

**FROM CLASSES TO MASSES**

**A Comparative Study of the  
Penny Press and Public Journalism**

**by**

**Delaney L. Turner**

**Graduate School of Journalism  
Faculty of Information and Media Studies**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts**

**Faculty of Graduate Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario  
May, 1998**

**© Delaney L. Turner 1998**



National Library  
of Canada

Acquisitions and  
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Acquisitions et  
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-30703-4

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the origins and impact of the so-called penny, or peoples' press in the United States and Canada. It then examines the origins and goals of public journalism, a form of journalism being practiced in newsrooms across the U.S. In each chapter, this thesis examines the political, social, economic and technological factors that influenced the press in both countries. This thesis rests on the contention that there are several parallels between the penny press and public journalism, most notably in the journalist's responsibility to democracy. Also examined is the concept of objectivity and the constraints it places on journalists. Research took the form of a literature review, with additional personal and telephone interviews. Research confirms many of these parallels, particularly in the journalist's commitment to the democratic process 100 years apart. The most notable exception to these parallels is the perceived impact of the internet on public journalism.

**KEYWORDS:** corporatism, democracy, internet, newspapers, niche marketing  
objectivity, penny press, peoples' press, public journalism, telegraph

## **EPIGRAPH**

**Just as the sense of community will have to be restored to maintain the vitality of a mass society, so the newspaper that is to survive as a viable institution will have to rediscover its relations to a true community.**

**Louis Lyons**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Though my name appears on the title page, this thesis was hardly a solo effort. I would like to thank Professor Andrew Osler, for his invaluable input and guidance. His insights added considerable richness, if also considerable additional pages to the work.

A note of thanks is extended also to Dr. George Kerr, for giving my work that sober second look.

Finally, I would like to extend my eternal gratitude to my parents, for their love, patience and understanding in this often frustrating, sometimes daunting and always challenging endeavour.

*Delaney L. Turner*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Certificate of Examination	ii
Abstract	iii
Epigraph	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vi

### CHAPTER ONE: HYPOTHESIS

Introduction	1
“What Hath God Wrought?”	4
The Daily Schoolhouse	6
The Canadian Connection	8
A Troubled Estate	11

### CHAPTER TWO: THE AMERICAN PRECEDENT

Introduction	15
Jacksonian Democracy and the Common Man	16
Social Changes - Immigration and Reform	21
Penny Pioneers: The Editors	22
Penny Pioneers: The Journalists	25
Dawn of the Democratic Consciousness	26
Press Criticism, 1800 - 1850	27
The Telegraph - Central Nervous System for the Nation	31
Civil War - The Emergence of Industrial America	35
The Civil War's Effect on the Press and its Readers	37
The Industrial City - Democracy by Osmosis	38
The Post-Civil War Reform Movement	42
The Penny Press Grows Up - The Editor as Reformer	43
Advertising - The Double-Edged Sword	49
Muckrakers and College Boys - The New Journalists	52
Press Criticism, 1850 - 1900	53

### CHAPTER THREE: CANADA CATCHES UP

Introduction	58
Toronto's Humble Origins	58
Loyalism and Anti-Americanism	60
Methodism and the Democratic Impetus	64
“The People”	65
The Colonial Press	66
William Lyon Mackenzie	66
The Colonial Press' Failures	69
The Colonial Press' Successes	70
Canada in Transition, 1850 - 1880	71
George Brown and The Globe	74
Confederation	78
Industrial Toronto	79
Immigration - New Faces, New Skills	81
Labour - An Impetus for Reform	81
John Ross Robertson and the Telegram	83

<b>Reform and Community-Building</b>	<b>85</b>
Advertising - Farewell, Victoria	88
News - Information and Entertainment	90
The Role of the Journalist	91
Myth-Making and Anti-Americanism	92
Joseph E. Atkinson and the Star	97
Social Harmony - Loyalism Revisited	98
Press and Business - Ownership Questions	99
Papers and Politicians	100

## **PUBLIC JOURNALISM - COMING FULL CIRCLE**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>102</b>
The Democratic Essentials	102
The Roots of Political Cynicism	104
The Corporatist Agenda	113
The Objectivity Question - from Lippmann to Rosen	119
Institutional Inertia	127
Advertising - Finding Their Niche	128
The Problems with Corporate Ownership	132
File Not Found - The Wired Journalist	133
Back to Basics - Public Journalism in Theory and Practice	134
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>VITA</b>	<b>170</b>

## CHAPTER ONE - HYPOTHESIS

### Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. First, to compare the role played by the peoples' press in the United States and Canada in the evolution of a democratic consciousness; second, to compare the peoples' press to public, or civic journalism as currently practiced in many modern newsrooms. Public journalism attempts to reconnect newspapers and their readers by promoting citizen participation to resolve long-standing social and political problems. This thesis rests on the contention that despite the substantial changes that newspaper journalism has undergone in the intervening decades, there are several parallels between these developments. Both emerged in times of rapid social and economic change, both were affected by advances in technology (i.e. the World Wide Web may be to public journalism what the steam press and telegraph were to the peoples' press), and both call into question the role of the journalist in their respective democratic societies. This thesis does not focus so much on the intricacies of government operations, rather it examines citizens' attitudes toward their government, and the role newspapers play in creating those attitudes.

While the peoples' press in the United States developed in major urban centres such as Baltimore, Boston, Chicago and New York, this thesis is concerned primarily with those newspapers published in New York City. It was there that the peoples' press attained the greatest significance in contemporary journalism - the New York Times began as a penny paper. Second, New York City's cultural, economic and political influence on Toronto was a key factor in that city's rise as an important urban centre in Canada. Between 1890 and 1900, Toronto mirrored the economic, social, political and technological changes that had already taken place in New York.

The decade of the 1830s in the U.S. was a time of technological, social, political and economic change on a national scale. It was a decade that saw the arrival of the peoples' press in 1833. The New York Herald, first published on 6 May 1835 by James Gordon Bennett, was truly a revolution in American journalism. The Herald was not the first "official" penny paper (Benjamin Day's New York Sun, first published in 1833, holds that honour), but it was no less a revolutionary paper in several respects. First, the Herald was a representation and embodiment of technological and social changes in the U.S at the time. These changes included the advent of the steam press (and later, the telegraph), immigration and urbanization, a new political egalitarianism and the beginnings of industrial America. All these factors contributed to the rise of an urban middle class in America, whose members constituted the Herald's main

readership. Second, the Herald ushered in a new social role for the press in the United States.

Prior to the arrival of the Herald, American journalism was largely dominated by an elite party press. It was the mission of these papers not so much to make a profit, as to promote the ideology of their respective parties. Whereas the party papers were dependent on subsidies and subscriptions, the Herald (and every penny paper that followed its lead) relied on advertising and street sales. Although Bennett began the Herald with a mere \$500 (Baldasty 46), running a newspaper was already becoming too expensive for the subsidies that had sustained the party press. The transition from subsidies to advertising was one of the most important factors in shaping the peoples' press.

The Herald professed a decidedly different mandate than that of the party papers. Its emphasis was on news; more specifically, it focused on what became known as the "human interest story." Most often this meant stories about sex, crime, sports and other happenings considered trivial (and sometimes offensive) by the established papers. The Herald also sought a new audience. While the established papers catered to New York's business and political elites (a rather small portion of the population), the Herald addressed a growing urban readership consisting in large part of workingmen and immigrants. On 6 May 1835, Bennett writes in his first editorial that the paper "endeavor[s] to record facts on every public and proper subject, stripped of verbiage and coloring, with comments when suitable, just, independent, fearless and good tempered" (qtd. in Baldasty 47).

The appearance of the Herald also coincided with a new trend among the American public - a loosening of the formalities surrounding party politics. Not only was this a popular sentiment; many politicians also had embraced a new, egalitarian independence in the interest of the "common man." While running for the presidency in 1848, Zachary Taylor professed no opinions, boasted no party loyalty and offered no platform. His sole mission was "to serve the people" (Baldasty 45).

This attitude was not a passing phenomenon. By 1850, there was in the U.S. a widely held belief that political parties were unresponsive and beyond popular control. American political culture was characterized by "a malignant distrust of politicians as self-centred and corrupt wire pullers" (Baldasty 45). By 1870, "political culture no longer was central to the lives of Americans, and no longer central to their newspapers. People did not cynically abandon or avoid the world of politics, but it no longer served such an important function in their lives as it once had done" (Baldasty 45).

It was not that Americans had abandoned politics completely; rather, they were eschewing the country's traditional political parties in favour of an aggressive egalitarianism. The 1830s was the period of Jacksonian Democracy, in which "the country was transformed from a liberal mercantilist republic, still cradled in aristocratic values, family and deference, to an egalitarian market democracy, where money had new power, the individual new standing, and the pursuit of self-interest new honor" (Schudson, News 44).

It was this new egalitarian sentiment that fueled Bennett's Herald, and indeed much of the peoples' press. Although Bennett had previously written for party publications such as the New York Courier and the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian, the Herald actively rejected this model. In his first editorial, Bennett states: "We shall support no party, be the organ of no faction or COTERIE, and care nothing for any election or any candidate from president down to a constable" (qtd. in Baldasty 47).

Not only did Bennett capitalize on Americans' changing political sentiments, he envisioned a radical new role for the press in American society. His Herald would address not a transplanted Old World aristocracy, but a growing, affluent middle class. The stories contained in his paper would run the gamut of all possible interests. His first editorial outlines this mission with almost excessive enthusiasm:

I mean to make The Herald the great organ of social life, the prime element of civilization, the channel through which native talent, native genius and native power may bubble up daily . . . I shall mix together commerce and business, pure religion and morals, literature and poetry . . . till The Herald shall outstrip everything in the conception of man . . . This is the age of the Daily Press, inspired with the accumulated wisdom of past ages, enriched with the spoils of history, and looking forward to a millennium . . . the happiest and most splendid ever yet known in the measured span of eternity (qtd. in Pickett 91).

For a newspaper that gave its readers a steady diet of scandal and sports, this was indeed a lofty goal. But the formula proved successful. By 1839, the Herald's circulation was equal to that of the Times of London (Schudson, News 54), and by 1840, its circulation of 51,000 was the highest in New York City (Baldasty 47). Bennett shamelessly promoted his success, a trait that was soon adopted by most penny papers of the era: "No newspaper establishment, in this or any other country, has ever attained so extensive a circulation, or is read by so many of the business, educated and intelligent classes" (qtd. in Schudson, News 54).

### **“What Hath God Wrought?”**

All of the trends first pioneered by the Herald were accelerated (and facilitated) by the arrival of the telegraph. The first telegraph line, established in 1844, stretched from Washington to Baltimore. The completion of the transatlantic cable in 1866 allowed papers to print foreign news as it happened. By 1861, much of the United States was connected by the “singing wire.” While Bennett can be credited with inventing the concept of the “human interest story,” it was the expansion of the telegraph that accounted for its rapid acceptance into the journalistic landscape of the era.

The arrival of electric communications had a profound impact on journalism in two ways. First, it drastically altered the concept of what constituted news. Second, it altered the role of the press in American (and later, Canadian) society. In the era of the party press, “news” was most often lengthy political analysis and verbatim records of party conventions. However, the telegraph, with its ability to transmit in seconds breaking news from across the country, made the human interest story possible. As Marshall McLuhan states, it was not so much the subject matter of the story that created this new dynamic, but its immediacy: “The ‘human interest’ dimension is simply that of immediacy of participating in the experience of others that occurs with instant information” (McLuhan, Understanding Media 253).

The speed of the telegraph also allowed daily transmission and collection of human interest stories from across the country. The volume of wire stories became so great that by 1848, only four years after its first practical demonstration by Samuel Morse, several New York newspapers agreed to share the cost of the wires in exchange for a common pool of stories. For editors such as Bennett and later, Joseph Pulitzer, printing an assortment of such stories was easier, cheaper and more profitable than had been the long political essays of the party press.

The peoples’ press helped to shape a new American lexicon as rapid technological developments left their mark on the American vocabulary. The pyramid lead (putting the most important information at the top of the story) was born out of the high cost of telegraph wire services and space limitations in the newspaper. As the telegraph spread, so did the need for standardized language devoid of as many local colloquialisms as possible: “Facts, facts, nothing but facts. So many peas at so much a peck; so much molasses at so much a quart. The index of forbidden words was very lengthy, and misuse of them . . . was punishable by suspension without pay or immediate discharge” (Schudson, News 77). This new, standardized reporting would

come to known as the “objective” news story. It is one of the most contentious legacies of the telegraph, and will be examined in more detail in the following chapters.

The standardized language emerged out of necessity as well as out of America’s egalitarian ethic. On a pragmatic level, large headlines and simple language could be easily understood by the non-English speakers who made up a large portion of the penny press’ readership. They could also be read quickly on the streetcar: “For the first time in human history, people other than the very wealthy could . . . ride in vehicles they were not responsible for driving. Their eyes and hands were free; they could read on the bus” (Schudson, News 103).

As the number of wire stories appearing in American newspapers increased, so too did the social dimension of the newspaper. While the party papers had been written from (and for) a single point of view, the diversity of writers and subjects provided by wire stories created what McLuhan refers to as a mosaic. It was this diversity that both reflected and appealed to the new breed of newspaper reader: “The press is a group confessional form that provides communal participation . . . [It] is the daily communal exposure of multiple items in juxtaposition that gives the press its complex dimension of human interest” (McLuhan, Understanding Media 183).

By printing a variety of wire stories from across the country, newspapers created a reciprocal dynamic among their readers. Simply put, readers found that reading about themselves in the newspaper (or people just like themselves) was new and exciting: “Experience translated into a new medium literally bestows a delightful playback of earlier awareness. The press repeats the excitement we have in using our wits, and by using our wits we can translate the outer world into the fabric of our own being” (McLuhan, Understanding Media 211). In this case it was both the content of the articles and the newspaper itself that helped the newspaper reader of the 1830s understand his society and participate in it. This could not have happened before the arrival of the telegraph.

In addition, the party press depended heavily on Washington, D.C. as its news source. In this respect, the decentralizing effect of the telegraph spelled the end of that city as the dominant source of news in the U.S.: “The telegraph and the fast press in the metropolitan areas destroyed the power of the party press, the post office, the exchange system and state capitals . . . Issues were no longer settled in congress. The metropolitan press destroyed a centrally directed government” (Innis 170).

When discussing the impact of electric communications on the press, it is important not to overlook the organic qualities of the two. Robert Park has described the newspaper as having an organic quality. Once established, Park contends, its

evolution is not predictable, but subject to a number of external factors: "The newspaper, like the modern city, is not wholly a rational product. No one sought to make it just what it is. In spite of all the efforts of individual men and generations of men to control it and make it something after their own heart, it has continued to grow and change in its own incalculable ways" (qtd. in Schudson, News 40).

The impact of the telegraph went beyond simply speeding up communications in the United States. It created in the population an external central nervous system by which the entire country was able to communicate with itself instantaneously. As McLuhan states, the electricity that passed through the telegraph wires acted as a new "social hormone," whose functioning paralleled that of nerve impulses to the human brain:

Electricity may be said to have outered the central nervous system itself, including the brain. Our central nervous system is a unified field without segments . . . The simultaneous transmission of electric communications, also characteristic of our central nervous system, makes each of us present and accessible to every other person in the world (Understanding Media 247).

It was this instant participation in national affairs that played a major role in the evolution of a democratic consciousness in American newspapers and in their readers.

### **"The Daily Schoolhouse"**

Bennett's Herald inspired a number of competitors. These included Henry Raymond's New York Times (1851) and Horace Greeley's New York Tribune (1841). Later, Joseph Pulitzer's New York World (1883) and William Randolph Hearst's New York Evening Journal (1882) would engage in vicious circulation battles. While the editorial mission of these papers took vastly different courses as time went on (the Tribune was a haven for radical political thinking), they shared similar layout and physical production. More importantly, intense competition among these papers for the city's enthusiastic readership created a dynamic much wider in scale than one individual paper - a democratic consciousness.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, a definite shift began to occur in New York newspapers. After acquiring the New York Times as a failing penny paper in 1896, Adolph Ochs refashioned it as a respectable publication. In contrast to Pulitzer's Herald, the Times set about establishing a reputation for dependable, impartial news. As Schudson explains:

The Times wrote for the rational person or the person whose life was orderly. It presented articles as useful

knowledge, not as revelation. The World . . . created a sense that everything was new, unusual and unpredictable . . . If the World's readers might have longed for more control of their lives, the readers of the Times may have wished for more nutrients in theirs (News 119).

Under the leadership of Joseph Pulitzer, the New York World undertook the task of educating newcomers about their new country. Pulitzer intended the World to provide its readers with both editorial leadership and useful news. In his own words, he wanted the World to be "both a daily schoolhouse and a daily forum - both a daily teacher and a daily tribune" (qtd. in Schudson, News 98).

As a result, the peoples' press in the United States not only began to reflect the social contract of its day, newspapers such as the New York World, the New York Tribune and the New York Times took an active part in shaping it: "The press is a daily action . . . made out of just about everything in the community. By the mosaic means, it is made into a communal image or cross section" (McLuhan, Understanding Media 212).

An important element of this emerging social contract was an active promotion of democracy and civic responsibility. In his first editorial, dated 11 May 1883, Pulitzer writes:

There is room in this great and growing city for a journal that is not only cheap but bright, not only bright but large, not only large but Democratic - dedicated to the cause of the people rather than of purse potentates - devoted more to the news of the New than of the Old World - that will expose all fraud and sham, fight all public evils and abuses - that will serve and battle for the people with earnest sincerity (qtd. in Pickett 179).

There was little reason to doubt Pulitzer's ambitions. Born near Budapest in 1847 to Jewish parents, Pulitzer understood the hardships facing emigrants to the New World. Before buying the World in 1883, he had campaigned for urban improvements and against corruption in the pages of his St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Like Bennett, his formula also was immensely successful. The first issue of the World under his stewardship sold out.

It was not long before Pulitzer's World began having an impact on the other New York dailies. The biggest change was in the balance sheets. The World's skyrocketing circulation forced the Times, the Tribune and the Herald all to reduce their prices by one cent. Pulitzer also was the first to rationalize advertising rates, setting a fixed rate based on circulation. Before this change, circulation figures were most often exaggerated, and even Bennett had been hostile to running large ads.

With Pulitzer's arrival, journalists also began to modify their opinions regarding their occupation. The job that in the 1830s had been populated by a large number of proud and ignorant drunks was now home to sober and college-educated men. The 1890s saw the advent of journalism manuals and university courses:

Reporters came to share a common world of work . . .  
 [They] believed strongly that it was their job to get the facts and to be colorful. In their allegiance to facts, reporters of the nineteenth century breathed the same air that conditioned the rise of the expert in politics, the development of scientific management, the triumph of realism in literature, and the "revolt against formalism" in philosophy, the social sciences, history and law (Schudson, News 71).

### The Canadian Connection

The development of the press in Canada followed much the same route as did the press in the U.S. And it attained much the same status as that of the popular American newspapers. Quite remarkable, though, was the speed with which this was achieved. At the same time that Benjamin Day was recording record profits with his New York Sun, William Lyon Mackenzie was amassing considerable personal debt with his Colonial Advocate. In less than a century, however, a considerable number of Canadian newspapers evolved from the small, one-man operations of Mackenzie and Joseph Howe into mature, respectable publications such as George Brown's Globe. By the turn of the century, newspapers such as the Toronto Telegram and the Toronto Star were for Canadian readers as important as were the World and the Times in the U.S.

Like Pulitzer's New York World, Joseph E. Atkinson's Toronto Star also championed the "common man." But while in the U.S. the peoples' press enjoyed almost exponential growth (fueled by both a booming industrial economy and massive immigration), in Canada the road was considerably more difficult. There are several reasons for this, the first being the fact that the first printing press in Canada did not arrive until 1791. Canada's meagre and sparse population also was a major impediment. While New York was sufficiently populous, wealthy and vibrant to support a mass press as early as 1835, during the same period in Toronto it was not uncommon to see farmers chasing pigs down Bay Street (Kilbourn 6). While Americans were investing heavily in mass-transit systems, much of Canada was still wilderness; a heavy downpour could render most of Toronto impassable. It was not until the late 1860s that Canada could fully support a mass-circulation daily such as the Toronto Telegram.

An equally important factor in Canada's tardy press development was its lack of democracy. Popular sovereignty in the U.S. had made economic growth the prime force in the country's development. In the process, aristocratic values gave way to a strong egalitarian ethic.

Upper Canada, however, was not so fortunate, in that there was little movement toward liberalized institutions prior to the 1837 Rebellion. While the colonial government did provide for an elected House of Assembly, grievances brought before its members had little chance of reaching the ears of those who held the real power. Members of the House of Assembly, though elected, had no official say in legislation. Executive power was concentrated in the hands of a Lieutenant-Governor, who appointed ministers for life and was answerable only to the Secretary of State in Britain.

