Language of the Popular Press

The language of this journalism was as important a site of change as its visual appeal and organizational practices. Matheson has identified one of the most important shifts of the early twentieth century in the way a totally new version of journalistic language came into being and was shared to a large extent across the range from quality to popular newspapers. This involved much more editorial intervention to make copy fit the format of a paper and saw the development of house-styles which attempted to fashion a much more unified approach to using a combination of language, the standardization of layout and even the range of opinions expressed in order to create the impression of a single voice of identity throughout a paper. The role of a sub-editor was pivotal in shaping this new language in order to fit the copy into a format which allowed a newspaper to be read on the move and tailoring it to fit the space available within the pictorial and advertising space (Matheson, 2000: 565). Smith also considers the language of this period's journalism as having undergone

a fundamental change. The 'story' became the basic molecular element of journalistic reality and the distinctions of categories of news into hard and soft became reconfigured as part of its discourse (Smith, 1978: 168). By 1900 daily journalism had become an area of increasing specialization and professionalization, with sub-editors and managers of clearly delineated departments with advertising playing a more central role and more scope for the political ambitions of powerful owners. Some journalists, particularly on large national newspapers, were now becoming well paid, increasing the status if not the reputation of journalism. The journalism of this period enabled a textual inscribing of many of the major characteristics of this era in a radically restructured format:

*The entrepreneurial component of editing and publishing, the professionalization of journalists and journalism, and the transition from the wealthy, educated, leisured reader to the working, literate reader of the middle classes are inscribed in the changing cultural formations of the periodical and newspaper press throughout the period. (Brake, 1988: 10)*

## Conclusion

Some commentators, such as Leavis (1932: 182–183), have argued that the popularization of early twentieth-century mass journalism had a negative cultural effect. She claimed that the papers of Newnes, Harmsworth and Pearson created a cultural division that had not existed before. There had certainly been no evidence of mass lower-class readerships in the fare of the daily newspapers before them since this readership had remained marginalized within a lower public sphere of weekly newspapers and occasional magazines, broadsides and pamphlets. The most considerable achievement of the New Journalism was to make this reading public more tangible and – in commercially targeting the lower classes for the first time in daily newspaper form – it indicated the growing reality of the economic attractiveness of the lower classes as simultaneously a mass readership and a mass market for advertising. Certainly, it brought a further de-politicization of the working person's journalism as it sought out beneficial advertising connections that were unlikely to be associated with any form of radicalism. The political and generic implications of mass journalism have been well articulated by Tulloch:

*To assemble mass readerships, the new press had to adopt the formula of the popular Sunday press and the burgeoning magazines. Mass readerships are essentially a coalition of different tastes, interests and political positions. Newspapers had to be created that had 'something for everyone.' The process pushed newspapers towards a consensus politics that aimed to maximize the audience. (Tulloch, 2000: 142)*

The changes ushered in by the New Journalism began to make their presence felt across the whole field of journalism. The kind of headlines Stead had borrowed from

American journalism and used in the *Pall Mall Gazette* had become integrated into the layout of *The Times* by 1887, along with an extensive use of sub-headings, and soon this integration of many of the features which had begun with Newnes and Stead had become the subject of a commentary across the press, such as in this example from *The Queen* of 1900:

*This is an inquisitive age: all daily papers from the august Times downwards have now their daily column of personal news, and few are the magazines which do not publish monthly some report of an interview with this or that celebrity. So keen is the general thirst for information touching the private life of every individual. The telegraph wire and the penny post, the periodical press and the special reporter have, during the last half-century provided the curious with new and extraordinary means of gratifying their relish for personal detail. (White, 1970: 78)*

All subsequent developments within the journalism of the twentieth century and into the next have been structured by the establishment of mass-popular journalism as the dominant and defining model. Movement along the spectrum and within it, as it adds new technological dimensions, is determined by a complex negotiation with that simple observation. Modern journalism after 1896 has been a balancing act between the demands of a commercialized journalism industry and the interest and even interests of the people, either as citizens or, more often, as consumers.

## FURTHER READING

- Caterall, P., Seymour-Ure, C. and Smith, A. (eds) (2000) *Northcliffe's Legacy*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. This provides a range of commentary and critique on this most influential of newspaper men in the early twentieth century.
- Chalaby, J. (1998) *The Invention of Journalism*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Hampton, M. (2004) *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850–1950*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. This provides an overview of the ways in which views of journalism as well as the practice of journalism itself changed over a period of a hundred years. Invaluable in considering the ways in which functions and definitions of journalism have changed over time.
- Jackson, K. (2001) *George Newnes and the New Journalism in Britain, 1880–1910. Culture and Profit*. Aldershot: Ashgate. This gives a detailed account of the changes in mass print culture ushered in by this seminal figure who had an enormous influence on the popular journalism at the turn of the century.
- Wiener, J. (ed.) (1988) *Papers For the Millions: the New Journalism in Britain, 1850–1914*. New York: Greenwood. This provides a definitive exploration of the integration of the 'New Journalism' into Britain at the end of the nineteenth century and how it was to shape much of the century which followed.