Nor was there a strong sentiment for popular sovereignty in Upper Canada. With the War of 1812 still fresh in many peoples' memories, democracy was often equated with treason. The years following the war had seen many American sympathizers take up residence south of the border. Combined with the lack of public accountability, the political climate of Upper Canada was one of paralysis: "The Tories did not have to justify their behaviour to anyone in the colony because they held office in spite of popular disapproval. The Reformers did not have to weigh their criticisms or their promises because they would not be in position to act upon them" (Kilbourn 31).

The disparity between the two emerging nations is explained succinctly by Alexis de Tocqueville in Democracy in America: "On passing from a country in which free institutions are established to one where they do not exist, the traveler is struck by the change . . . [I]n the one, melioration and progress are the general topic of inquiry; in the other, it seems as if the community only aspired to repose in the enjoyment of the advantages which it has acquired" (Tocqueville 270).

In the case of Upper Canada, these advantages were more symbolic than material, embodied chiefly in the paternalistic protection of the British Empire: "To them . . . Britain meant, more than anything, the red-coated grenadier, the Union Jack, the crimson patches on the map of the globe, the sum of which stood for law and order and decency in a world that would go rapidly to the dogs without them" (Kilbourn 28).

Upper Canada's road to a democratic consciousness began with William Lyon Mackenzie. While it would be premature to label him as a public journalist, parallels can be drawn between his efforts to bring Responsible government to Canada and those in the public journalism movement in the United States. Much of what appeared in the Colonial Advocate was the result of Mackenzie's speaking directly with his readers.

Among the several papers he founded in his lifetime, the Colonial Advocate and the Constitution were both virulent opponents of the colonial power structure and a forum for the common man of the era.

The erratic, unpredictable Scotsman also shared many of the characteristics of American democrats. He was an admirer of Andrew Jackson, and several years after his failed Rebellion in 1837, he worked as a reporter for Horace Greely's New York Tribune. Mackenzie's status as an independent in the House of Assembly paralleled the growing anti-party sentiment south of the border. One of his major achievements in the House - the Report of Grievances - came about after countless interviews and petitions carried out while scouring the countryside around York (Kilbourn 123).

Most importantly, Mackenzie's sympathies always fell to the common people. In print and in person, he constantly promoted their interests in opposition to Upper Canada's ruling elites. Mackenzie himself had grown up in poverty. To him, the Family Compact's stranglehold on power was the largest impediment in alleviating poverty in the colony.

The same principles can be found in Joseph Atkinson. Both grew up in impoverished surroundings, both were possessed of a strong moral sense (in this case, Methodism), both were committed to social justice, and most importantly, both men defended the interests of the common people in their newspapers. One difference between the two is that the common people of Atkinson's day were not farmers, but Toronto's industrial class. And while Mackenzie ran huge debts in printing his Colonial Advocate, by 1890 newspaper economics in Canada had caught up to the American model - the profit motive was an integral part of the newspaper's operations.

By 1900, there existed little difference between the Toronto Star and the New York World, either in reporting style or in layout. But while the end product in both countries was similar, their evolutions followed different paths. The colonial press in Canada evolved in a strongly Victorian context in which individual political freedom was less important than deference and loyalty.

This began to change, however, with the arrival of Joseph Atkinson at the Toronto Star. While it is true that many of its headlines praised God and Country, Atkinson was far from a Monarchist. Like his American counterparts, his views on social and political reform were rooted not in the writings of Karl Marx, but of John Stuart Mill. Like his Liberal ally Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Atkinson strongly believed in a North American free-trading zone. Although the paper was a fervent champion of trade unions and public ownership of utilities, such a stance was born out of the liberal belief in freedom of association and economic expediency:

Whether specific wrongs were corrected by socialistic means or otherwise was to him a matter of expediency rather than of principle. And since this was only a matter of expediency, he could support measures that were socialistic without being a socialist, or use the methods of capitalism when they better suited the purpose he sought to further (Harkness 9).

Atkinson's support for organized labour was part of the Star's history - the paper was founded by printers laid off from E.E. Sheppard's Toronto News. At the time Atkinson took charge, the Star was "the only exclusively evening paper in the city employing union labour" (Harkness 21). The growth of the Toronto Star between 1900 and 1914 also was helped by the "Laurier Boom," a period of industrialization, immigration and economic growth similar to that of New York 20 years earlier.

### A Troubled Estate

By 1900, the people's press had laid down the conventions of modern print journalism: the use of large headlines and illustrations, the pyramid lead, simple, standardized language and the adoption of objectivity all date back to the foundations established by the New York Herald.

These conventions are now held sacred among journalists and journalism educators: any deviation from these time-worn codes is looked on as, at best, incompetence, at worst, subversion. But however useful these conventions have been in providing useful, timely information, there are now signs that they are no longer working. More precisely, there is mounting evidence that readers are unreceptive to the information journalists are providing. Numerous surveys in both Canada and the United States indicate that a growing number of people now see the media (in all its forms) as a barrier, not as a solution, to long-standing problems. Many citizens look upon journalists, especially those in the elite national press, as having little or no interest in their own concerns. In addition, a large portion of newspapers in Canada and the United States are owned either by large corporations whose commitment to democracy is tenuous at best; or by entrepreneurs such as Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black, whose right-wing, free-market political views are thought to jeopardize the presence of differing political viewpoints in their newspapers.

This is a dangerous trend. Along with a solid public education system, a vibrant press offering a variety of opinions is essential to ensure a free and democratic society. The United States and Canada are active promoters of democracy around the world. Yet there is a widely held sentiment among their citizens that their own democratic societies are under siege. A global economy, more fluid movement of goods and capital and the

information explosion all have eroded the political and economic sovereignty of nations around the world.

Newspapers in North America have reacted to these charges in a number of ways. Readership surveys, layout changes and special “happy news” sections are among the tactics newspapers have used to regain their readers’ trust. For the most part, however, these changes have amounted to little more than window dressing: “[Some] contend that the gap between journalists and the shrinking consumer pool is simply a matter of discovering the right formula: a magical new color weather map, just the right mauve and off-white news set, a highly-targeted demographic niche . . . But all these arguments . . . trivialize the problems” (Merritt 10).

However, several newspapers in the United States have begun a movement entitled public, or civic journalism - a practice that views the reader as an active citizen, not, as in the language of the corporate world, a news consumer. What the practitioners of public journalism have recognized, in declining readership, voter apathy and a sometimes undisguised hostility towards the media in general, is that their readers no longer feel served by their product. And in spite of charges of boosterism by the established press, the practitioners of public journalism realize that journalists do indeed have an active role to play in society, a role that involves much more than detached observation. This is not a new idea. Rather, it can be traced to the foundations of American democracy: “A paper . . . takes up the notion or the feeling which had occurred simultaneously, but singly, to each [man]. All are then immediately guided toward this beacon; all these wandering minds . . . at length meet and unite” (Tocqueville 120).

Public journalists also realize that objectivity is a flawed construct that has contributed greatly to the disconnect between the media and their constituents. They contend that the increasing fragmentation of North American society is making true public debate increasingly difficult: “In a society of scattered individuals glutted with contextless information, effective public life must have shared, relevant information and a place to discuss its implication. Only free and independent journalists can provide these things” (Merritt xi).

While the peoples’ press reflected an era of nation building, public journalism is concerned with nation re-building. As part of aggressive promotion campaigns, many prominent New York dailies of the penny press era funded large-scale civic projects, and actively enlisted the help of their readers in their completion. The New York World’s campaign to solicit pennies for the base of the Statue of Liberty raised over \$100,000: “This enabled the World to picture itself as the champion of working people,

to criticize the ‘luxurious classes,’ and to promote simultaneously the city of New York, the mass of ordinary citizens, and, of course, the *New York World*” (Schudson, *News 106*).

While it is true that most editors of the penny press era were unabashed capitalists, their papers, particularly Pulitzer’s *World*, addressed their readers’ concerns in simple language that gave the sense that they were an important part of their new society. In this sense, the press (and by extension, journalists) were participants in their society, acting for the greater good. One hundred years later, practitioners of public journalism are trying to engage their readers in tackling long-standing social problems in their communities such as crime and racial tensions. That Pulitzer instilled in newspapers their obligations to social reform and democracy is one of the few saving graces of an industry known primarily for sensation and exploitation.

What is interesting to note is that both the peoples’ press and public journalism are both founded on the same principles.

One key difference, however, is that public journalism is a concerted, organized effort. Instead of handing their readers the news from upon high, public journalists listen to citizen’ concerns with a belief that when people feel involved in their media, they feel less cynical toward journalists and the public officials they write about.

This is not a new concept. Tocqueville suggests that when the civic life of a community is in good health, “feelings and opinions are recruited, the heart is enlarged, and the human mind is developed by no other means than by the reciprocal influence of men upon each other” (Tocqueville 117). According to Tocqueville, these influences must be created, and newspapers are the best way to achieve this.

Public journalists also realize that the polarized format of most political coverage both attracts and promotes extreme opinions which alienate the majority of readers: “Discussions about solutions degenerate into shouting matches across an ideological gap that is a false construct of extremes designed by politicians and perpetuated by journalists” (Merritt 3).

Another area of concern on both sides of the border is the growing consolidation of newspapers into fewer and fewer hands. In Canada, Conrad Black has a controlling interest in the majority of Canadian newspapers - this despite two royal commissions denouncing concentration of media ownership and a great deal of handwringing among journalists themselves. Although Black professes not to interfere with the editorial content of his papers, the emphasis on profitability that now dominates the boardrooms of his newspapers has more than one journalist worried about the diversity of content in the Canadian print media. The same can be said in the

U.S., where most newspapers are owned by chains such as Gannett and Knight-Ridder.

What public journalists want to restore is a middle ground to public debate in America. They believe most people to hold moderate viewpoints which, given the paradigms of modern newspapering, are systematically shut out. This middle ground “is not simple compromise . . . Rather it represents a shared conclusion about what is best, all things considered and in the circumstance for everyone. A public judgment never loses sight of the importance of the good things that might have to be assigned relatively less emphasis in order to resolve a conflict. (Merritt 104).

The current media climate in North America, however, favours sound bites over depth, ideology over consensus.

## CHAPTER TWO - THE AMERICAN PRECEDENT

### Introduction

This chapter will examine the roots and evolution of the penny press in the United States. It has been stated that this new form of journalism grew out of the needs of the emerging industrial America, which saw the country undergo four major changes: political, social, economic and technological. With the election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency in 1829, a new mood of political and social egalitarianism began sweeping country. Rail transport began to open up America's domestic market, just as techniques of mass production were being perfected.

Throughout the century, the promise of personal economic improvement was a powerful force in the growth the American dream. The years following the Civil War saw the American economy evolve from its mercantilist beginnings to an industrial powerhouse. Between the years 1830 and 1900, the country's social fabric was greatly changed. Westward expansion and settlement during the 1830s brought professionals, farmers and journalists to the frontier. During the 1880s, industrial centres such as New York and Chicago attracted waves of immigrants from Italy, eastern Europe and Scandinavia. Fleeing religious persecution and in search of a better life in the New World, these immigrants would make up the majority of the penny press' readership. However, none of these factors would have brought such dramatic changes in American life without the corresponding changes in technology. In addition to developing rail transport, the invention of the steam cylinder press and the telegraph shaped the modern definition of news, and ushered in the age of the mass circulation daily. The telegraph brought diverse regions of the country into instant contact with each other as was never before possible, and the enormous steam presses distributed fast-breaking news on an industrial scale. The combination of these four factors dramatically rewrote the social contract in America, and the most important vehicle for disseminating this new reality was the penny press.

What has not been examined in detail, however, is the role of Reform in American journalism. While it is widely acknowledged that the country saw at least two major periods in which Reform was prominent, its influence on American journalism is widely ignored. This is an unfortunate oversight, as Reform is as central to American life as is the press itself. In addition to their circulation wars and self-promotional stunts, the practitioners of peoples' journalism were greatly interested in promoting democratic ideals and improving the living standards of their readership. American economic progress had come at a high social cost, as the great majority of the people who worked to produce the goods sold in department stores managed only a meagre

existence in harrowing slums. Newspapers such as Horace Greeley's New York Tribune and Joseph Pulitzer's New York World were just as passionate in their crusade for circulation as they were in their campaigns for urban and social reform. An important element in both Reform movements was the journalist himself. As the century progressed, it was the socially conscious and increasingly well-educated journalist who embodied Reform and democracy. Contrary to the climate in which many of today's journalists work, reporters of the penny press era were looked upon by readers as champions of the new democratic ideals. This is an important legacy of the penny press that has been overshadowed by present-day concerns about the economics of journalism.

This chapter also will examine Americans' attitudes towards the press in a social context. Press criticism came into being soon after Benjamin Day began printing his New York Sun. Not only did the penny press lay the groundwork for contemporary journalistic practices, it also brought about contemporary journalistic problems. Partisanism, subservience to advertising and sensationalism have posed difficulties for over a century.

The central theme of this chapter is that the news that came out of the penny press was a product of the industrial revolution, produced and treated in much the same way as the mass-produced goods advertised in its pages. As Davis Merritt illustrates:

Journalism is not only a literary art; it is an industrial art. The inverted pyramid, the 5 W's lead . . . are just as much a product of industrialization as tin cans. The methods, procedures and canons of journalism were developed not only to satisfy the demands of the profession, but to meet the needs of the industry to turn out a mass-produced commodity . . . [I]n this sense, the techniques of journalism defined what is considered to be real (16).

While the penny press gave its readers the language and forum with which to participate in their industrial society, neither the United States, nor Canada, remains an industrial society. It was during the last century that journalism became a social institution. And in that respect, all institutions are subject to social and political change.

### **Jacksonian Democracy and the Common Man**

Above all, Andrew Jackson's presidency was characterized by a faith in the common man. Jackson had grown up in poverty, and even after rising to national prominence, his sympathies remained with those people whose situation closely

mirrored that of his own: "Jackson was one of the few presidents whose heart and soul were completely with the plain people. He sympathized with them and believed in them partly because he had always been one of them" (Nevins and Commager 165). His presidency also was marked by a rejection of the entrenched privileges of the east, particularly the intricacies and influence of its banks. Jackson's support lay among the pioneers, small planters, shopkeepers, laborers and immigrants who were committed to improving their social standing without the benefits of the eastern social establishment. "They did not believe for a minute that the great prizes of public life were reserved for the rich, the well-born, and the educated" (Nevins and Commager 166). Jackson also was popular among religious congregations such as the Methodists, Baptists and Campbellites, whose demonstrative gatherings and democratic structures were the opposite of eastern deference and restraint.

What Jackson's supporters had in common was their experience of the frontier. Regardless of their previous life experience, education or social standing, the hardships of the American west irrevocably shaped the politics of every settler: "It was more than a line - it was a social process. It encouraged individual initiative; it made for political and economic democracy; it roughened manners; it broke down conservatism; it had a spirit of local self-determination coupled with a respect for national authority" (Nevins and Commager 175).

Jackson's supporters made up the third wave of settlers to the west. Unlike previous migrations, these people left a lasting impression on America's social fabric. It was they who built what would become the economic and social infrastructure: "In short, they represented the more enduring forces in American civilization" (Nevins and Commager 177). In addition, these settlers were imbuing their children with the new egalitarian ethos: "By 1830, more than half the Americans had been brought up in an environment in which old world traditions were absent or very weak . . . Men were valued . . . for what they could do" (Nevins and Commager 178).

However, none of Jackson's egalitarian ideals would have been brought to fruition had the country's political machinery not changed as well. Fortunately, his tenure as president was marked by unprecedented advances in election procedures, most notably in the election of the president. In 1800, under the Electoral College system envisioned by Thomas Jefferson, the legislature had chosen the presidential electors in 10 states, and the people in only six (Brinkley 245). By 1828, electors were chosen by popular vote in every state except South Carolina. Much of this was due to the spread of democracy in the 11 frontier states, which had either granted white

manhood suffrage outright, or erected only nominal barriers against it (Hicks 224). This in turn resulted many eastern states abolishing or greatly reducing their own property qualifications for voting. As John Hicks observes, increased suffrage had reduced the Electoral College to a mere formality: "No longer were the people satisfied, as Jefferson had supposed they would be, to fill the offices from among their betters. Popular rule had come to mean that the common people should choose their rulers from among themselves . . . [T]he masses in a good majority of the states had the ballot [and] they had acquired the will to use it" (224).

The influence of the frontier states on the country's electoral procedures resulted in the number of registered voters nearly doubling to 2.4 million (Nevins and Commager 166). Consequently, the expansion of voting rights forced aspiring politicians to change their attitudes toward "mob rule." By 1840, universal white manhood suffrage was so widely supported that to have ever advocated anything else had become a liability (Williamson, qtd. in Schudson, News 17). In addition, the according of political rights to members of that "mob" left a powerful impression on the country's political attitudes: "The old cleavage so sharply visible between the good deportment of the gentry and the wretched deportment of the 'mob' had been largely obliterated" (Nevins and Commager 170).

That he assumed power on the eve of the first penny papers is of great significance as well. Jackson was greatly interested in spreading the ideals of political and social equality, and he saw the press as the perfect vehicle for spreading that message. He appointed more journalists and editors to political office than had any previous president. In 1829, the National Journal listed 40 journalists he had appointed. By 1832, that number had grown to 57 (Dicken-Garcia 102). Jackson also was the first president to seek public approval not through eloquent oratory, but through newspapers. In this respect, he had put into practice political techniques that were indeed innovative: "By the 1820's the traditional belief that political leaders must be eloquent leaders able to persuade the educated elite had given way to the view that they must appeal directly to the public and be capable of persuading the masses and shaping public opinion" (Schlesinger, qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 38). This shift brought American democracy one step closer to the common man: "As poor farmers and workers gained the ballot, there developed a type of politician that had existed only in embryo in the Jeffersonian period . . . These leaders encouraged the common feeling that popular will should control the choice of public offices and the formation of public policy" (Hofstadter 49).

Americans' new-found enthusiasm for Jacksonian Democracy was still spreading rapidly when it received approval from Europe. Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America remains a perceptive and relevant examination of American society on the cusp of the Industrial Revolution. Not only does its author explain the American democratic experiment to Europe, Tocqueville's insights on the role of the press in that society also offer proof that Americans' views towards the printed word were very similar to those held by English libertarians. In addition, Tocqueville's views on the ability of popular democracy to create considerable economic prosperity serve to highlight the difference between the U.S. and Canada. Tocqueville saw problems with the American model, most notably the possibility for the tyranny of the majority, but he commended the economic and social progress it had produced so shortly after the revolution: "No political form has hitherto been discovered, which is equally favourable to the prosperity and the development of all the classes into which society is divided" (259).

Tocqueville put on paper ideas that had until then in America only circulated in personal expression. His understanding of Jacksonian principles such as popular institutions and popular will remains concise to the modern reader: "In America, the people appoint the legislative and the executive power, and furnish the jurors . . . the American institutions are democratic, not only in their principle but in all their consequences . . . The people is therefore the real directing power . . . In the U.S. the majority governs in the name of the people" (184).

It was Tocqueville's understanding of American democracy that popular institutions, not organized religion or noble birth, had created the country's social contract: "The political institutions of the United States constantly bring citizens of all ranks into contact, and compel them to pursue great undertakings in concert" (182). An important element in this contract was its emphasis on personal and national improvement. As money was replacing birth and titles as a means of social distinction, such improvement was usually equated with economic gain. Such an outlook would cause problems after the Civil War, but at the time of Tocqueville's writing, improving society through economics was a belief held in common by the majority of the American population: "In the states it is not only a portion of the people which is busied with the melioration of its social condition, but the whole community is engaged in the task; and it is not the exigencies and the convenience of a single class for which a provision is to be made, but . . . of all ranks of life" (221).

The prominence given to Tocqueville in this chapter is based on his observation that not only is a free press beneficial to democracy, but the two are indeed inseparable: “When the right of every citizen in the government of a society is acknowledged, every citizen must be presumed to possess the power of discriminating between the different opinions of his contemporaries . . . The sovereignty of the people and the liberty of the press may therefore be looked upon as correlative institutions” (196).

While it is true that the American Constitution forbids government censorship of the press, it was written at a time when the social import of the printed word was limited both in its size and its reach. The number of states in the union had grown considerably in the intervening years, as had the nation’s population. At the time of Tocqueville’s writing, Americans were only beginning to grasp the potential - and the problems - of a free press. Regarding censorship, Tocqueville’s observation of the impossibility of finding someone beyond the sway of personal or political interests is in essence a secular interpretation of John Milton’s Areopagitica: “To act with efficacy upon the press, it would be necessary to find a tribunal not only devoted to the existing order of things, but capable of surmounting the influence of public opinion” (197).

Tocqueville extended his insights from the abstract to the practical applications of newspapers. Although views on the precise role of the newspaper had yet to be clearly defined, Tocqueville’s observations on the necessity of the newspaper, both to democracy and to the social contract, are the most enduring. As newspapers offered the population the only window on the outside world (or, in Walter Lippmann’s terms, the only pseudo-environment), Tocqueville saw America’s newspapers as vehicles through which its citizens could work toward the common good:

[The press] is constantly open to detect the secret springs of political designs, and to summon the leaders of all parties to the bar of public opinion. It rallies the interests of the community round certain principles, and it draws upon the creed which factions adopt; for it affords a means of intercourse between parties which hears and which addresses each other without ever having been in immediate contact. In the US each separate paper exerts but little authority; but the power of the periodical press is only second to that of the people (200).

In sum, de Tocqueville was one of the first to examine and articulate the emerging social contract in America. His views on the social impact of popular institutions, as well as the necessity of a free press to maintaining and strengthening those institutions will be revisited in chapter four.

### Social Changes - Immigration and Reform

In the 1830s, the social landscape of the U.S. was largely one of small rural towns. Apprenticeships and master craftsmen had yet to be replaced by large factories, and only one person in 15 lived in a city with more than 8,000 inhabitants (Hofstadter 55). In the next 10 years, however, the country's population would increase from 12.9 million to 17.1 million. In the same period, the percentage of urban residents nearly doubled, from 0.9% to 1.5% (Schudson, *Origins* 31). It was during this period that America would undergo its first period of Reform. As the country's industrial revolution was still some years away, this first period of Reform was based not on solving the problems of urban life, but on establishing a moral framework more suited to the new American reality. Holding individualism as its central tenet, the Reform period of the 1830s was strongly religious in tone. Its advocates sought a return to morality and what they considered eternal Biblical truths: "We are to revise the whole of our social structure, the State, the school, religion, marriage, trade, science, and explore their foundations in our own nature . . . What is man born for but to be a Reformer, a Re-maker of what man has made; a renouncer of lies; a restorer of truth and good . . ." (Emerson 142). For its adherents, poverty was the chief enemy of such truths. Thus, their main goal was its elimination, not for simple material gain, but to improve the conditions of the "dangerous and perishing classes of society" (Nevins and Commager 173).

It was a movement that touched on all facets of life, and saw the participation of every section of the population: "As every institution's functions and effectiveness came under scrutiny, Americans' collective set of assumptions about government, individuals' roles, society and the world changed" (Dicken-Garcia 41). The most important articulator of this new thought was the newspaper: "The era of reform, 1830-1860, saw the press taking positions on an array of social issues that . . . were not tied to government and party structure" (Dicken-Garcia 32). This lack of political affiliation served two ends in the American populace. First, its emphasis on individualism fit the country's prevailing political sentiments. Second, it laid the foundation for reforms undertaken in the name of the disinterested citizen, not the partisan. Although a loyal Whig (and thus by definition opposed to popular sovereignty), Horace Greeley did seek to improve the conditions of all his readers, regardless of their party loyalties. For him, combining journalism and Reform was a perfectly natural union: "Not to have been a reformer is not to have truly lived" (Nevins and Commager 174).

### Penny Pioneers - the Editors

To better understand the innovations brought to American journalism by the penny press, it is necessary first to briefly describe the country's journalistic practices before Benjamin Day began printing the New York Sun in 1833. Newspapers prior to the Sun's publication were largely private affairs, sold by subscription only, and read in the privacy of the subscriber's own home. A year's subscription - between \$6 and \$10 - was more than the labourer's average weekly wage. It was a journalistic model borrowed almost entirely from the elite British press. Prior to the arrival of the Sun, the largest newspapers in New York were Arthur Tappan's Journal of Commerce, and the Courier and Enquirer, published by James Watson Webb.

In addition to being beyond the financial means of all but the monied classes, these newspapers were above all political journals, written by members of either the Whigs or the Democrats. And they were numerous. In 1830, the U.S. could boast 650 weeklies and 65 dailies, with an average circulation of 1,200 (Schudson, News 31). Ten years later, the number of weeklies had increased to 1,141, with the number of dailies more than doubling to 1,380, with their circulation rising to 2,200 (Schudson, News 31). These papers did not, however, promote the idea of free public debate. As Hazel Dicken-Garcia points out, the so-called party press existed for one sole purpose: "The newspaper was a vehicle for conveying party views to the public, convincing the public of the rightness of those views and the errors of opposing views, achieving party cohesion and solidarity, . . . 'winning' public debates [and] winning elections" (38). With the publication of the Sun, however, Benjamin Day targeted a completely new type of newspaper reader who embodied the egalitarianism and enthusiasm of the new America: "[T]he penny press was as much a manifestation of the coming industrial revolution as the slum, the agitation for relief by exploited workers, and the trend toward urbanization" (Emery 217). Nor was this innovation a co-incidence. Edwin Emery has argued that the appearance of the penny press and the rise of the common man were closely integrated (217).

Whether Benjamin Day intended to begin a revolution in American journalism that would last until the present day is unclear. However, with the publication of the New York Sun, he created the foundation for the modern newspaper. In the Sun of 9 November 1833, Day describes his paper's mission and its intended audience:

Although of a character (we hope) deserving the encouragement of all classes of society, it is more especially valuable to those who cannot well afford to incur the expense of subscribing to a "blanket sheet" and paying ten dollars per

annum . . . [W]e may be permitted to remark that the penny press, by diffusing useful knowledge among the operative classes of society, is effecting the march of instruction to a greater degree than any other mode of instruction (qtd. in O'Brien 50).

The arrival of the Sun on the streets of New York was indeed timely. With Whig versus Democrat giving way to smaller, regional contests, and with voting rights extended to all white males, the need for clear, simple information was pressing: "The Sun was a recognition of the common man on the communications level. The working man had already won the right to vote. Now the penny papers could reach out to him as no other medium could . . . At the same time, readers began to show a little more interest in the government they had the power to control" (Emery 217).

Day's journalistic generosity toward the working classes also was profitable. A mere three years after he began printing, circulation of the Sun had reached 27,000 - 5,600 higher than the city's 11 six-cent dailies combined (O'Brien 116). In 1837, Day installed his first steam cylinder press.

Like those editors who would follow his lead, Day devoted his newspaper to actively engaging his readers in a dialogue. Not only did the Sun promote this dialogue between labourers, but between all classes of New York society. Merchants turned to the Sun for its advertising, while labourers bought it to be both entertained and informed. The era of Everyman's newspaper had begun, a transition not lost on Day himself:

Since the Sun began to shine upon the citizens of New York there has been a very great and decided change in the condition of the laboring classes and the mechanics. Now every individual, from the rich aristocrat . . . to the humble laborer . . . reads the Sun . . . Already can we perceive a change in the mass of the people. They think, talk and act in concert . . . The Sun newspaper has probably done more to benefit the community by enlightening the minds of the common people than all the other papers together (qtd. in O'Brien 129).

Two years after the Sun's appearance, another penny paper appeared on the streets of New York. James Gordon Bennett's New York Herald borrowed Day's innovative approach and further refined it to the point where the two editors would engage in vicious personal attacks and battles for circulation. Bennett represented a new element in American journalism. He was the first reporter - not a printer - to start a newspaper. In addition, Bennett was quick to use any and all new technologies to produce the Herald, including gathering news by pigeons and ponies. More importantly

was Bennett's recognizing the importance of business to the newspaper reader. On 11 May 1835, the Herald published its first money market report (O'Brien 109). Bennett's paper would also be the first to run a letters column and a sports section, all geared toward establishing a personal relationship with his readers. Bennett often took this mission to extremes, once including in his editorial column news of his upcoming wedding. It was a successful formula. By 1845, the Herald's circulation had jumped to 12,000. Five years later, it stood at 33,000, due in large part to Bennett's installing a new Hoe Lightning press, capable of printing 12,000 sheets per hour (Emery 257).

The success of the Herald did draw its share of criticism, however. In addition to his battles with Benjamin Day, Bennett would be accused by the six-cent papers of charges including libel, lying, indecency and blasphemy. But as Emery has observed, this criticism stemmed less from their moral outrage than their own declining circulation: "He had made his rivals appear stuffy and outdated" (224). The appearance of the Sun and the Herald was the first sign that the mercantilist, aristocratic America was beginning to fail. With advertising replacing political patronage as the primary means of economic survival, many elite newspapers saw journalistic upstarts such as Bennett and Day as a threat to the established social order. As Schudson explains: "Their moral wars were not so much business competition as deadly serious social conflict, a class conflict in which they were on the defensive against a new way of being in the world which we awkwardly summarize as 'middle class' and which was symbolized and strengthened by the rise of the penny press" (News 56).

To the newly-invigorated world of New York journalism, one more important editor would add his mark. Horace Greely would build his New York Tribune into the most trusted newspaper of the era. Like Day and Bennett, "Uncle Horace" brought a nearly fanatical devotion to news. But where his contemporaries were content with climbing ad revenues and increased circulation, Greely added to the Tribune a strong moral dimension and a sometimes fanatical devotion to political reform. It was Greely who exhorted the young to seek their fortunes in the west, and would himself run for president in 1872. A loyal Whig, Greely was hesitant to turn over political control to the Jacksonian "mob," but he did recognize the need for the common man to participate in American society: "His idea was to direct the forces of capitalism so that industry, labor and agriculture could complement each other in improving the common lot" (Emery 226).

Like Day and Bennett, Greely established a personal relationship with his readers through the pages of the Tribune: "The Tribune was a tremendous force in the

country because of the personal faith of the plain people in the honesty of its editor. Every word the Tribune printed was believed implicitly because he was the man behind it" (Godkin, qtd. in Emery 229).

But unlike the Herald and Sun, which offered readers a steady diet of sensational, human interest stories, Greeley filled his newspaper with politics. But the Tribune was by no means exclusively a Whig paper. Its contributors included Karl Marx and the radical Canadian exile William Lyon Mackenzie. So impressed was Greeley with Mackenzie that in 1846 he made the Canadian the Tribune's correspondent in Albany (Kilbourn 241). The Tribune also was a success. Far from turning readers away from politics, Greeley's Tribune attracted readers of all political allegiances and social classes. Its pages would see debated a new political thinking, as Greeley envisioned the paper to be "a journal removed from the servile partisanship on the one hand and from gagged, mincing neutrality on the other" (Schudson, News 39). The Tribune was soon viewed as the authority on the political questions of the day: "Whether he wrote on politics, farming, labor, marriage, the frontier, or slavery, all classes of society took note of the Tribune" (Emery 232). So popular was the Tribune that after only one month its circulation jumped to 11,000 (Emery 228).

### **Penny Pioneers - the Journalists**

The innovations brought about by Day, Bennett and Greeley also brought about a new breed of journalist. Prior to the advent of the penny papers, journalists' subservience to their political patrons was commonplace: "Journalists were little more than secretaries dependent upon cliques of politicians, merchants, brokers and office seekers" (Schudson, News 34). As the journalists' principal task consisted in furthering their respective party's platform, the need to converse with and gain the trust of the working classes was nonexistent.

With the publication of the Sun and Herald, however, the need for stories aimed at the working classes required journalists to go into the streets in search of news. Not only was this change essential for the newspapers' financial success, but in the process journalists discovered an important element in their work: "Journalists after the 1830s discovered that this focus [on ordinary people] provided an important link between papers and readers" (Dicken-Garcia 229). In this new quest for sensational news, journalists succeeded in establishing a trust with the labouring classes that read their newspapers. Such a transition signaled that on the surface, at least, newspaper content was based less on party rhetoric than on the aspirations shared by journalist and reader

alike: "Journalists could spontaneously see things from the standpoint of the typical American who was eager for advancement in the democratic game of competition . . . He understood . . . the westerners' resentment of the entrenched East, the new politicians' dislike of the old bureaucracy, and the aspiring citizen's hatred of privilege" (Hofstadter 55).

### **Dawn of the Democratic Consciousness**

Robert Park has remarked that the power of the press can be measured by the number of people who read it (80). With their soaring circulations, it can be safely argued that it was the cumulative effect of the Sun, the Herald and the Tribune that laid the foundations for America's emerging democratic consciousness. As advertising had become essential to their survival, penny papers were obliged to accept almost any type of advertising aimed at the general reader while laying no claim as to its validity. While this practice drew strong criticism from the elite press, The Boston Daily Times of 11 October 1837 remarked: "To this complaint we can only reply that it is for our interest to insert such advertisements as are not indecent or improper in their language, without inquiry whether the articles advertised are what they purport to be" (Osler 80).

The biggest change, however, was in newspaper content. No longer could newspaper owners content themselves with printing the latest Whig or Democratic pronouncement. What was essential to the democratic consciousness was the belief that ordinary peoples' lives were of interest and value to others and to the community. As Schudson explains:

For the first time, the American newspaper made it regular practice to print political news not just foreign but domestic, and not just national but local. For the first time it printed not just affairs of commerce and state but reports from the police, from the courts, from the streets, and from private households. One might say that for the first time the newspaper reflected . . . social life (News 40).

Park's understanding of the power of the newspaper to act as arbiter of political dialogue is also important to note. While it is doubtful whether Day or his contemporaries drew parallels between their newspapers and the Athenian agora, Park saw the early penny papers as performing the same public service as had Plato and Socrates: "What the popular teachers did for Athens in the period of Socrates and Plato the press has done in modern times for the common man" (82).

With the populations of New York and Chicago increasing rapidly, the early penny papers were quickly supplanting the face-to-face communication that had characterized early American society. Day recognized that a large number of his readers had grown up in small villages and towns, and his Sun was instrumental in maintaining that intimate social structure in a larger urban environment. As Park explains: "The motive, conscious or unconscious, of the writers of the press . . . [was] to reproduce . . . in the city the conditions of life in the village. In the village everyone knew everyone else. Everyone called everyone by his first name. The village was democratic" (84).

The foundations laid by Day, Bennett and Greeley would serve as the new fundamentals in American journalism. Journalists and editors alike had recognized the importance of maintaining a dialogue with their readers, and in the new American political landscape, the importance of providing them with the information necessary to effect meaningful participation. The newspaper had replaced gossip as the primary means of transmitting information. In the process, reporters would come to understand their new-found power to speak on the public's behalf: "In short, it meant that journalists increasingly recognized the press' role in maintaining, advancing, and promoting society's goals" (Dicken-Garcia 111).

#### **Press Criticism, 1800 - 1850**

In Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America, Hazel Dicken-Garcia states that for an industry to achieve internal permanence, it must meet four requirements. First, it needs a stable structure, operation and policy; second, a sense of community among its practitioners; third, a shared notion of purpose and standards; and fourth, a self-held concept that it serves the whole society and is involved with social issues and movements (24-26). In her view, American journalism came into its own in 1833 (26). By no means did every newspaper in the U.S. meet each of these criteria. Even at the height of the penny press, partisans could still receive their party papers. Nor were these standards to remain unaltered. However, by the early 1830s, the popular press in America had gained sufficient social import to be considered a permanent industry.

The first article of American press criticism was written by E.L. Bulwer and Sergeant Talfourd, and appeared in 1836 in the American Quarterly Review (Dicken-Garcia 136). That it appeared a mere three years after the founding of the New York Sun is indicative of Americans' interest in the new journalism. Bulwer and Talfourd endorse the American concept of a free press. As profitable as the Sun and the Herald

appeared to be in catering to public tastes, however, they were not ready to accept the idea of a press run by members of the mob. Indeed, prior to the Civil War, much American press criticism dealt heavily with the morality (or as they saw it, immorality) of the penny press. As late as 1844, the press was in some circles deemed a product of "Divine Providence" (Dicken-Garcia 138). Bulwer and Talfourd did acknowledge and did promote the idea that the press should be used to promote the common good. However, the individuals they deemed most fit for this job were the wealthy, educated elite. In their view, newspapers were to be "vehicles of sound political doctrine," with their editors being "alive to the great responsibility of their station" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 149).

As the profits of the penny papers increased, so too did the insistence that they take their moral responsibilities more seriously. For many, a moral press was "as important an article of daily food for the moral man, as bread is for the physical" (Dicken-Garcia 138). Bulwer and Talfourd write again in 1843 that "[j]ournalists should form a virtuous resolution, that they will hereafter control their passions, moderate their language, pursue the truth . . . and maintain it with decency and decorum" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 150).

Much of this rhetoric was based on the principles espoused by Reformers such as Emerson. Reformers recognized that the newspaper was quickly outstripping the pulpit in reach and influence, and so exhorted journalists to engage themselves in seeking out the truth on their behalf. While this search for truth is still high on the journalist's list of priorities, Emerson's definition has little to do with accurate or objective reporting. It would not be until after the Civil War that American journalism concerned itself less with providing its readers with moral guidance than with useful information. Until that time, press criticism in America promoted the idea that "truth must be loved for itself alone; and society, in all its leading characteristics, must be greatly reformed and regenerated . . . [J]ournalists must put their own shoulders to the wheel and exert all their strength" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 151).

An equally important characteristic in early American press criticism is its optimism. Aside from the concern about an "immoral press," critics were quick to articulate their enthusiasm regarding the possibilities of the newspaper. It was an optimistic era in the country, and in this respect, both editors and critics viewed the growth of the press as leap forward for civilization. The newspaper, it was viewed, was rapidly becoming a necessity for every city in America. An author in the Southern Quarterly Review in 1842 remarked:

How dull and stupid a city or village must be where there is no newspaper . . . What would life be worth, in an enlightened age, and in a country full of plans and projects . . . where facts and information of prime importance must be speedily known . . . without some organ of intelligence, regularly published, on whose statements the people might rely with perfect confidence (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 139).

Considering that early press critics were often just as overwhelmed and confused by the penny papers as were the journalists themselves, the fact that their insights into the social nature of the press remain relevant to contemporary study is remarkable. Even before the arrival of the mass circulation daily, critics were well aware of the social nature of the newspaper. Not only did they see in its pages a reflection of the world outside, they drew parallels to ancient Greece: "Newspapers are what the ancients used to call a microcosm - a little world in miniature, where without going out of the house or mingling with the mass . . . a man may look on . . . and see whatever of interest is passing . . . around him" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 139). Early press critics articulated what had already been discovered by Day, Bennett, and Greely: that in order to remain socially relevant, newspapers had to acknowledge the needs of their readers: "In addition to providing a link outward to the rest of the world, the newspaper became community-centred, thus connecting individuals to both the immediate surroundings and the larger polity" (Dicken-Garcia 42). This realization was crucial not only in gaining the trust of their readers, but to their own economic survival.

Early press critics also took note of a factor very often overlooked in contemporary attitudes towards journalism - the pitfalls and demands of the job. The Southern Quarterly Review could see as early as 1842 that editors had little time for "calm reflection," and that journalists sometimes made "loosely drawn conclusions from altogether hypothetical premises [with] careless disregard or utter omission of weighty objections, and by a hurried, indifferent and quite unfinished style of composition" (Burlingame, qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 147). Would that modern criticism allow journalists that same admission, the seemingly impermeable nature of news and journalism's own resistance to reform would not be nearly as strong. As early as 1842, the Southern Quarterly Review realized that a nation's press was only as good as the people who operated it.

Early press critics also understood the potential for the press to shape public opinion. More influential than pulpit or pamphlet, critics recognized that the penny press did on more than one occasion "instigat[e] reforms and changes in popular

opinion, and the action of the whole masses, whose influence [was] sensibly felt throughout the entire society, even by rulers and legislatures" (Burlingame, qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 141). Such an effect would only be increased with the ascendance of Joseph Pulitzer's New York World.

The most problematic element for early press critics was partisanship, the party papers' common practice of advocating the ideology of a given party. Though it differed from the later concept of objectivity in that it did not involve a distrust of one's own observations, the two concepts do touch upon the role of the press in providing disinterested information. Unfortunately for early critics, finding a viable alternative for partisanship was to prove difficult. Disinterested citizens - be they journalists or other - were in very short supply. The greatest editors of the day - Raymond, Greeley and Bennett - had themselves trained solely as politicians before entering journalism (Dicken-Garcia 47). The Southern Quarterly Review in 1843 remarks: "Our best editors are, unfortunately, partisans, and party spirit . . . is the bane of our institutions - a foul blot upon our liberty, discreditable alike to our assumed intelligence and our virtue" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 143).

There were others, however, whose definition of partiality went beyond matters of Whig versus Democrat. William Cobbett, a lifelong English liberal and career rabble-rouser who had worked as a journalist in the U.S., added his voice to the debate from across the Atlantic. For him, partisanship was not about giving equal voice to opposing ideologies, but about a dedication to the individual citizen's ability to draw his own conclusions:

Professions of impartiality . . . are always useless . . . when used by a newsmonger, for he that does not relate news as he finds it, is something worse than partial, he that does not exercise his own judgment . . . is a poor passive tool, and not an editor . . . I feel the strongest partiality for the cause of order and good government and against every thing that is opposed to it (Shilen, qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 99).

To those who undertook the task of reporting the news, most early press critics could offer only a vague definition of the procedures or ethics they should consider. As late as 1850, Bulwer and Talfourd were the only critics to propose a set of guidelines for proper journalistic conduct. Among these were the beliefs that the press should be independent, fearless and report on all topics; that the newspaper should state its views boldly and brave the consequences; that, in accordance with J.S. Mill's marketplace of ideas, the newspaper should let readers make up their own minds on matters; and

lastly, that editors should be above prejudices and passions (Dicken-Garcia 153). It is a testament to their perceptiveness that these are still commendable goals for the modern newspaper journalist.

When matters turned to the role of the newspaper in a democracy, however, critics were much more precise. The principles outlined in 1842 by the Southern Quarterly Review are very much in the same political vein as Jacksonian Democracy and the place of the individual citizen: “It is the peculiar province of the newspaper press to maintain the principle of a free government; to advocate popular rights, to be . . . the champion of the people; its chosen protector for internal and external foes, its pioneer in removing difficulties and leading the way to peace, happiness and national fame (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 50).

American press criticism in the first half of the nineteenth century was in many respects as excited about the potential of the press as were the editors and journalists themselves. They can be forgiven for lacking specifics in some areas, as reporting at the time had yet to change from the story as a sermon to the story as information. However, their views regarding the duty of the newspaper to strengthen democracy and protect the individual were two tenets that would be further refined and promoted as the century went on. Many press critics saw the press as providing the way to society’s salvation. This was nowhere more evident than in the philosophical parallels between Emerson and Greeley.

### **The Telegraph - Central Nervous System for the Nation**

The final element in establishing the democratic consciousness in America’s newspapers was the telegraph. James Carey has described it as “an agency for the alteration of ideas” (204). With the spread of the telegraph came a revolution in journalistic writing and a dramatic change in Americans’ social and political attitudes: “Now that thought could travel by ‘the singing wire,’ a new form of reporting and a new form of knowledge were envisioned that would replace traditional literature with a new and active form of social knowledge” (Carey 202).

It is, therefore, slightly ironic that in large part the press did not take a more active interest in the telegraph’s evolution. What journalists and editors did not overlook, however, was the perceived potential of the telegraph to advance civilization. In the optimistic spirit of the times, Samuel Bowles envisioned on 4 January 1851 a glorious future for the numerous technological innovations of the era, which included the telegraph:

The increase of facilities for the transmission of news brought in a new era. The railroad car, the steam boat, and the magnetic telegraph . . . have brought the whole civilized world into contact . . . Nations and individuals now stand immediately responsible to world opinion . . . The [newspaper] is, and is to be, the high priest of History, the vitalizer of society, the world's great informer . . . and the circulating lifeblood of the whole human mind. It is the great enemy of tyrants, and the right arm of liberty . . . Laden with the fruit of all human thought and action, the newspaper will be in every abode, the daily nourishment of every mind (qtd. in Pickett 109).

It was the formation of the Associated Press in May 1848, that allowed New York's most influential newspapers to extend their influence across the country. By agreeing to share the cost of telegraph wires and pool their content, Bennett, Greeley, Raymond and James Beach ensured that objective reporting would become the standard in American journalism. Newspapers' transition to objective reporting would become fully apparent after the Civil War. With the Erie Canal having solidified New York's status as a transportation capital, the telegraph would ensure the city's penny papers a much higher national profile: "By eliminating time and space in news presentation, the telegraph diminished the privacy of the book form and heightened . . . the new public image of the press" (McLuhan, Understanding Media 214).

Through economic necessity - transmission costs stood at five cents per word - these editors ensured the end of partisanship in the penny press. The telegraph allowed journalists the political neutrality they had been seeking:

The telegraph, by creating the wire service, led to a fundamental change in news. It snapped the tradition of partisan journalism by forcing the wire services to generate "objective" news . . . that could be used by papers of every political stripe . . . The wire services demanded a form of language stripped of the local, the regional, the colloquial . . . in which the connotative features of utterance were under rigid control (Carey 208).

The leveling effects of the telegraph also would affect the newsroom. Editors, sorting through a continual flow of now formulaic news, altered their criteria for selecting the stories to mirror the same process that had created them. In terms of both its production and its handling, such mass produced news was no different from soap, shoes and other industrial goods. Telegraph reports became selling points, as newspapers began to boast about the amount of telegraphic news they printed. Front pages were filled with as many items from places as far away as possible. James Carey

describes the transition in this manner: “In the face of what was a real glut of occurrences, news judgment had to be routinized and the organization of the newsroom made factory like . . . The sparseness of the prose and the sheer volume of it allowed news . . . to be treated like a commodity . . . It was subject to rates, contracts, franchising, discounts and thefts” (211).

Yet this front-page jumble of unrelated items did play a large part in establishing newspapers’ democratic consciousness. By bringing together such diverse material on a single page, the newspapers succeeded in creating a dynamic that had not existed in the party press era: human interest. As McLuhan explains: “It is the daily communal exposure of multiple items in juxtaposition that gives the press its complex dimension of human interest” (Understanding Media 204).

What journalists gained in their new, standardized vocabulary, they lost in professional standing and influence at their respective newspapers. As news reporting became standardized, the journalist saw himself removed from the story he was recounting. The telegraph worked to replace the journalist’s own talents and observations with neutral information: “As words were expensive . . . it separated the observer from the writer. Not only did writing for the telegraph have to be condensed to save money, but also from the marginal notes and the anecdotes of the ‘story divorced from the story teller’” (Carey 211).

In this respect, Carey’s observations regarding the effects of the telegraph correspond with those of Michael Schudson, who, quite optimistically, describes objectivity as the separation of facts from values (News 3). Schudson defines facts as “assertions about the world . . . beyond distortion by personal preferences,” while values consist of “conscious or unconscious [preferences] for what the world should be” (News 3). In Schudson’s view, objectivity bestowed a new power upon the journalist. Whereas he had previously imparted the rhetorical authority of either Whig or Democrat, the journalist’s objective news story would become “a claim to license within a defined field of activity and claim to mandate the meaning of that field for others” (Hughes, qtd. in Schudson, News 7). And as the reading public became increasingly hungry for information, so too, did the number of fields in which journalists would exercise that license.

This resulted not only in newspapers’ acquiring an increasingly formidable veneer of truth in matters of public concern, but their imparting to their readers the precise language with which these matters were to be discussed. Through the adoption of objective reporting, the penny press would become a social authority:

[Objectivity] is not just a claim about what kind of knowledge is reliable. It is also a moral philosophy, a declaration of what kind of thinking one should engage in making moral decisions. It is . . . a political commitment, for [it] provides a guide to what groups one should acknowledge as relevant audiences for judging one's own thoughts and acts (Schudson, News 7).

Objectivity, however, did not ensure that the journalist's own impressions did not find their way into the news, nor did it ensure news reporting free of ideology or distortion. These problems will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

So powerful and widespread was the telegraph's impact that it would alter the social and political organizations in the U.S. in the same manner that it had altered the newspaper. When combined with the railroad, the telegraph altered Americans' "very structures of awareness" (Carey 210). The most significant element in the new social contract was the need for communication, especially among the emerging urban middle class. Carey cites 1896 as a pivotal year in the telegraph's effects on the American social fabric. It was the year in which national time zones replaced those set by individual states. These new time zones were based not on state boundaries, but on geography. By eliminating local state authorities in favour of a disembodied, electric authority, the telegraph created what McLuhan has described as the national central nervous system: "Whereas all previous technology may be said to have outered the central nervous system itself, including the brain, our central nervous system is a unified field without segments" (Understanding Media 247).

The standardization of news reporting and newspaper organization would come to the American social landscape. In Carey's view, the arrival of the telegraph and its impact upon newspaper readers played a large part in creating the American middle class: "Improvements in long-distance communication created a series of horizontal classes . . . first in business but eventually spreading out into every domain of human activity" (Carey 159). The social leveling brought on by the electricity flowing through the telegraph wires enabled Americans to achieve the eighteenth-century ideal of Universalism. Central to this ideal was the belief that "[p]eople were everywhere the same. Communication was the engine that powered this ideal. Each improvement in communication, by ending isolation, by linking people everywhere, was heralded as realizing the Universal Brotherhood of Universal Man" (Carey 208).

The telegraph was the most influential factor in America's transition from a centralized and hierarchical society to one based on universality and egalitarianism.

While it is true that manufacturing and transportation were also significant influences, it was the instantaneous and organic nature of electric communications that took power away from local authorities such as the post office and brought these changes to the population as a whole (Innis 169). By adopting the telegraph as its primary means of information gathering, the penny press brought Americans together in a national dialogue never before possible: "The simultaneousness of electric communication, also characteristic of our nervous system, makes each of us present and accessible to every other person in the world" (McLuhan, Understanding Media 248). The principal characteristic of the new national consciousness was its democracy. According to the Chicago School, "[t]his process of community creation, of institution building was . . . the formative process in the growth of American democracy" (Carey 144).

### **Civil War - The Emergence of Industrial America**

The Civil War was the catalyst for both the rise of mass industrial production and dramatically changing Americans' reading habits. The physical demands of the war stepped up the need for raw materials as well as finished goods. The war's complexity introduced a new type of reporting which required journalists to consult more than one source to accurately convey their story. The definition of news itself was changing. It was during this period that newspapers completed the shift from news as a moral guide to news as pure information, a trend which had begun years earlier:

Those newspapermen who took the lead in seeking out the news, and reporting it in the interest of the public alone, found their ranks increasing during the war years . . . [R]eaders wanted to be certain that they could form their own opinions based on factual and comprehensive presentation of the news . . . By the end of the century the editor who felt himself to be a part of a political party . . . was a liability to his newspaper (Emery 317).

The spread of the telegraph allowed reporters to file their stories faster than ever before. But what newspapers gained in speed, they lost in depth. It was during the Civil War that evolved one of the most lasting of journalistic practices: the pyramid lead. Afraid their connection might be cut before conveying the essentials, reporters would begin stories with their most significant elements. Such a practice has not gone out of fashion: "Some of the copy, such as that transmitted out of Washington . . . and out of Richmond . . . would not be much out of place in a modern newspaper" (Emery 310). The war would also see the invention of the typewriter, the adding machine and the cash register - all essential to the operation of the expanding industrial press. The

increase in news volume also had a significant effect on Americans themselves. Anxious to learn of both the latest war developments and of the fate of their loved ones, newspaper readership soared. By the end of the war, reading the daily newspaper had become firmly entrenched in Americans' social habits: "Because the press met one of the nation's greatest needs, a need no other institution could satisfy . . . [its] place in the larger polity's structure was crucial and its information role became crystallized. Only the press could provide information about the course of the war . . . and hence, some sense of whether the nation would endure" (Dicken-Garcia 51).

From 1865 until the end of the century, the U.S. saw a dramatic increase in its industrial production. The total number of industries quadrupled, providing a sevenfold increase in the country's industrial output. Industrial employment increased from 12 million to 29 million (Nevins and Commager 260), with the national wealth jumping from \$20 billion to \$88 billion (Nevins and Commager 237). As Emery writes, the industrial revolution represented "[t]he dynamic capitalism of an expanding America, seizing upon unparalleled natural resources and utilizing the new machines of the industrial revolution [to transform] the national economy" (338). None of this could be achieved, however, without the expansion of the railroads, which allowed industrial products to reach new markets. Between 1865 and 1900, the U.S. would see its rail lines increase from 30,000 miles to 200,000 (Nevins and Commager 237).

More important to this study than sheer numbers, however, are the people who provided the labour that fueled America's rise to industrial prominence. Corresponding with industrial expansion was a wave of immigration - millions of Italians, Poles and Austrians arrived in the U.S. and settled in its major urban centres. These people would make up much of the penny press' readership - Joseph Pulitzer was himself an Austrian immigrant.

Between 1870 and 1910, some 20 million immigrants dramatically altered the cultural character of American cities. By 1900, two of three people of foreign birth lived in urban settings (Nevins and Commager 294). As diverse as their national origins were, however, all had one thing in common: "[W]hatever their reasons for taking this step, [all] were caught up in the great adventure; all dreamed of a better life; and most of them helped build such a life for themselves and for their children" (Nevins and Commager 293).

To succeed in building that new life, immigrants were required to adapt themselves to America's new social norms. In 1880s America, this included putting

their past ethnic, religious, or class distinctions behind them in favour of a simple ballot:

There were no legal divisions or distinctions; class did not betray itself by accent nor did it follow religious lines; and an open society made it relatively easy . . . to move from class to class. Free public education enabled the children of laborers to rise in business and the professions, and the ballot was a potential weapon whereby workingmen could . . . compel legislators to pass friendly laws (Nevins and Commager 283).

This social and political leveling was one of the most significant effects of America's industrial revolution. Factory working schedules succeeded in eliminating immigrants' past working habits, and soon the machinery that produced shoes and condensed milk had standardized the country's social habits as well (Nevins and Commager 260). In fact, the new American social contract was in large part based on the economic interdependence of entrepreneur and labourer: "In its ideal form, the market system rests on the assumption that the subjective discussions of separate human beings, each acting rationally to promote his or her own economic wealth, will produce the greatest possible aggregate wealth for society as a whole. The individuals in this system [are] motivated primarily by material want" (Schudson, News 15). It would be the task of the newspaper to replace workers previously-held religious and linguistic ties with the new social American social vocabulary.

### **The Civil War's Effect on the Press and its Readers**

The Civil War created what can be called the modern newspaper. The demands of the war accelerated trends and innovations that had previously been merely tentative, untested and unreliable. Among these was the extended use of illustration (Dicken-Garcia 55). Pictures were not new to newspapers, but following the war, to conceive of a major news story without an accompanying line drawing was simply not feasible. After taking control of the New York World, Joseph Pulitzer would use illustrations as never before.

Another important innovation was the multi-source story (Dicken-Garcia 55). Until the war, news reports rarely contained more than one source. Often the only voice in the story belonged to the journalist. However, recounting dramatic battles accurately and thoroughly required more complex stories. And the speed with which the stories were circulated increased the human dimension of the news: "[A]iming to be the eyes and ears for the individual affected newsgathering and reporting techniques.

Eyewitness and interview accounts became important for the first time, and the speed of transmission became even more crucial" (Dicken-Garcia 46). Though this new form of reporting encountered charges of distortion (a charge that remains to this day), "reading descriptions of unfolding events that one had witnessed in person was a new experience" (Dicken-Garcia 83). Providing their readers with such extensive coverage of the war was not inexpensive, however. Bennett's New York Herald spent between \$500,000 and \$750,000 from 1861 to 1865 (Dicken-Garcia 56). However, Americans' newfound need for the press resulted in substantial profits for the newspapers as well.

The combined effect of these innovations on newspaper readers was indeed significant. Newspapers' transition from news as sermon to news as information was a large part of Americans' growing sense of nationhood and citizenship. The newspaper viewed its readers not as anonymous members of a religious or linguistic group, but as individuals. And the newspaper began to give them the language and the knowledge they would need to understand their communities, and how to live in the new industrial order: "The newspaper press informed individuals about the society they were party of to increase their knowledge of their surroundings, institutions and government, providing what they needed to participate as citizens" (Dicken-Garcia 82).

### **The Industrial City - Democracy by Osmosis**

*"The people of the big cities, being molded together as economic and cultural units, increasingly turned to the daily newspapers for the story of their urban life and their common interest" (Emery 346).*

It would be impossible for the penny press to have as lasting an effect on American journalism had there not been a forum which brought together the profound social and political changes of the era. That forum was the industrial city of the 1880s: "Inventions, as well as sudden or catastrophic changes seem to play a more important part in bringing about serial changes in the cultural rather than in the biotic community. But the principle involved seems to be substantially the same" (Park, qtd. in Goheen, Victorian Toronto 25).

An urban phenomenon without precedent, the industrial city embodied the social, economic and political climate of the age - large, democratic, progressive, exciting and wealthy, the industrial city was a rejection of mercantilist America in every respect: "The pre-industrial city was characterized by a stable and clearly articulated social structure which was reflected in all its simple precision in the urban landscape . . . Society was composed of groups, the division between which were so obvious

and irrefragable that most men lived their lives in the classes into which they were born" (Goheen, Victorian Toronto 7).

It was in cities such as New York and Chicago that the modern American social contract was written. Peter Goheen has observed that "[t]he city was seen by contemporaries to be composed of a series of forces resolving themselves into factors of push and pull, all the result of interacting forces of new technology, new demands and changing tastes" (Victorian Toronto 17). The interplay of immigration, industrial production and democracy resulted in a new set of rules by which the city's inhabitants would live. Its foundations were no longer birth or property, but individual economic potential: "[T]he economy was becoming more social: the market tied together people of unconnected occupations, while factories and offices linked people together more and more in a system inscribed in consumer goods" (Schudson, News 102). These forces would also have a tremendous effect on the newspaper. As Gerald Baldasty has explained: "The city provided a focal point for changes within American journalism. The sheer size of the growing cities of the nineteenth century and the amount of activity within them necessitated new functions of the press: the observation and description of events and activities that were increasingly part of newspaper content" (52).

These changes produced a wealthy, dynamic city which at its best could extol the benefits of the modern urban experience. For its new citizens, a wide array of amusements, entertainment and sports - all previously the domain of the upper classes - were at their disposal: "Part of the experience of the city, even for the poor, was that it nourished dreams" (Schudson, News 101). Life in industrial New York was often viewed as a spectacle by labourer and journalist alike. As Theodore Dreiser explains: "My favorite pastime when I was not out on an assignment . . . was to walk the streets and view the lives and activities of others" (qtd. in Schudson, News 105).

There was, however, a darker side to this energy and enthusiasm. The industrial city also was marred by racism, poverty and disease. The influx of immigrants who would go on to enrich the American cultural landscape were not always welcomed with open arms. Tensions between established Americans and the incoming waves of humanity fostered a potentially explosive "atmosphere of hate" (Juergens 240). Amid fears that America would be "mongrelized by castoffs from the gutters and alleys of Europe" (Juergens 240), the weekly journal America on 28 March 1889 denounced what it saw as "the pollution of our national lifeblood by the stream of ignorance, misery and vice pouring into it from the lowest strata of European life" (qtd. in Juergens 244).

Poverty in New York near the turn of the century was a serious problem. In addition to inhabiting a climate characterized by profanity, drunkenness and violence, most immigrants were forced to live in ill-lit and poorly ventilated tenement buildings. The New York State Tenement Housing Commission reported in 1891 that Manhattan contained 22,000 such buildings, which housed as many as 500,000 people. Four years later, the number of tenements had more than doubled, with the number of inhabitants reaching 1.3 million (Juergens 240). The large majority of these buildings was scarcely livable: "Their toilets and indoor washing facilities were fouled beyond redemption, their airshafts littered with garbage discarded through open windows, their hallways sheathed in darkness and rancid with a hundred smells" (Juergens 266).

Added to these deplorable conditions was a criminal shortage of safe foods. The New York State Charities Aid Association in 1893 concluded that 45% of infant deaths under the age of five was attributable to impure milk, and that "many a sickly and deformed bodily frame, and many a warped mental and moral nature [could] be traced to the same source" (Juergens 277). In the absence of strict regulation, milk producers would often "enhance" their product with "diseased particles which [produced] cholera-morbus, diarrhoeal complaints and oft-times death" (Juergens 278).

In addition to the physical dangers of the urban industrial experience developed an equally troubling aspect: anonymity. Released from the bonds of kinship in favour of a new-found individualism, citizens quickly became aware that urban life also could be very lonely. Louis Wirth has described the negative aspects of urban living as "the substitution of secondary for primary contacts, the weakening of bonds of kinship, and the declining social significance of the family, the disappearance of the neighborhood, and the undermining of the traditional basis of social solidarity" (qtd. in Schudson, News 59).

It would be the newspaper that would replace citizens' Old-World ties with those necessary for surviving in their new urban surroundings. Unlike in Europe, where newspapers were still either party publications or serious literary reviews, the American newspaper was one institution that directly addressed its readers' needs: "The work of the newspaper as a gatherer and interpreter of the news was but an extension of the function which was otherwise performed spontaneously by the community itself through the medium of personal contact and gossip" (Schudson, News 41). The more people read, the more "people understood their own ordinary lives to be of value to themselves and of possible interest to others" (Schudson, News 19).

The penny press' legacy of public education was a result as much of its publishers' humanitarianism as their economic self-interest. The unprecedented demands of living in the industrial city necessitated a solid relationship between the newspaper and its readers. Neither could survive without the other: "The metropolis, with all its diversity and anonymity, necessitated a newspaper that took a broad view of local events" (Baldasty 48). For both publisher and reader, the need to be informed about their new surroundings was equally great: "There were no patterns of expectations upon which they might rely for their interpretation of the new environment, an environment growing even less familiar at each new expansion of the physical fabric of the city made the whole even less recognizable" (Goheen, Victorian Toronto 15).

One of the most important accomplishments of the penny press was its influence on increasing literacy. Again, this was due in large part to economics - a high rate of literacy is an essential component not only for personal success, but for a society's economic well-being. But the benefits of literacy extend beyond simple economics. The ability to speak and understand the printed word is at the heart of the democratic consciousness. Paulo Firere describes it as

a human act implying reflection and action. As such it is a primordial human right and not the privilege of a few. Speaking the word is not a true act if is not at the same time associated with the right of self-expression and world-expression . . . of creating . . . and ultimately participating in society's historical process (qtd. in Schudson, News 37).

Through simple language and grammar, the penny press helped illiteracy rates in the U.S. drop from 20% in 1870 to 10.7% in 1900 (Emery 346). Most of the people discovering the pleasures of reading were immigrants living in New York. The city's population increased by 1.5 million between 1880 and 1890, resulting in 80% of the city's population being foreign-born or of foreign parentage (Emery 343). The penny papers' influence on literacy resulted in its readers acquiring the sense that they were actors in their own history (Schudson, News 37). This was to have long-lasting effects on the country's political attitudes, as literacy is essential to sustaining democracy. In societies in which the general public is excluded from public life, such as mercantilist America or colonial Canada, there was very little need for mass literacy. In colonial Canada in particular, literacy was the exclusive domain of the ruling elite.

### The Post-Civil War Reform Movement

America's growing industrial prowess changed the way businesses were structured. Mass production and national distribution necessitated more complex operating structures, known as corporations. Defined as a device resembling “[a] fictitious person who could enjoy the legal advantages but avoid most of the moral responsibilities of a human being” (Nevins and Commager 268), the corporation provided its owners greater efficiency and higher profits. However, it also widened the gap between proprietor and worker: “The changing scale of manufacturing and commercial enterprise fractured the old relationship between owner and producer - a characteristic of the small shop and craft system of production” (Goheen, Victorian Toronto 13). The eventual combination of record profits and alienated workers would be an important stimulus to America’s next period of Reform.

Corporations were a double-edged sword. While they provided the consumer with higher-quality goods at lower prices, the more of these he bought, the more he became merely a cog in America’s new economic framework, “exposed to the vicissitudes of policy over which [he had] no control” (Nevins and Commager 270). Local factories were closed in favour of larger, more profitable ones elsewhere: “The creative instinct of craftsmanship was largely destroyed, and workingmen were reduced to a mere part of a mechanical process” (Nevins and Commager 279). Trusts, unwritten agreements between the captains of a given industry to fix prices for their mutual benefit, spread across the country’s industrial landscape so rapidly that soon almost everything a person wore, ate or worked with was made or controlled by trusts (Nevins and Commager 270).

Such collusion among industry leaders was illegal. Many states had anti-trust legislation on their books, but it was rarely, if ever, enforced. It would not be until workers’ growing sense of alienation and exploitation threatened to escalate into a full-scale social crisis that legislators began to take notice:

Labour was one of the basic factors in the growth of big business, but in the division of profits it was conspicuously left out. It was left out, too, when the social rewards were distributed: workingmen rarely lived on “the right side of the tracks,” they were not asked to join the country clubs, and their leaders were ignored by the colleges and universities that every year bestowed honorary degrees on masters of capital (Nevins and Commager 278).

It would not be long before America's increasing prosperity turned sour. Operating large corporations required substantial political support, be it above or below board. Soon it became clear that across the country, corruption had entered into both politics and industry: "[C]ities became power centers where political machines reigned and corruption spread" (Schudson, News 59). Gradually, people began to notice that unfettered economic competition could bring poverty as well as prosperity. As during the era of Emerson, poverty was viewed as a national weakness. With politics offering "the choice between merely serving the business class or living off it as a sort of parasite" (Hofstadter 204), a large number of Americans turned away from politics and business as arenas in which to make their fortunes (Hofstadter 203). The social contract, in which the wealthy entrepreneur both acknowledged the existence and needed the participation of the labourer, was being unraveled. As Theodore Roosevelt explained: "The commercial classes are only too likely to regard everything merely from the standpoint of 'Does it pay?' and many a merchant does not take any part in politics because he is short sighted . . . and too selfish to be willing to undergo any trouble for the sake of abstract duty" (qtd. in Hofstadter 205).

For labouring classes, there came to exist the general sentiment that the promise of American life was not being filled, a feeling that "science and machinery had outrun social science and political machinery" (Hofstadter 338). America had come to realize the dehumanizing effects that its industrial machinery had brought upon its population: "People were being uprooted physically and mentally by the effects of the economic revolution, and in the new environment no social institution could remain static" (Emery 9). It was a realization that would bring about the second wave of Reform in American life and American journalism. Like the first, it would entail an examination of all facets of American life: "Social relationships were reconsidered - the impact of the city, immigration, inequalities in wealth, the growth of classes, all came in for critical attention" (Hofstadter 336).

### **The Penny Press Grows Up - The Editor as Reformer**

In both profits and social import, the 1880s marked the apogee for the penny press in America. Both Hearst's New York Evening Journal and Pulitzer's New York World had circulations in the millions, and were posting record profits. And their sensational reporting had earned them a devoted readership. Behind this exciting facade, however, the city's social problems were becoming harder for readers to

ignore. Death rates in the tenement buildings were four times higher than in richer areas, and drunkenness was rampant.

Concerned by the increasing gaps between the captains of industry and their employees, the country once again put itself under the microscope. Much like the earlier period of Reform, this was a collaborative effort among all elements of society. As Theodore Dreiser would recount, literature of the period “turned from local color to problem novels and moral sermons . . . Scholars emerged from their ivory towers to grapple with social problems . . . Preachers rediscovered the social gospel and troubled respectable parishioners with a literal reading of the New Testament” (qtd. in Hofstadter 338). This period of Reform also held a great advantage over that of Emerson’s time. The spread of the telegraph let the entire country see what was happening in New York, ensuring the idea of the newspaper as agent of Reform would spread across the country: “Soon newspapermen in other cities were making similar reports, and the nation awoke to a realization that the challenge of the city was no less urgent than the challenge of the farm” (Hofstadter 341).

As in the days of Emerson, the newspaper was seen as the most efficient vehicle with which to discuss and initiate these reforms. And readers were receptive to their message: “The reader might find himself admiring the financial coups and the graceful living, but he also was disturbed by the excesses of economic individualism. Newspapers which attacked the . . . dangers of reckless market speculation found widespread popular approval” (Emery 352). An important difference for later Reformers, however, was that many critics saw the newspaper as complicit with corporations and trusts (particularly the railway companies) in bringing about the industrial malaise. In 1882, George Rider, in his article “The Pretensions of Journalism,” would charge the popular press with “insincerity and duplicity,” condemning what he saw as its “subjection to cliques of traders and manufacturers” (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 179). Rider felt that newspapers’ increasing dependence on advertisers and manufacturers robbed them of their duty to report the truth (Dicken-Garcia 179). His claims were not inaccurate. While it would be unfair to condemn all popular papers of what Rider called “venal affiliations,” advertising executives did know how to influence newspaper reporting. The trade journal Printer’s Ink of 5 February 1890 states: “A five-dollar bill in the hands of a reporter or editor will secure what fifty dollars will not buy at the counting room” (qtd. in Baldasty 73).

Its entertainment role already firmly established, it was during the 1880s and 1890s that the penny press solidified its role as public educator. No other instrument

could articulate the ideas of urban reform and public dialogue more effectively, more quickly or as widely. In New York, the charge for Reform was led mainly by three men: Edwin Lawrence Godkin of the New York Evening Post, Charles Dana of the New York Sun and Joseph Pulitzer of the New York World.

Godkin filled his Post with several progressive ideas, including womanhood suffrage, public education, Negro rights and civil service reform. An adherent of J.S. Mill liberalism, he nevertheless supported the idea that governments should be active in the social sphere (Emery 328). His ideas regarding the role of the newspaper as a public forum had its roots in ancient Athens: "The modern newspaper is the equivalent of the Greek agora, the only means possessed by the citizens of interchanging thought and concerting action" (qtd. in McCollum 2). Godkin attached the same weight to his journalists' obligations to educating their readers: "A society of ignoramuses each of whom thinks he is a Solon would be an approach to let Bedlam loose" (qtd. in McCollum 2).

Charles Dana also would be known for his faith in the newspaper to effect social change. Although not as outwardly political as Godkin, Dana advanced the belief that newspapers should not shy away from topics deemed too unseemly to discuss in polite company. In his first editorial after taking control of the Sun, Dana promised his readers "a daily photograph of the whole world's doings in the most luminous and lively manner" (qtd. in Emery 324). Dana's view was that newspapers were bound to report whatever "Divine Providence" allowed to happen, "whether it be cholera, murder, abortion [or] tornado" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 209).

Dana also was a strong proponent of the educated journalist. For him, a reporter's ability to put an event in context was far superior to simply recording the facts: "If I could have my way, every young man who is going to be a newspaper man, and who is not absolutely rebellious against it, should learn Greek and Latin . . . I had rather take a young fellow who knows the Ajax of Sophocles . . . to report a prize-fight or a spelling match . . . than to take one who has never had those advantages" (qtd. in O'Brien 242).

Dana enforced only one rule on his reporters: be interesting. News failing this test was reputedly eaten by the office cat. Although dependent upon wire services for foreign and national news, Dana gave his city reporters the freedom to report on events with their own voice, not with that of the telegraph. For Dana, taking a literary approach to the news was beneficial to the reader and to society alike: "Suppose you tell all the truths of science in a way that bores the reader. What is the good? The truths

don't stay in your mind and nobody thinks any better of you because you have told the truth tediously" (qtd. in McCollum 4).

Dana's formula was successful. Although the Sun remained for a long time a four-page paper, its circulation a fraction of either the World or the Journal, it was highly regarded by journalists as a publication that valued its reporters for their intelligence and the quality of their writing: "His men did the work he wanted them to do, not by following instructions. He set the writer free and let him go his own way to glory or failure. There were no conventions except those of decency, of respect for the English language" (O'Brien 245).

Neither Dana, nor Godkin, however, could match the stature of Joseph Pulitzer. And no editor would earn the same respect of his readers. A Jewish Austrian immigrant born in Budapest, he was well aware of the difficulties facing newcomers to industrial America. After taking control of the New York World in 1883, Pulitzer would provide entertainment, education and a crusading spirit for the city's working class readers.

There were in industrial New York a myriad of problems to solve: housing, perilous working conditions and improving schools and hospitals were all of great public concern. However, as George Juergens has observed, none was more fundamental for Pulitzer "than the right of all Americans, native and foreign-born, to take their place as equal members of the society" (237). Pulitzer's was a crusade to extend the promise of American life to all immigrants: "Pulitzer conferred a dignity of sorts on popular journalism . . . beyond profits and losses, that ultimately influenced all newspapers, and that is still reflected in the lip service the press renders to its role as servant of the people" (Juergens xii).

Pulitzer did not invent the concept of the newspaper as agent of social reform. However, he brought this concept to the forefront of the World's operations. While the newspaper industry had taken on the same organization and operating procedures as the largest manufacturers, Pulitzer still regarded his World not as a product, but as public property (McCollum 3). On 3 October 1886, he articulated the World's mission:

The newspaper that is true to its highest mission will concern itself with the things that ought to happen tomorrow . . . and will seek to make what ought to be to come to pass. It is not enough to chronicle the life and thought of the people . . . A paper which has the moral sense, the intellectual perception and the political independence to speak the heart, the mind and the conscience of the people . . . can do more to benefit the country than can a hundred pulpits or a score of Governors . . . The

*World . . . seeks the highest attainable point in character, educative force and actual public service rendered (qtd. in Pickett 179).*

Pulitzer also understood his readers' needs for entertainment as well as information: "[H]e understood the desire of his readers for effective leadership reflecting progressive attitudes, as well as for entertainment" (Emery 379). And he gave his readers large doses of both. Using simple, almost colloquial language, Pulitzer's reporters succeeded in bringing a steady stream of poetry, short stories, theatre reviews and sports news, the last being "no small concession to men who had little opportunity to play the games themselves" (Juergens xi). In short, Pulitzer made the *World* relevant to his readers' urban experiences. By gaining readership with entertainment, he could then open the city's eyes to the reforms it needed. It was one of the rules for journalists at the *World* "never [to] be satisfied with merely printing the news" (Emery 374).

Although the *World* would be read by members of all of New York's economic classes, the great majority of its readership was among the city's immigrant population. As an immigrant himself, Pulitzer realized that newcomers' economic success necessitated speaking English. More importantly, he recognized the temptation for employers to prevent such empowerment by keeping their immigrant employees second-class citizens. As Juergens observes, the *World* would take up the seemingly thankless job of becoming their spokesman: "[Immigrants] needed a champion, and at a time when few were willing to enter the lists, the World came forward. The timing of its support, as much as the support itself, is what endeared it to the tens of thousands of people who asked nothing more dramatic than the right to be accepted on their own merits" (246).

Regardless of America's egalitarian ethos, racial tensions still ran high in industrial New York. Scandinavians were seen as more desirable than Russians, the Irish were regarded as a constant threat to national security, and at the bottom of the ladder sat the Italians, many of whom made their homes under bridges. Pulitzer was not ignorant of this fact, and it can be argued that the *World*'s use of racial stereotypes did little to alter public opinion regarding race relations in the city. However, he was aware of the potential benefits that could result from such a diverse linguistic and religious mix. His editorial of 27 January 1884 states: "Our greatest merit . . . is that we have assimilated all that is vital from every available stock, and, utterly disregarding the class distinctions of the past, have given Nature a new freedom to work out a new

race . . . What [immigrants] bring to us is strong blood and unlimited possibilities" (qtd. in Juergens 246).

The miserable living conditions of over one million immigrants and labourers was but one of many problems tackled by Pulitzer and the World. Jacob Riis' series of articles entitled "How the Other Half Lives" brought the perilous living conditions to the attention of everyone. During July and August 1883, the paper ran headlines such as "How Babies are Baked," "Little Ones Dying Off" and "Pestilence Nurseries" (Juergens 272). Pulitzer aimed to instill in his readers sufficient moral outrage to prompt political action. In shedding light on the living conditions of the poor, he advanced the concept of what qualified as news: "The World fulfilled its primary mission just by considering the plight of the poor to be news. It gave extensive coverage to the reports of the various Tenement House Commission and related agencies, and on at least one occasion played a part in having an investigation launched" (Juergens 267).

By the turn of the century, Pulitzer had greatly altered the face and practices of American journalism. Innovations such as coloured banner headlines, illustrations and white space made the newspaper exciting to the eye. His emphasis on simple language played a large part in the increase in literacy rates in New York. Not only did this work to increase the World's circulation, it also helped solidify a democratic consciousness in its readers. With the World, readers saw a paper that understood their needs and fears, spoke to them in a language they could understand. This provided them the means with which to play their part in the American industrial experience. Pulitzer's crusades for safe milk and better living conditions were a catalyst for a generation of muckraking journalists. As Juergens explains:

In providing such publicity, Joseph Pulitzer filled a function not unlike that which brought fame to muckrakers like Upton Sinclair and Lincoln Steffens; indeed, in many ways he qualifies as the first of the breed. He understood . . . that horror stories too often repeated soon lose their impact, and avoided this danger by using the publicity for a purpose, to win a reform or to punish a wrongdoer (283).

That the World became the most widely-read newspaper in the western world at the time is a testament to the revolutionary vision and innovative techniques Pulitzer brought to the job. Newspaper stunts and sensational reporting had existed long before he took charge of the World. However, between 1883 and 1885 he would increase the level and scope of these stunts beyond the means of any of his competitors: "His

greatness is that he taught himself and his successors how to use them" (Juergens xi). No other paper could match his sending Nellie Bly around the world in 72 days to beat the record of the fictional Phineas Fog (Juergens ix). Newspapers prior to 1883 were unremarkable in their unrelieved grayness and small type, and illustrations were viewed as an occasional frill. After 22 May 1883, however, when the World ran a four-column woodcut of the Brooklyn Bridge, no newspaper could design a front page without an illustration. (Juergens x) By adopting the Bodoni typeface, Pulitzer made the World both easier to read and more attractive to the eye. Pulitzer made sports and womens' pages, frivolous pictures, stories and poems a regular feature in the World: "Each of these responses, unknown or conceived in only a rudimentary way prior to 1883, became the journalistic conventions of a later decade" (Juergens xi).

Pulitzer's other great accomplishment was his dedication to his readers. There is nothing in New York journalism prior to 1883 to match his crusades on behalf of immigrants, tenement dwellers, middle-income taxpayers and so on. Were this not the case, the penny press would be a mere historical footnote in the history of American journalism, and the prestigious prize awarded in his name would not exist. However, Pulitzer's commitment to social reform is a tradition that has lasted into the modern era.

### **Advertising - The Double-Edged Sword**

The phenomenal success of the penny press in the U.S. could not have been achieved without advertising. It had been clear to editors since Benjamin Day that enthusiasm alone would not pay the bills. The rise of advertising was as important, if not more so, to the rise of the penny press as was the news itself.

Manufacturers' need for advertising grew in concert with the country's population and economic progress. Prior to the Civil War, the American economy had been one of small local markets and poor distribution. Often, a merchant could sustain his business simply by having a sign outside his store (Baldasty 52). With the increased need for mass-produced goods brought on by the Civil War, however, came the spread of the railroad and national distribution schemes. The scale of American manufacturing had increased to the extent that "[t]he New England shoe producer who sought to sell goods in Oregon could not rely on word of mouth; national markets required national marketing" (Baldasty 53).

Techniques for increasing sales were also changing. National marketing schemes were on their way to replacing word of mouth communication, and commerce based on trust and consensus was being replaced by brand-name recognition. This

transition was brought on in large part by advertising agencies, who could offer manufacturers exposure to national markets. The year 1869 would see America's first Newspaper Directory, which provided advertisers with the circulation and publishing details of major newspapers across the country, as well as demographic information that would help advertisers answer what would soon become their key question: "What class of persons does this publication reach, and are they likely to be the purchasers of my goods?" (Baldasty 64). Most often, advertisements for consumer goods would be aimed specifically at women. As Nathaniel Fowler, an early advertising executive explained, "A woman who does not read ads would not be a woman, consequently all women read ads. Women are the buyers of everything everywhere . . . Woman is the pivot which turns trade" (qtd. in Baldasty 65). The rise of the advertising agency would leave no industry untouched. Manufacturers of beer, soap, patent medicines, baking powder, pianos, seeds and typewriters were all among those to benefit from this new approach. And the best way to create brand recognition was the newspaper.

With daily circulation figures in the millions, the penny press offered manufacturers the ideal medium to ensure the high-volume sales necessary in America's new economic climate. An early advertising agent, E.H. Morse, noted that the newspaper "leads both in reaching the people and producing the results" (qtd. in Baldasty 55). But it was not simply its reach that made the newspaper the ideal marketing tool. With a preponderance of questionable (and sometimes dangerous) patent medicines still being advertised, manufacturers needed to establish in their customers a trust that the product would deliver on the claims made in its advertising. Consequently, advertisers looked to exploit readers' trust of the World to confer upon their ads this necessary credibility. George H. Daniels, then a passenger agent for the New York Central Railroad, would comment that newspapers' character made his advertising "particularly appropriate for their columns" (qtd. in Baldasty 56).

So important was advertising to America's newspapers and industry, that it was largely responsible for the creation of department stores. These large, anonymous temples devoted to mass-produced goods could only exist with the daily advertising available in the newspaper. Soon, department stores such as Macy's, Bloomingdale's and Wannamaker's in Philadelphia would become an important source of news copy. In the optimistic economy of the times, many journalists were quick to portray the opening of a new department store as evidence of the city's progress and prosperity. As Robert Park has observed: "The department store is . . . a creation of the Sunday newspaper. [W]ithout the advertising that the Sunday newspaper was able to give it,

the department store would hardly have gained the vogue it has today. It is important in this connection that women read the Sunday paper before they did the dailies. The women are buyers (96).

In both size and profits, the department store was an evolution from the small merchants of earlier decades. Between 1888 and 1902, Macy's advertising budget increased from \$60,000 to \$227,142, during which time its sales increased by 400% (Baldasty 57). The department store also had changed the nature of newspaper economics. Between 1879 and 1899, advertising revenues for New York's peoples' dailies increased from \$29 million to \$96 million (Baldasty 57).

It was the 1880s that, with respect to the influence it exerted on a newspaper's operations, the advertising desk would come to rival the editorial desk. Newspapers' rising profits gave rise to specialized job areas, each doing one of the many tasks that Day and Bennett had once performed themselves. For advertisers, gone were the days when they could content themselves with monthly ad submissions. With the circulation and competition from rival advertisers increasing at such a dramatic rate, the placing of advertising became a daily event. Bennett would on 1 January 1888 be among the first to make this transition. From then on, all ads would have to be submitted daily.

Advertisers were more than happy to accommodate these new demands. And they imposed some of their own. Manufacturers were often determined that their ads ran next to news articles, not next to those of their competitors. Advertising agencies were quick to exploit their commercial clout. In their eyes, there was no question as to which party held the real reins of power. A trade journal in 1899 remarked that "[a] newspaper should do everything within its power to bring results to those who are using its columns" (qtd. in Baldasty 70).

As questionable as some advertising was, the immediate benefits for the reader were numerous. Advertisers' soliciting consumers' input on their products imbued consumers with a sense that their opinions and participation were essential to the nation's economy. Products would succeed or fail based on their performance, not on the reputation of the store owner. Also, advertisements made exciting reading. As Fred Hudson, then the managing editor for the New York World would remark, "[t]he ads form the most interesting and practical city news. They are the hopes, the thoughts the joys, the plans, the shames, the losses, the mishaps, the fortunes, the pleasures, the miseries, the politics and the religion of the people" (qtd. in Schudson, News 43). Newspapers and national advertising made the purchase of baking soda seem an exciting way for women to participate in the new industrial society. Newspapers'

increasing dependence on advertising would also complement one of the penny press' more enduring legacies: educating their readers. As McLuhan has observed, "All media that mixes ads with other programming are a form of 'paid learning.' The sensational press was the forerunner of paid learning" (Understanding Media 206).

### **Muckrakers and College Boys - The New Journalists**

With the maturing of the penny press came a new breed of journalist. Now familiar with objectivity and the pyramid lead, these new journalists came in two varieties: the muckraker and the college boy. Both represented a significant evolution from the drunkard of the 1830s. The muckrakers brought a dedication to urban and social reform: "The muckrakers were not only themselves instruments of reform, but their astonishing popularity was a symptom that the public was ripe for their message" (Hofstadter 353). The college-educated journalist brought a solid understanding of politics, English, philosophy and history. And as the press grew both in complexity and social import, such education was desirable. Whereas journalists of the previous era had written for their paycheck and nothing more, the journalist of the 1880s was more inclined to believe he was conducting a social experiment: "Reporters in the 1890s saw themselves, in part, as scientists uncovering the economic and political facts of industrial life more boldly, more clearly, and more 'realistically' than anyone had done before" (Schudson, News 71). It also was the period which saw the establishment of journalism manuals and university courses. In 1903, Pulitzer endowed the Columbia School of Journalism with \$200,000 (McCollum 7).

The question of the appropriate education for aspiring journalists was a source of great debate. On one side resided those such as Louisville Courier-Journal editor Henry Watterson, who favoured real-world experience over the classroom: "Special instructions in artillery does not make a man a soldier. Nor will special knowledge of one department . . . make a man an editor" (qtd. in McCollum 7). On the other were editors such as Charles Dana and Joseph Pulitzer, the latter in particular believing that educated journalists were essential for accurate, reform-minded reporting: "An able, disinterested, public-spirited press, with trained intelligence to know the right and courage to do it, can preserve that public virtue without which the popular government is a sham and mockery" (qtd. in McCollum 10).

The chief argument of those editors opposed to journalism courses was that good journalists were born, not made. They believed that a so-called nose for news was not something that could be cultivated in the classroom (McCollum 8). Those on

the opposite side of the debate constructed a strong countering argument. It was their view that the newsroom was hardly the ideal training ground, as harried editors had little time to devote to rookie reporters (McCollum 10). Edwin L. Shuman, one of the earliest journalism educators, likened the situation to that of a musician, who "must stumble along alone and learn only by repeated trial and failure" (qtd. in McCollum 9). With industrial American society growing ever more complex, many editors saw the need for journalists to be able to understand this complexity. Remarked Samuel Bowles, "A journalist without perspective has no right to exist" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 213). More importantly, many saw journalism's ill-defined social status and hazy definitions as precisely the incentive to study it in more depth. George Smalley, a U.S. correspondent for the London Times, advocated studying journalism "to ascertain its true relation to social and political life, and the right methods to be followed in its pursuit" (qtd. in McCollum 9).

### **Press Criticism, 1850 - 1900**

Just as the publication of the New York Sun sparked the first flurry of American press criticism, so did the Civil War spark an increase in thinking about the role and the impact of the newspaper in the American democratic society. Press criticism from 1850 until the end of the century further refined and clarified concepts that had been introduced in earlier writing. More importantly, critics discussed problems that have remained until today: sensationalism, partisanship and the profit motive. So disgusted was Godkin with the drive for profit that he once remarked: "If people of other callings operated as did some newsmen 'solely with reference to profits,' civilized society could not hold together" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 187).

In 1860, Lambert Wilmer published Our Press Gang, the first book devoted entirely to press criticism (Dicken-Garcia 166). In the years following the Civil War, the U.S. would see several "firsts" in its press criticism. Richard Grant White would in 1869 be the first to mention journalistic standards, calling the newspaper "the brain of the community" and "the organ of its collective thought" (Dicken-Garcia 158). In 1889, W.S. Lilly made the first mention of journalistic ethics (Dicken-Garcia 158). Most important was the common thread among all three writings: "Implicit in all such discussions was the belief that the press shaped public opinion" (Dicken-Garcia 161).

Americans' attitudes towards the printed word had changed considerably in the years since the New York Sun. If not unanimously enthusiastic about the new journalism, critics' moralistic tone of earlier condemnations had greatly subsided:

"Whether horrified or nervously amused, most stopped at the realization that such information had been committed to print, for it did not fit prevailing notions of the printed word's function" (Dicken-Garcia 226). What had not changed was the optimism with which Americans viewed the power of the press. Samuel Bowles, having already exhorted the virtues of the telegraph, praised the newspaper as "the instructor, the correcter, the stimulator of the age" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 158).

Equally as important was critics' realization that the newspaper was not only an institution, but a social phenomenon. James Parton would in 1866 recognize that the newspaper was indeed a key element of the American social contract: "Newspapers connected each individual with the general life of mankind . . . Those who didn't read the newspaper couldn't be 'members of the human family'" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 158).

One of the biggest problems facing critics of this era was one that had existed since the party press: partisanship. Although the spread of the telegraph and the Associated Press had succeeded in freeing journalists from their party masters, newspapers were still being criticized for portraying only one side of a story. It was a charge journalists themselves recognized. Godkin in 1868 remarked that

[i]f . . . newspapers only present . . . one side . . . , a "snap judgment" may be taken, and an appearance of popular approval be secured for the time being for anything the "leaders" like to bring forward. But the public does not remain long content with this half-knowledge. The question is gradually turned around, and the other side is revealed . . . Then come distrust, dissatisfaction, disgust, and reaction (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 176).

The area of newspapering which saw the most spirited debate was that of sensationalism. Some New York newspapers, namely the New York Times, prided themselves for their sober tone. The Times' Adolph Ochs in 1896 called his sheet "a model American newspaper, a model high-standard daily journal, a model for fairness, cleanliness, independence and enterprise, a welcome daily visitor in the homes of intelligent and respectable people" (qtd. in McCollum 14). However, Ochs was in large measure preaching to the converted. Although he had rescued the Times' from bankruptcy, its circulation was nowhere near that of the more colourful papers such as the New York World. Bushnell lamented that stories of sex and scandal created "a taste fatal to all the ethics of purity and honor" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 201), while Boucicault accused newspapers of diverting readers' attention from more pressing political issues:

"It became a rag picker when the nation was engaged in a great political struggle" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 188).

To these criticisms of sensationalism, some prominent journalists also added their own. Godkin was strongly critical of both the World and the Journal for their "[g]ross misrepresentation of the facts [and] deliberate invention of tales" during the Spanish-American war (qtd. in McCollum 13), while Ambrose Bierce, himself a reporter for the Journal, denounced his employers and their industry as being "conducted by rogues and dunces for dunces and rogues . . . faithful to nothing but the follies and vices of our system. They fetter the feet of wisdom and stiffen the prejudices of the ignorant. They are sycophants to the mob, tyrants to the individual" (qtd. in McCollum 15).

Proponents of sensational reporting lauded its practitioners not so much for their enthusiastic use of adjectives, but for their motivation. As Arthur Brisbane described, "Yellow Journalism is a war, war on hypocrisy, war against class privileges, especially war against the foolishness of the crowd that will not think and will not use the weapon that it holds - the invincible ballot" (qtd. in McCollum 12). To support his argument, Brisbane cited James 1:22-25, a passage which encourages acting over merely listening: "You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith made him completely what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone" (1483).

Nearly a century later, McLuhan would also come to the support of yellow journalism. As he viewed it, sensationalism was a strong element in newspapers' building communities: "[T]he press yields the inside story of the community in action and interaction. It is for this reason that the press seems to be performing its function most when revealing the seamy side. Real news is bad news - bad news about somebody, or bad news for somebody" (Understanding Media 205).

Another important element in later press criticism was the realization that journalism was often a difficult, thankless occupation. Godkin would describe reporting "as demoralizing a business as a young man could enter," lamenting the fact that aspiring journalists' enthusiasm and concern for society was in the eyes of so many newspaper owners devalued in favour of "spice, smartness and enterprise" (Dicken-Garcia 199). The newspaper industry had become so standardized and demoralizing that day-to-day reporting resembled "sending carts out for loads of soil and rubbish to

dump them all in a heap" (White, qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 200). Even Godkin, an enthusiastic supporter of reform-minded journalism, lamented journalists' need to "collect, condense and clothe [news] in language to make it a ponderable, merchantable commodity" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 211).

A sharp contrast to earlier press criticism was the view that a good newspaper should let the reader make up his own mind regarding issues. Critics now recognized that newspaper content had made the transition from news as sermon to news as information, a change brought on by the Civil War and by the spread of the telegraph. Critics were also quick to endorse the independence that these developments brought to journalism. In many critics' view, newspapers were now free to seek the truth "regardless of consequences to parties, to schools, to corporations, to individuals, and . . . to the interests of the editor and the owners of the paper itself" (White, qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 211).

Critics still lamented the fact that such reporting reduced complex issues to stereotyped contests, but Samuel Bowles deemed it "better to hear only one side, than to be daily lied to . . . The honest reader may take our opinion on trust . . . But if he prefers, as he ought, to compare and weigh and strike the balance for himself, we are bound to furnish him the raw materials" (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 216).

An important legacy of the later press critics was their arrival at a code of journalistic ethics. As Dicken-Garcia has observed, "[r]udiments of codes of conduct articulated by individuals of this era paved the way for further definition of appropriate journalistic conduct in the early twentieth century" (222). It was Melville E. Stone who put the first version to paper. Among its central tenets were: no pandering to "unthinking" tastes; no sensationalism to boost sales; an adequate division between news and advertising, accurate and fair reporting, combined with the ability to make apologies where necessary (qtd. in Dicken-Garcia 219).

Since the publication of Benjamin Day's New York Sun in 1833, Americans never lost their enthusiasm for the potential of the press. Despite charges of sensationalism, immorality, corruption and vice, Americans held the power of the press as civilizing agent of Reform in high esteem. It was this optimism and faith in the power of the press that allowed journalists to establish their political independence and status as social institution. It would be this enthusiasm as well that would lead to newspapers' being the key element in the establishment of the democratic consciousness.

In sum, what had begun as simple scandal sheets hand-printed with the express purpose of making a profit evolved into the modern newspaper. Under the influence of the telegraph, newspaper writing transformed itself from personal observations, sermons and party rhetoric into a standardized, impersonal, industrial and predictable product, designed to be read and understood by as many people as possible. Editors, for the most part, had directed their attentions away from party pronouncements and toward sex, crime and scandal that would attract a far greater number of readers. Journalists, forced for the first time to speak with ordinary citizens, found they shared many of the same goals and aspirations as their readers. With the telegraph also came objectivity, which, though freeing journalists from their party masters, reduced complex issues and events into simplistic, often distorted concepts.

Newspaper organization had evolved from the one-man operations of Day, Bennett and Greeley into the complex corporate structures of industry. No longer was the editor in charge of advertising, distribution and reporting. By 1900, the editor would find himself in a battle with the advertising desk as to defining the newspaper's true mission. It is a battle that continues to this day.

Newspaper readers also changed. The small, monied social elite who received their party paper by subscription to read in the comfort of their own home had been gradually overtaken by the workingman, who bought his Sun or Herald on the street for a penny. As entertaining newspapers evolved into educational newspapers, the workingman's sense of political enfranchisement also increased. The penny papers of Bennett and Day became so influential that soon the monied aristocrats were buying them as well.

What this created in America's newspaper readers was the democratic consciousness.

## CHAPTER THREE - CANADA CATCHES UP

### Introduction

If it can be said that the establishment and rapid growth of the penny press in the United States was due in large part to the economic, social, political and technological changes taking place, it also can be said that its Canadian counterpart developed almost in the absence of such changes. That the Toronto Star and the Toronto Telegram had, by century's end, attained a prominence in Canada similar to that enjoyed by the New York World in the U.S. is a testament more to the pioneers in Canadian journalism, than to a new-found commitment to freedom of the press. While Day and Bennett were helped by a vibrant industrial economy and a commitment to the spread of democracy, the erratic, tempestuous William Lyon Mackenzie was one of the few men working to bring the same philosophy to Upper Canada through the pages of his Colonial Advocate. His rebellion against the colonial powers in 1837 was a desperate attempt to bring about responsible government, not "out of a perverse hatred of British institutions, but because an intransigent provincial oligarchy had denied them the representative institutions that British colonists had come to look on as their right" (Duffy 24).

Nevertheless, between 1830 and 1900, the Canadian press did pass through the same stages of development as the American press. That is, from a landscape of party papers, through to George Brown's Globe, Canada's first "popular" paper, to the independent mavericks such as E.E. Sheppard's Toronto News, William Maclean's Toronto World and John Ross Robertson's Toronto Telegram.

As in the United States, the independent penny papers had a similar effect upon the elite party papers such as the Toronto Mail and the Toronto Empire, both financed by backers of Conservative Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald. These papers did not abandon their exhaustive coverage of politics, but when faced with competition, even the Globe began running sports and business news. For George Brown, sound economic principles were as important to good citizenship as social progress.

### Toronto's Humble Origins

To John Graves Simcoe, Canada's first Lieutenant Governor, establishing a vibrant press was not a high priority when he founded the town of York. Rather, the future provincial capital was established as a simple military outpost to protect Upper Canada from American invasion. This utilitarian outlook was evidenced as much by its housing (which resembled barracks) as its almost complete lack of municipal services. Lacking the simplest paved roads, Toronto in the 1830s was still best approached by

boat, and it was not uncommon for townsfolk to lose their way in the forests north of what is now Bloor St. A full urban infrastructure was decades away: "The administration of government and dispensation of justice did not provide that stimulus in any part of the nineteenth century, but rather served to confirm the founding of a small town and to assure its continued existence . . . York . . . remained virtually a village for several decades" (Goheen, Victorian Toronto 48).

To those residents familiar with progressive American cities, York's status as a "stagnant backwater" was a constant source of irritation. Many of York's residents, United Empire Loyalists who had been driven out of the Thirteen Colonies after the American Revolution, had given up a great deal to remain loyal to the British crown. To those settlers less interested in Upper Canada's colonial status, however, the fact that a heavy rain turned much of the town into a bog was equally frustrating: "The situation seemed all the worse by contrast with the young United States . . . The optimism and the progress and the very numbers of the people in the frontier states provided a dramatic contrast to the stagnation of Upper Canada, and in the eyes of the dissatisfied served as a constant reproach" (Kilbourn 26).

Nor was this situation bound to improve any time soon. Executive power in Upper Canada rested in the hands of the Family Compact, a tightly-knit association of wealthy families and Anglican clergy, few of whom displayed an interest in popular sovereignty. While it is true that Upper Canada boasted a Legislative Assembly to which members were duly elected, their concerns were rarely acted upon by the Executive Council. Members of the Executive Council were not elected, but appointed by, and accountable to the Lieutenant Governor, who took orders directly from Britain. Simply put, the machinery that would allow someone from outside this clique to influence its decisions did not exist:

This lack of opportunity for actual participation in local government meant a lack of opportunity for that orderly clash of opinion and eventual compromise which distinguishes English-speaking communication in general today. There was a lack of opportunity for coming into the open and uttering what the old Greeks called "The word said into the middle" (Landon 157).

This political paralysis, while beneficial to the members of the Family Compact, was a source of constant complaint from members of the Legislative Assembly. In addition, their refusal to sully their hands with municipal improvements did little to increase Toronto's stature: "By the appropriation of the public lands, the Compact not only robbed the Commonwealth, but . . . obstructed settlement and retarded the

progress of the country. It enhanced its unpopularity by giving itself social airs . . . through the account of its grand mansions" (Smith 88).

In addition to holding the political reins in Upper Canada, the Family Compact also controlled all the colony's business interests, its post office and its judicial system. In contrast to the egalitarian and accessible manner in which land was granted in the U.S., public lands in Upper Canada were the exclusive property of the Compact. As a result, farmers were forced to pay rent on land they viewed as their own. This placed a heavy burden of the taxes for local improvements on settlers' own shoulders, instilling in them a great sense of injustice (Kilbourn 45). In his Report on the Affairs of British North America, delivered in 1839, Lord Durham observes:

[T]he whole of the public lands have been deemed property of the Crown, and the whole of the administration for disposing of them to individuals . . . has been conducted by officers of the Crown . . . [I]t is either very difficult or next to impossible for a person of no influence to obtain any of the public land . . . Every where needless delays have harassed and exasperated applicants; and every where . . . gross favouritism has prevailed in the disposal of public lands. [This is] but a part of the evils, grievances and abuses, of which Your Majesty's subjects in the colonies justly complain, as having arisen from maladministration in this department (qtd. in Earl 76).

While in retrospect it is easy to criticize the Family Compact for running the province much like a private fiefdom, one must consider the political climate in Upper Canada in the years following the American Revolution. The War of 1812 was still fresh in many peoples' minds, and in Upper Canada as well as in Britain, democracy was synonymous with mob rule. Consequently, a push toward popularly elected officials was not likely to be greeted with any degree of enthusiasm: "After the war, as Tories and members of the Family Compact, the Loyalists naturally associated democracy with treason. They regarded the arrival of American democratic ideals in the new Parliament Buildings with as much enthusiasm as they had watched American soldiers set fire to the old ones" (Kilbourn 27).

### **Loyalism and Anti-Americanism**

To better understand the history of the press in Upper Canada, it is necessary to examine the Loyalist ethos: its origins, its tenets and the influence it exerted on the colony's imagination. Loyalism dominated the Upper Canadian imagination almost from the colony's foundation. The image of the moral, sober and respectable subject of the British crown has its origins in Colonial America. As revolutionary fever swept the

Thirteen Colonies, the Loyalists were conspicuous by their desire to remain aloof from the conflict:

They attempted no purges of colonial legislative assemblies where strange and seditious doctrines were preached, destroyed no printing presses screaming of royal conspiracies against colonial freedoms and the right of all men to choose their own governors . . . Instead, they replied rationally or satirically to the pamphleteers, made mild witticisms in the face of terrorists [and] beseeched the authorities for more protection (Duffy 14).

However, the Loyalists' predilection for decorum was no match for Revolution. Forced from their homes by a violent tide of Republicanism, the Loyalists brought to Upper Canada memories of humiliation and defeat. As Duffy recounts, their experience of the war was not one of professional military standards, but of crop burnings, midnight beatings and underground prisons: "To endure defeat in this kind of immediate, personalized war was to suffer galling humiliation" (Duffy 18). In the Loyalists' view, the American Revolution had destroyed their covenant with the British crown and replaced it with decadent mob rule. This impression was strengthened by Americans' attitudes towards the Loyalists: "The victors viewed their one-time opponents as reprobates and traitors to a self-evidently just and noble cause. Even . . . General Washington sought nothing for the Loyalists but dispossession and dismissal, . . . though not before they had been spoiled of every possession their opponents could grab" (Duffy 20).

Many Loyalists were forced to leave comfortable and prosperous lives, despite their being sympathetic to some of the principles driving the American Revolution. The central themes of the Declaration of Independence - a synthesis of Roman Republicanism and English Liberalism - were not antithetical to the Loyalists' own political beliefs: "A great many English-speaking persons believed in one or two of them. It was the new arrangement, the linkage of previously separate ideas, that came as a shock" (Duffy 16).

The Loyalists' flight to Upper Canada required their creating a myth that could sustain their energies in their new surroundings. The Loyalists viewed themselves as keepers of the covenant with God and King, as those who sought to preserve decorum and order against the unruly American mob. In fashioning this myth, however, the Loyalists were forced into an uncomfortable relationship toward their American heritage. It was impossible for them to completely ignore their former homeland, due either to familial ties or simple geography. Nevertheless, the literature of Upper Canada works to stress the Loyalists' un-American traits: "If there were such a thing as a

Loyalist mentality, one aspect of it would have been a certain hesitancy about acknowledging one's American roots. A person may overcompensate for the similarity of his origins to his opponents by denying any eventual resemblance (Duffy 25).

The Loyalists came to view their expulsion as possessing a Christian dimension. They had lost not only their homes, but a promised land (Duffy 9). In their new Eden of Upper Canada, salvation would come at the hands of the British authorities, who provided them with shelter and supplies to begin anew. For the Loyalists, these material goods were rewards for their loyalty to Britain and the value it placed on civility:

The covenant made possible a land perched precariously between a wilderness on one hand and an aggressive enemy on the other. What seemed a political and geographical impossibility could be preserved only by adhering to the pact. Here stood a land and a degree of prosperity stemming not from conquest and enslavement, but from the toil of those who had improved the empire that nurtured them [and gave] an ideal of civic behaviour which set them apart from the oath-breakers to the south. Canada was perilous and unique because it depended upon mutuality, trust, and cohesion in the face of a continental power acknowledging no laws but its own . . . and powerless to impress upon its citizens proper standards of behaviour (Duffy 8).

The Loyalist myth was further strengthened by the War of 1812. Isaac Brock's victory over the U.S. at Queenston Heights brought Upper Canada neither fame nor territory, but instead symbolized the Loyalist values of grit and perseverance (Duffy 23). Brock's victory also strengthened the Christian dimension of the Loyalist experience. Having suffered agony and defeat at the hands of republican America, the Loyalist victory at Queenston added the principle of resurrection (Duffy 23). Even General Brock, a good, but personally unremarkable soldier, came to be viewed as a martyr for the Loyalist cause: "The very fact of survival vindicated the Loyalist principles" (Duffy 23).

As newspapers in Upper Canada had yet to attain a significant level of mass influence, the Loyalist myth was first disseminated through the colonial literature. According to Duffy, the values inherent in Loyalism fit the literary imagination of the time: "The romantic and cultural creed that swept the West at the beginning of the nineteenth century could view these exiles with particular affection both as outsiders and as intrepid citizens - defenders of a threatened state. An optimistic pattern had been salvaged from tragic material" (Duffy 28). The Romantic nature of the Loyalist experience suited perfectly its Christian dimension. By combining Christianity and

Romantic overtones, the Loyalists were able to portray themselves in the colonial folklore as the despised yet true inheritors of North America (Duffy 28).

This mythology was viewed as protection against the encroachment of American values in Upper Canada. After the American Revolution and the War of 1812, the stability provided by the British flag was a welcome relief. As Duffy recounts, the scars of the Loyalists' defeat and their healing under the shelter of the imperial authorities produced a "pervasive allegiance to the crown and a deep dislike for its enemies" (Duffy 20).

Another important element in the Loyalist myth was its emphasis on social cohesion and class harmony. This was based on their desire to re-establish their social vision in Upper Canada. In contrast to the social hierarchy imposed by the Family Compact, "Loyalism cut across class lines . . . [N]o great disparities of occupation or social station made them easily identifiable to each other" (Duffy 15). In practical terms, Loyalists were faced with the difficult task of absorbing American influences such as a free press without succumbing to Republican ideals. The Loyalist mythology was such that it was easy to either dismiss or brand as a traitor those sympathetic to these ideas.

It is in the writings of Mazo de la Roche that one finds the most succinct expression of the Loyalists' need for social cohesion. According to Duffy, the Whiteoak family of her *Jalna* series represents a stable, harmonious family whose idyllic existence is constantly threatened by outside influences. Most often these are such American concepts as individualism and materialism. The Whiteoaks are inward-looking and self-sufficient, emphasizing such Loyalist virtues as stability and continuity. The fact that their home is located in the forest is also significant. According to Duffy, *Jalna* represents

an imaginary kingdom in which the threats posed to social peace by appetite and individualism could be safely absorbed and contained . . . so long as the house stands, the pleasure principle . . . and the pursuit of it never becomes wholly destructive. [I]t is called a paradise, one in which the snake of vitality can be accommodated without fatal disruption (Duffy 87).

The Loyalist myth also could be found in those congregations outside the Anglican church. Lutherans, Catholics and Methodists all had established churches in Upper Canada well before the rise of the Family Compact (Duffy 25), and had little use for Bishop Strachan's plans to build a privately-run Anglican state on Canadian soil. However, the Loyalist principles would be co-opted by Strachan and the Family Compact to justify their lavish existence and their control over colonial affairs. Whereas the Loyalists wished to remain faithful to King and Empire, the Family Compact

wanted colonists to defer to its own authority. Whereas Loyalism cut across class lines, the Family Compact wished to establish their own aristocracy (Kilbourn 31). To achieve this, the Compact raised the spectre of the “low grovelling principles of democracy” (Kilbourn 161) to justify their control of the colony:

Loyalty rather than Loyalism became the oligarchs’ watchword; the two words sounded close enough to the elite to appear as the colony’s founders. Their rhetoric, the formulas they employed for purging their enemies, emphasized that it was they themselves who were particularly loyal . . . with social dissenters easily labeled as disloyal Americanizers of the colony (Duffy 24).

### **Methodism and the Democratic Impetus**

Unlike the predominantly secular roots of the American press, the evolution of the Canadian press was played out against a strong backdrop of clashing religious denominations. While the Anglican church stressed deference and stability, Methodism and the Presbyterianism of Mackenzie and Brown provided much of the fuel for Canada’s democratic progress. The influence exerted by Methodism on the Canadian press owes as much to its doctrines of compassion as to its democratic structure. Unlike the centralizing, authoritarian structure of the Anglican church, Methodism was better-suited to the frontier of Upper Canada. It offered regional conferences and an itinerant clergy. The latter point is of particular interest, as a variety of ministers allowed for more than one interpretation of the scriptures - differing interpretations of the truth. Also important was the emphasis Methodists placed on group participation in church activities.

Equally important to Methodism’s influence on the colony’s democratic evolution were its adherents. Although its congregation included those of British ancestry, they had little use for the Anglican church: “The Loyalists . . . wanted nothing to do with what they considered the disorderliness, the militant democracy of U.S. government and society. This had not however made them pine for a church and aristocracy” (Duffy 25). Upper Canada’s Methodist congregation was made up largely of farmers, unskilled labourers, merchants, innkeepers, teachers and radicals, many of whom were opposed to the Anglican social hierarchy. It was these people who would read the Colonial Advocate, and it was these people who would make up the core readership of papers such as the Telegram, the News and the Star. And while maintaining a social hierarchy was in the best interests of the Anglican church, “to become a member of [the Methodist] church was to some extent to lose caste . . . There were very few professional men and none who were wealthy” (Goheen, Victorian

Toronto 234). Also, the absence of class distinctions seen in Upper Canada's Methodist congregation further strengthened the Loyalist ethos.

It was among Upper Canada's Methodist congregation that the idea of popular democracy first took hold: "[Its adherents] represented the growing nationalism of the Canadian frontier, just as they represented its restless democracy in their resentment at the privileges and claims of the English church" (Creighton 219). When viewed in this manner, it is not difficult to see how these principles of group participation and flexibility affected peoples' attitudes towards the press.

### "The People"

The social landscape of Upper Canada in the 1830s was polarized between the insular world of the Family Compact and the working classes. It was this latter group who most eagerly embraced the promise of a free press and popular sovereignty:

The notion of the Press had been inextricably linked to the notion of popular sovereignty. The naive yet splendid trust in the efficacy of unrestrained debate and the rationality of the common man was eventually sanctified by . . . "On Liberty," which was really an elaboration of beliefs already commonplace throughout the British and American worlds (Rutherford, Canadian Media 26).

Also, this group was bound together in a social contract entirely different from that being fashioned by the Family Compact. Theirs was tempered by the experience of the frontier, of carving out a meagre existence from the wilderness of Upper Canada. It was an experience that closely mirrored that of settlers in the U.S.: "The frontier imposed a democracy of its own and allowed a certain freedom to those who did not choose to be governed by an aristocracy . . . The idea of an aristocracy lent itself entirely too readily to ridicule [and] abuse" (Kilbourn 32).

As restrictive as the laws in Upper Canada were (the colony's laws regarding freedom of the press were decades behind both the U.S. and England), the colony still enjoyed a free exchange of ideas. The colonial press certainly contributed to this, but the success of debate was due in large part to the colony's small size and its proximity to the U.S. Upper Canada at the time of the rebellion was small enough that news could still travel via personal contact. The free exchange of ideas envisioned by J.S. Mill was mediated as much through the press as through the taverns and hotels along the border: "In the records of travel of the thirties, there are constant references to the inns and to conversations with strangers, and also mentions of evenings spent about the fireside with much debate and discussion" (Landon 157). In this respect, albeit nearly by

default, Upper Canada was very much an oral culture - a key element for the foundation of a democratic consciousness.

It was during these discussions (in addition to the Methodist influence) that the idea of popular sovereignty took hold in Upper Canada. Fueled by a number of Upper Canadian radicals and itinerant Americans, the farmers and labourers of Upper Canada fashioned a political consciousness very similar to that being practiced in the U.S.: “Their crusade was the crusade of the common man against the powerful individual and the great corporation . . . which was sweeping the western American states and had inspired the election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency” (Creighton 233).

### **The Colonial Press**

Journalism in Upper Canada in 1830 was a fragmented, sporadic and haphazard venture. Starting a journal was relatively inexpensive, but maintaining it was considerably more difficult. The journalistic landscape during the 1830s was made up largely of specialized trade journals, weeklies and tri-weeklies with meagre subscription lists and a weak distribution system. In addition, the papers were unpredictable in their content. Most often one-man operations, they offered readers a sampling of the editor’s own curiosities and eccentricities rather than any standardized definition of news. As Susannah Moodie would illustrate, early Canadian journalism consisted of “[a] strange mix of politics, religion, abuse and general information” (qtd. in Rutherford, Canadian Media 13). Most importantly, the majority of the colonial papers were aimed at the literate inhabitants of the colony.

### **William Lyon Mackenzie**

The most energetic and influential spokesmen for popular sovereignty and Responsible government in Upper Canada was William Lyon Mackenzie. A transplanted Scottish Presbyterian, Mackenzie’s youth was shaped by equal doses of Scottish pride, Presbyterian morality and crushing poverty. In short, he was the antithesis of Bishop Strachan’s ideal colonist:

Mackenzie was proud of the humble independence in which he was raised. It taught him contempt for those who made their way up in the world by being pleasant. He felt an almost physical loathing for people whose wealth or power was derived from what he chose to call “fawning and cringing in the right circles.” . . . His greatest respect was reserved for those among the common people who even in advertising had not allowed a good name to turn prostitute (Kilbourn 13).

As enamoured as he was of the American political system, Mackenzie was not interested in political union with the republic. Mackenzie was an ardent Canadian nationalist decades before Confederation. In the pages of his Colonial Advocate, first published at Queenston on 18 May 1824, Mackenzie promoted his vision of a purely Canadian republic:

Ask a Canadian - Would you desire an established church; the ministers to be paid by the state? He will reply, No, no; let all denominations be equal . . . The election of your own justices of the peace? Yes. The control of your own wild lands and other revenue? Undoubtedly. Cheap economical government? Yes. The election of your own governors? Ay. Of your legislative councilors? Ay. Well then, would you not also wish to be joined to the United States? No, never! (qtd. in Kilbourn 121).

Nor did Mackenzie despise his colonial masters in England - while defending himself in a libel trial he quoted at length the speeches of English parliamentarians (Kilbourn 81). Mackenzie based his virulent criticism of the Family Compact on the belief that it was they alone who were responsible for stalling Upper Canada's development and perpetuating the poverty of its inhabitants: "He believed . . . that the members with power and privilege, by holding back the development of the country in their own selfish interests, were responsible for that poverty . . . On top of that, the very existence of the Family Compact represented an affront to his own family pride" (Kilbourn 22).

It was not simply the material poverty of Upper Canada that so angered Mackenzie; it was the intellectual poverty as well. While education was available for children of the Family Compact, universal education did not arrive in Upper Canada until the 1880s. Mackenzie, who had read over 900 books before setting foot on Canadian soil (Kilbourn 18), decried the lack of public libraries in the colony. In addition, he viewed the founding of Upper Canada College as a plot by the Family Compact to strengthen its hold on the colony's political imagination (Kilbourn 115). Mackenzie was well aware of the importance of the printed word, and constantly stressed the need for an educated electorate: "The question of whether a people should be Educated is the same as whether a people should be happy or miserable, liberated or oppressed" (qtd. in Kilbourn 115). In spite of the colony's regressive postal tariffs and constant personal debt, Mackenzie devoted much of his energies to educating the colony himself: "He believed [the printed word] to be the great educator in all virtue,

and the sure means of stirring men to a fight for social justice . . . Books, pamphlets, collections of quotations, he was to disperse, broadside, by the thousands upon his Upper Canadian public because they were ‘efficient weapons in the hands of free men’” (Kilbourn 19).

To his passion for education and his strong moral sense, Mackenzie added a fervour for democracy and a free press. An admirer of Andrew Jackson, Mackenzie was determined to spread the gospel of social and political equality in Upper Canada. Mackenzie believed that “[g]overnment was a sacred trust to be administered on behalf of the people” (Creighton 236), and one of the most effective ways of bringing this about was through a free press. In his Colonial Advocate of 26 January 1832, he writes: “Remember, that wherever the Press is not free the people are poor abject degraded slaves, that the Press is the life, the safeguard, the very heart’s blood of a free country; the test of its worth, its happiness, its civilization” (qtd. in Rutherford, Canadian Media 25).

In this respect, Mackenzie’s political thinking was not as outlandish as it may have appeared. His opinions regarding the role of the press and democracy were rooted in both the U.S. Constitution and English liberalism. His vision of responsible government was directly linked to parliamentary traditions being practiced in England, and his views of democracy as a God-given right were enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence. It was on the 60th anniversary of its signing, 4 July 1836, that Mackenzie began printing the Constitution, with the stated purpose of “preparing the public mind for nobler actions than our tyrants dream of” (qtd. in Kilbourn 159). Like his heroes Joseph Hume and J. S. Mill, Mackenzie saw democracy as a conduit to the divine - a theory postulated by philosophers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau: “The emergence of the modern state, Rousseau argued, was an integral part of the history of need, a necessary consequence of both luxury and inequality . . . The history of the state is therefore part of the history of man’s alienation, his loss of a once undivided nature” (Ignatieff 117).

As simple as these goals were, however, Mackenzie’s publications were not easy reading, particularly for the farmers and labourers whose support he so eagerly sought. His Colonial Advocate was filled with lengthy sermons and libertarian essays. For the uneducated reader, the road to political enlightenment was a long and arduous one: “By the standards of the yellow press . . . it had all the pacing of a three-volume Victorian novel. It took an evening, not a glance, to do justice to the front page” (Kilbourn 36). Nor did the Advocate boast any pretense of entertainment. The notion

that one would read a newspaper for amusement was still decades away. For the colonial reader, politics was the only topic available: "As for comics, crime, gossip, pictures and sports, one must be satisfied with more political fine print and an editorial or two. But then politics in those day had something of the character of those things put together" (Kilbourn 41).

Nor did Mackenzie's publications boast any dedication to objectivity or journalistic ethics: "Once he laid hands on good copy he was incapable of restraint" (Kilbourn 39). The nature of Mackenzie's career is such that it is impossible to separate his politics from what he printed in his newspapers. In this respect, Mackenzie fit the mold of the colonial journalist. Journalism in Upper Canada had yet to attain either the sustained social impact or the expensive machinery that would eventually transfer a large part of the editor's power to the advertising department. Where Mackenzie differed from other colonial journalists was his political independence and the vigour with which he promoted the double-barreled notion of a free press and popular sovereignty: "Tories! Pensioners! Placemen! Profligates! Orangemen! Churchmen! Brokers! Gamblers! Parasites! allow me to congratulate you. Your feet are at last on the peoples' necks" (qtd. in Kilbourn 159). Mackenzie did, however, possess many of the traits of later journalists and editors such as John Ross Robertson: "He had it in his blood to stir things up and to do so as publicly as possible. He was the most unselfish of idealists - he also was a born muckraker and scandal-monger" (Kilbourn 23).

Despite his lack of traditional journalistic ethics, Mackenzie did embody many of the traits that were to be the hallmarks of the penny press. Although elected to the Legislative Assembly on the side of Reform, he often professed independence and was quick to find fault with his own party and the Tories alike. His criticisms were so fierce that on four occasions he found himself ejected from the House. His concerns were not those of his fellow members, but those of the farmers and labourers. Growing up in rural Scotland, "[h]e was well equipped to understand their lot with a sensitive but unsentimental accuracy" (Kilbourn 15). Despite the lack of decent roads around Toronto, he actively sought the opinions of those living on the town's outskirts as well as those living within the city.

### The Colonial Press' Failures

As instrumental as the colonial press was in spreading the gospel of popular democracy and responsible government, it never attained the status of a mass medium. This is true for its circulation as well as for its social impact. Its content was too

eccentric and its distribution too weak to form any lasting notion of social control (Rutherford, Canadian Media 36). In addition, Upper Canada in the 1830s was still too sparsely populated, its economy too dependent on raw materials extraction and on the shipping interests of Montreal to foster any significant middle class. More importantly, its administration was still in the hands of appointed officials. The activities of Mackenzie had succeeded in removing much of the stigma from the notion of responsible government, but this had not yet been translated into anything resembling it in the legislature. The colonial government still offered its inhabitants little opportunity to participate in local affairs.

One stigma still in place, however, was that of catering to the working classes. Excepting the six newspapers Mackenzie started during his lifetime, the colonial press had subscribed largely to the dominant Victorian bourgeois ethos so heavily promoted by the Family Compact: "The wave of popularization after the mid-1830s may have given birth to the penny paper and modified an earlier pattern of journalism, but it had receded before substantially altering the bourgeois nature of the press . . . No more than a few journals really tried for long to cater to the tastes of the lower orders (Rutherford, Canadian Media 29).

The colonial press also had little effect on attitudes toward a free press. Two of the participants in the 1837 Rebellions were hanged, and Mackenzie escaped only by fleeing into the woods and across the border into New York state. And while it is true that the two men were executed for treason, John Beverley Robinson attributed their motivation to a free press: "It is one of the numerable consequences of the abuse of liberty, that a licentious press is permitted to poison the public mind with the most absurd and wicked misrepresentations, which the ill-disposed without inquiry, receive and act upon as truths" (qtd. in Rutherford, Canadian Media 1).

### The Colonial Press' Successes

In spite of all this, the colonial press did lay the groundwork for Upper Canada's emerging democratic consciousness. Combined with the lively discussions taking place in the taverns and hotels in Toronto and other points along the border, the colonial press, specifically the Colonial Advocate, did impart the notions of popular sovereignty and a free press that were to be the hallmarks of the peoples' press. The colonial press existed at a time when Upper Canadian society was transforming itself from an oral culture into a written one - newspapers such as the Colonial Advocate and the Constitution put down on paper the ideas that were being discussed in person: "The

early newspaper and its politics made democracy possible at the level where it matters most - the exchange of ideas in the neighbourhood, the serious but not solemn conversation among friends" (Kilbourn 36).

The domain of the colonial press was strictly politics. As the colony was lacking in popular entertainment such as sports and theatre, the political arena was the sole source of amusement and drama for the colony's inhabitants. This, however, was beneficial to the newspaper readers. Such a heavy focus on politics was necessary in the early days of Canadian democracy, when the idea of public participation in government was looked upon as heretical and treasonous:

The newspaper's concentration upon political life had stripped bare the mystery which had surrounded government. No longer could the officials pretend politics was a game only for the genteel and the privileged . . . As well, the press reports of parliamentary speeches brought the assembly into a much closer contact with the electorate. The assembly became . . . the representative of the popular will . . . The way was paved for responsible government (Rutherford, Canadian Media 20).

Another important legacy of the colonial press was its emerging national consciousness. Canada's political future was - and continues to be - a source of endless editorials and columns. Editors of every major Canadian paper that followed - whether a party organ or an independent - were faced with the challenge of shaping the future of the country: "The press had added the national idea to the pantheon of principles, including liberty, private property, and the British connection, which constituted the Canadian orthodoxy" (Rutherford, Canadian Media 35). What is ironic about these principles is that liberty and private property came not from England, but from the U.S.

### **Canada in Transition, 1850 - 1880**

In the years following the Act of Union of 1841, Canada underwent its most profound changes since the arrival of the Loyalists. The most significant of these advances were in business and transportation, two areas which would have a profound influence on the Press. It was during this period that Canada's first successful daily newspaper, the Globe, appeared.

On 16 May 1853, the first passenger train in Upper Canada made its inaugural trip, from Toronto to Simcoe. In the following years, the country was to see its rail system expand at an impressive rate. The Grand Trunk had connected Sarnia to Maine by 1859, the Great Western linked Hamilton to Windsor and Toronto by 1855, the same year that the Northwestern joined Toronto to Collingwood. By 1900, Canada

would boast 17,600 miles of track, compared to a mere 2,000 miles in 1860.

(Rutherford, Victorian Authority 10) As Peter Goheen observes, the railway was a key factor in Toronto's economic ascendancy: "[I]t presented Toronto with new opportunities to exploit its long appreciated geographical position and its newly-developed relationship with the Canadian west, with New York, and with Ontario" (Currents 218).

But the expansion of Canada's railways carried repercussions that transcended economics. As much as Prime Minister John A. Macdonald would view the railways as the key to Canada's political and economic independence, any progress in this direction would be largely superficial. Lacking the economic resources to fund the project itself, Canada was forced to depend on American entrepreneurs to build its national railway. This influx of American dollars started the irreparable linking of Canada's economic interests to the U.S. (Moffett 56).

Such advances in transportation also had a significant impact on the transmission of ideas between the two countries. As Goldwin Smith observed at the time, the transportation revolution facilitated not only the shipment of grain between the two countries, but of ideas as well. This was not brought about by any government initiative, but simply by someone's leaving a newspaper on the train: "Trains between Buffalo and Detroit pass through [St. Thomas] every day; the newspapers of either [city] could be read at the breakfast table, and the resident of St. Thomas could go to either place in the morning and come home the same evening" (qtd. in Moffett 66).

Developing at the same time as Canada's rail system were Toronto's large commercial interests. The founding of the Toronto Locomotive Works, the city's first large-scale factory, in 1852 (Goheen, Victorian Toronto 230), was followed by the establishment of the Toronto Board of Trade in 1856, the Imperial Bank of Commerce in 1867, and Eaton's department store in 1869. The establishment of the Toronto Stock Exchange in 1878 marked the city's evolution from a military outpost to an increasingly important commercial centre.

The city's population also was expanding at a rapid rate. The number of newcomers to Toronto had already increased by 500% between 1833 and 1851 (Goheen, Victorian Toronto 52), and by 1857 Toronto would see an influx of 155,000 more immigrants. (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 10) The majority of these newcomers were from rural Canada, seeking employment in the growing clerical, building and transport industries.

This influx did not, therefore, greatly alter the religious or ethnic character of the city. In 1843, four out of every five residents were Protestant (Careless, Brown 30). The majority of newcomers to the city were overwhelmingly of British ancestry, finding camaraderie in the already established English, Scottish and Irish communities: "In 1850 the institutions and the prejudices of the English Americans were visible and important. The immigrant groups had not yet achieved any similar status" (Goheen, Victorian Toronto 57).

Although on its way to becoming an important economic centre, Toronto was still in many respects a frontier settlement. Aside from the stately mansions of the Family Compact and the shops along King Street, there was little to suggest the city's growing prosperity. Sidewalks still consisted chiefly of wooden planks, and pigs were still a common sight in many neighbourhoods. Despite its population in 1843 standing at 16,000 (Careless, Brown 25),

[r]ough board shanties disfigured the laneways; within them, drunken brawls and knifings were a not infrequent occurrence. The city had inadequate water supply, five regular police constables, and more than a hundred taverns and licensed premises . . . It was in many ways uncouth, untidy, and ill-built, a town still close to the frontier, both in character and geography (Careless, Brown 26).

Many of the reasons for Toronto's less than refined character were the same as those that had so infuriated Mackenzie - citizens' inability to influence municipal affairs, and the unwillingness of authorities to initiate reforms. The Act of Union had resolved some of the problems facing Upper and Lower Canada; however, the country was no closer to establishing responsible government as was practiced in Britain. The re-named Canada West was still governed by a Governor General, whose policies were enacted not by a parliament, but directly by his ministers. Reformers insisted that responsible government would not be achieved until the position of Governor-General was changed to a constitutional monarch, and true executive power lay with Canadian ministers (Careless, Brown 29). Nor was the question of the country's future any clearer. Opinions regarding the administration of Canada ranged from rule by an English oligarchy to complete independence with an elected Canadian head of state. Others were content to live halfway between the two (Careless, Brown 29).

Added to this were ever-present tensions between Toronto's religious communities, transplanted from Britain onto Canadian soil. Irish Protestants clashed with Catholics, the city's Scottish Presbyterians bickered among themselves and all

three populations were at loggerheads with the English clerks and professionals. Anglicans whose trip across the Atlantic had not dampened their preference for privilege and deference: "The emerging Victorian Canada was fragmented and plural, its institutions more autonomous, its consensus more troubled . . . Its significance . . . can best be judged from the perspective of social change" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 8).

Nor had America's influence on the country diminished. Canada's increasing economic integration with the U.S. only had accelerated the transmission of its powerful notions of democracy and its obvious economic wealth: "The influence of American equality, democracy, and closely similar ways of life, pulled powerfully in one direction. Anti-republican sentiment and fear of an aggressively expansionist American Union pulled strongly in the other. The result was only to sharpen conflicts in Canadian affairs" (Careless, Brown 31).

Also changing were Canadians' attitudes towards politics. Although it was still the major topic of conversation among all classes, Mackenzie's flight to the U.S. and the executions that followed the Rebellion of 1837 had put a damper on the extremism that marked that earlier period. Liberalism was still a popular political topic, but its most ardent supporters were no longer farmers and labourers, but middle-class merchants (Careless, Brown 28). With a growing number of people employed as such, this interest would continue to grow as the years progressed. Indeed, it would be one of the founding philosophies of George Brown and the Globe, Canada's first successful popular daily newspaper.

### **George Brown and the Globe**

George Brown's significance in Canadian journalism is due not only to the innovations he brought to his Globe, but because he shared the same devotion to social justice and dedication to liberty as did Mackenzie. Like his rebellious predecessor, Brown also was a transplanted Scottish Presbyterian. While he did not suffer the hardships that had so affected the young Mackenzie, Brown was no less firm in his political and social convictions, and there was nothing in his formation that would have enamoured him of the ruling Tory elite:

Family prayers, Sunday school teaching for George, charitable work among the poor for his mother and elder sisters, all were an essential part of their lives . . . [Another influence] was his father's ardent Liberalism, his zeal for reform and progress, the revelations of Adam Smith and his heirs, and for

the destruction of every aristocratic privilege and hidebound Tory prejudice (Careless, Brown 7).

Where Brown differed from Mackenzie, however, was his rational, more orderly approach to political reform. While Mackenzie was likely to try any method he thought would bring government closer to the people, Brown was not prepared to be swayed by the passions of the masses. Both he and his father Peter were constitutional liberals, not Jacksonian democrats (Careless, Brown 16). In this respect Brown's outlook was suited more to Toronto's fledgling middle class.

Brown was not new to journalism upon his arrival in Toronto in 1843. Having earlier established the New York Albion with his father, he was familiar with both the business of journalism and its prevailing philosophies. With religious tensions running high in 1840s Toronto, political partisanship was the order of the day in its journalism: “[Brown was] soon to find that a detached non-partisan course was impossible for anyone of strong convictions in Canada of 1843” (Careless, Brown 29). With his Scottish roots and his dedication to political and religious freedom, Brown quickly and easily found a home within the Reform party.

When it was first published as a weekly on 5 March 1844, Brown's Globe joined with the Examiner in espousing Reform's platform. However, in his prospectus of 23 February, Brown had indicated that he would not necessarily put party loyalty above Canada's national interests: “THE GLOBE will . . . strenuously support the party which shall advocate the measures believed best for the country” (qtd. in Careless, Brown 42). As well, Brown included in his paper a collection of news reports that went beyond domestic politics. The four-page paper featured (from page one onward) American and British news items, editorials and world news, local and business news and finally, advertising. Brown's agreement in 1847 to share telegraph costs with rival Hugh Scobie improved the paper's coverage of national affairs. The Globe sold for five pence, and, like the competition, was available only by subscription.

The influence exerted by the Globe on Canada's democratic consciousness owed as much to its innovative features as to Brown's own personality. An energetic campaigner, Brown criticized his opponents in the press with an enthusiasm not seen since the days of the Colonial Advocate. Like Mackenzie, Brown was not above using a healthy dose of invective against his opponents, referring to the Conservative-backed British Colonist as “the literary common-sewer of Toronto” (Careless, Brown 44). However, Brown's criticisms were more substantial than simple vitriol. He supported

his arguments with well-balanced, coherent arguments: "Charges were made on public issues, and sincerely made, expressing the editor's burning sense of justice" (Careless, Brown 44).

These innovations had a profound impact on Toronto's established newspapers. The abundance of party papers in Toronto offered readers a choice of viewpoints, but rarely were these debated in print. Both Tory and Reform were content to promote their own ideologies, presenting their readers views that they firmly believed to be the only true path. This stance was further strengthened by the fact that both camps carried significant religious overtones. Their respective faiths simply were not open to discussion. By directly attacking his opponents in his newspaper, Brown succeeded in establishing Mill's vision of a marketplace of ideas, and another element in the democratic consciousness.

To his feisty political arguments, Brown added a reputation for solid news practices. The maturation of the Globe, much like that of the New York Times, revealed the potential of the popular press to become more important to a young nation than simply conveying the news of the street. Brown based his reporting not on rumour and speculation, but on facts. His growing reputation for reliable reporting was something new in the journalism of Canada West, and it attracted even his most vociferous opponents. The Globe "energetically went after the news, and presented it fully. Even convinced foes would grudgingly admit that its information . . . could usually be trusted . . . As time went on, politicians of both camps came regularly to use the Globe as a ready reference for the contemporary history of Canada" (Careless, Brown 45).

These changes also represented a revolution for the colonial reader as well. For the first time in the colony's history, there existed the possibility that a reader from the opposing political camp would read the "enemy" paper: "[E]ven political opponents could hardly forbear buying the Globe to see what (or whom) Brown was demolishing today" (Careless, Brown 44). Brown's paper tore holes through the rhetorical walls surrounding both Tory and Reform camps. This possibility resulted as much from the excitement surrounding Brown's attacks to the Globe's reputation for reliable news. In effect, the dynamic of the colonial press had been reversed. Whereas Mackenzie's Colonial Advocate articulated the discussions being carried out on the street, Brown's Globe created in his newspaper a discussion which would in turn be taken up in the pubs and taverns.

The circulation of ideas was both enhanced and accelerated as the Globe became more profitable. The paper set a number of important firsts in the history of the press in Canada. After a mere two months of publication on a wooden hand press, Brown could afford to install a Hoe steam press capable of printing 1,250 sheets per hour (Careless, Brown 46). By 1860, Brown would again update his machinery, installing a Taylor press capable of printing and folding 3,000 sheets per hour (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 40). These advancements were facilitated by Brown's association with the Riordan brothers of St. Catharines, the first in Canada to make newsprint from wood pulp.

By 1853, the Globe was profitable enough to print a daily edition - another first. This was a major step for the Press in Canada, due largely to another of the Globe's innovations - advertising. Brown had run advertisements in the Globe since its inception. For years, however, they had largely been drab and low-key affairs. announcing the arrival of major grain shipments, legal services and steamship schedules. The speed of Toronto's commerce in the 1840s was such that ads often went unchanged from season to season. Simply alerting the customer that these goods or services existed was sufficient to ensure continued business.

Brown's emphasis on advertising was indeed a gamble. The majority of newspapers in the 1850s could boast a circulation no higher than 2,000 (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 37), and almost all of them were heavily dependent on their creditors: "[A] modest subscriber list kept publishers closely in touch with the parochial concerns of their paying customers" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 38). Brown realized that the only way to end this subservience and expand his paper's influence beyond his regular readership was to solicit advertising. His solicitation of ads for goods and services outside the needs of his wealthy Reform readers was another element of the Globe's growing appeal among the general population. Indeed, the general reader was in part the creation of these journalistic innovations. Advertising also provided a reason for people to read the Globe other than for political commentary: "The pride taken by the Globe . . . in its list of 'new ads' each issue proved that the publisher looked upon his commercial messages as a feature of the news" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 118).

In addition to advertising and lively political commentary, Brown added other innovations in his campaign to target the growing numbers of general readers. Its publication now a daily event, Brown filled the Globe with information useful to businessmen and labourers alike. His paper also was entertaining. In addition to

shipping schedules, the Globe featured the serialized novels of Charles Dickens. These held no news value, but created yet another reason to read the Globe. By Confederation, the paper had outgrown its Reform party roots and evolved into a general interest publication: "[T]he Globe meant to earn [its] patronage by offering [the reader] a wider and more varied fare, the latest news . . . and the most correct commercial information, all without weakening its political character" (Careless, Brown 46). In this respect, the Globe closely mirrored the direction taken by the New York Times.

Through his use of advertising and varied content, George Brown had succeeded in lessening newspapers' dependence on political subsidies. He also succeeded in breaking down the ideological walls between Tory and Reform publications, bringing Mill's marketplace of ideas to Canadian soil. Where he did not succeed, however, was in bringing the paper closer to the masses. Brown's general reader may not have embraced Tory or Reform, but he was still educated and highly literate - rare qualities in pre-industrial Toronto: "The language and style employed in longer items . . . could suit the knowledge and taste of only the well and truly literate. The Globe . . . was not meant for anyone hesitant about his ability to read" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 118). This final step would be taken up by later papers such as the Toronto Telegram and the Toronto News.

### **Confederation**

A momentous occasion in Canadian history, Confederation was only of minor interest to the democratic consciousness of the Canadian press. The negotiations and backroom deals that had brought about the British North America act had been closed to press and public alike - neither had any significant input into the political union of the colonies. Nevertheless, the Globe regarded the colonies' unification on 1 July 1867 as a bold step: "With the first dawn of this gladsome midsummer morn, we hail the birthday of a new nationality. A united British America, with its four millions of people, takes its place among the nations of the world" (Brown 1). The occasion was of little interest to the foreign press, though - Canada's past and future economic masters seemed somewhat bemused by the sudden outburst of newfound national fervour: "The attitude of even Great Britain and the U.S. . . . was an attitude of complete indifference, qualified on one side by a bored sense of obligation and on the other by an unmistakable feeling of hostility" (Creighton 312).

Newspapers that did exist at the time embraced Confederation as essential in securing Canada's economic prosperity: "With its emphasis upon expansion, national unification, and independence, Canadian Confederation was a typical experiment in nineteenth-century nation building" (Creighton 305). To the editors of the penny papers that followed, Confederation would prove to be a useful tool. It provided newspapers such as the News, the World and the Telegram with the raw material with which to construct the emerging myth of Canadian nationalism. That myth would play a large role in Toronto's industrial revolution.

### Industrial Toronto

*"City life is like a spider's web - pull one thread and you pull every thread"* (J.S. Woodsworth).

The decades 1880-1900 marked Toronto's ascension to status as a major industrial centre. By the turn of the century, the city had grown from a temporary military outpost into a powerful economic engine: "Whereas Toronto in 1856 was a small trading centre, by 1900 she had achieved the rank of a great manufacturing and industrial centre" (Goheen, Currents 226). Waves of immigrants from Eastern Europe swelled the city's population, drawn in by the promise of factory jobs and religious freedom. By 1890, one-third of the city's inhabitants would be of foreign origin: "None of the cities in Ontario or Quebec rivaled it as a destination for immigrants" (Goheen, Victorian Toronto 231). It also was a period of intense urbanization. From 1871 to 1901, the proportion of Canadians living in urban centres would rise from one-sixth to one-third. In that time, Toronto would also see a 130% increase in the number of people holding industrial jobs (Granatstein et al. 63).

In raising its economic clout, Toronto also acquired the benefits of modern urban living. Chief among these benefits was the democratic influence of the nineteenth-century urban environment. Industrial expansion and immigration had eliminated many of the aristocratic privileges of the Family Compact. As well, sports, theatre and concerts - once the exclusive domain of the upper classes - were now available to all.

Among the most significant benefits afforded to the urban populace was an increase in literacy. While not of great importance in a rural setting, the ability to read and converse in written form was essential for survival in the city. Compared to the simplicity of most immigrants' former lives, urban living was a complex and confusing

challenge in which the simplest activities required basic literacy skills: "The big cities boasted the department store, the trade union, the public library, the daily newspaper, and organized sports, all of which assumed literacy skills among their clients" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 29). Literacy also was a key element in Toronto's economic growth, as these immigrants would be the principal consumers of mass-produced goods such as soap, shoes and canned foods.

The push to create a large, literate work force was quickly embraced by publisher and manufacturer alike. And it resulted in an enthusiasm for reading material that the city had not previously seen: "The greatest readers . . . were in the big cities. There, the sheer number of publications and the soaring circulation suggested an insatiable hunger for newspapers. Popular culture had arrived in Canada and with a vengeance" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 35). The population's new-found passion for reading was good news for newspapers and book publishers. Between 1870 and 1880, Canada's daily newspapers doubled from 47 to 94 (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 51). This followed a jump in the value of books imported into Canada from \$479,000 to \$959,000 between 1868 and 1874 (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 29).

This increase in literacy was the final step in incorporating Canada into the social changes that were taking place in the U.S. One of the most significant of these was the transition from an oral to a written culture, which was aided in large part by the rise of advertising and the department store. Mackenzie (and to a lesser extent, Brown) had begun printing when popular literature and printing technology in the colony were rare. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the whole of British America could boast only nine active printers (Rutherford, Canadian Media 2). By the time the Toronto Telegram and similar papers arrived on the scene, however, ideas would circulate chiefly on paper: "[T]he social import of a high level and a high quality of literacy is enhanced as an oral culture is transformed into a print culture. That grand event occurred in Canada during the last half of the century" (Rutherford, Canadian Media 25).

It was during this period that the penny press in Canada came to full maturity. The invention of the linotype in 1870 removed the last bottleneck in newspaper production, and advances in printing technology allowed for larger sheets, banner headlines and illustrations. Between 1874 and 1891, the number of dailies in Canada rose from 46 to 91 (Rutherford, Canadian Media 49). It also was the age of mass advertising, with department stores supplementing smaller shops, and brand names replacing personal contact with local craftsmen. The spread of the telegraph forced

journalists to standardize their writing in order for their stories to be understood by as many readers as possible. It was a time of excitement and uncertainty, as technology and democracy were rapidly rewriting a new social contract. The need for a newspaper that could make sense of such changes was considerable: "The growth of the city, an increasing democracy and social tension, and the rise of organized labour as well as organized sports contributed to an urban parochialism among both classes and masses. The chaotic society required definition, and celebration" (Rutherford, Canadian Media 135).

### **Immigration - New Faces, New Skills**

Beginning around 1870, the number of newcomers to Canada increased sharply. During the 1880s, nearly 80,000 immigrants each year made Canada their new home (Granatstein et al. 69). Most newcomers settled in large urban centres, especially Montreal and Toronto. This wave of humanity was significantly different from Canada's previous experiences. Whereas past newcomers to the city were of predominantly British stock sent over to strengthen the Empire's strategic interests, the huddled masses of the 1880s included Germans, Chinese, Poles, Scandinavians, Italians and Jews. Most of them had little knowledge of English or of democratic institutions. Few, if any of them, belonged to the city's established faiths. Their arrival at Toronto was the first influx to significantly alter the religious and linguistic character of the city.

But while their religious beliefs may have been cause for concern to the city's business elite, these new Canadians made important contributions to Toronto's growing industrial prowess. Having first-hand experience of industrial Europe, they possessed skills and knowledge that native-born Canadians were lacking (Granatstein et al. 67).

### **Labour - An Impetus for Reform**

The expansion of the railroads spelled the end of Montreal's century-long dominance of Canada's trade and economic interests. No longer would Canada West serve as a simple way station for lumber and grain traveling down the St. Lawrence river. Toronto's increasing affinity with American commercial and transportation interests allowed the city to open its own markets and develop its own factories: "Industry was by 1900, perhaps, the single most important source of employment and of income in the city" (Goheen, Currents 222).

As was the case in Britain and in the U.S., increased industrial production also brought on significant changes to the production of consumer goods. The skilled craftsmen of 1850 saw their livelihoods threatened by the increasing numbers of semi-skilled factory workers. Between 1870 and 1901, Toronto would see the number of industrial employees more than quadruple, from 9,400 to 42,515. The value of goods produced would rise from \$13,093 to \$58,415 (Goheen, Currents 222). Weekly wages rose from \$5.50 in 1888 to \$7.50 in 1901 (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 19).

As was the case in Britain and the U.S., however, Canada's industrial revolution was not without its problems. Abundant factory jobs were frequently dangerous, and most newcomers to the city were forced to live in slums, hours were long and wages were low.

An unfortunate consequence was the rapid rise of child labour, which replaced apprenticeships in nearly every domain. By 1881, children, many of whose mothers worked with their men in Toronto's factories, would account for an estimated 10% of Toronto's industrial work force (Kealey 175). Equally troubling were the conditions in which these children and their parents worked. Factories were poorly lit, poorly ventilated and offered only a minimum of barely maintained sanitation facilities. Sick leave was nonexistent, and workers were severely reprimanded for missing their shifts. It would be several years before the city would pass laws requiring that machinery be turned off before being cleaned. It was not until 1889 that the city undertook any efforts to examine the situation. Its Labour and Capital Report left little doubt, however, as to the reasons for such deplorable conditions: "In acquiring the industry at one bound we have become possessed just as quickly of these evils which accompany the factory town which in other lands were the creatures of gradual growth . . . They spring from the desire to acquire vast fortunes in the shortest possible interval of time, regardless of the suffering which might be caused" (qtd. in Kealey 193).

These Dickensian conditions provided much of the fuel for the first wave of urban renewal in Canada. Like Mackenzie's crusade for responsible government, the push to combat poverty came not from the municipal government, but from the press. Robertson's Toronto Telegram, as well as William Maclean's Toronto World (1880) and E.E. Sheppard's Toronto News (1881) took up the task of promoting urban reform with energy and vigour: "These self-proclaimed tribunes of the people were most conscious of political corruption and vaguely distressed by the squalor of urban life (Rutherford, Urban Reform 315).

### **John Ross Robertson and the Telegram**

One of the most important figures of the penny press in Toronto was John Ross Robertson. More than his competitors, Robertson embodied the values and attitudes of industrial Toronto: “Toronto evolved . . . with steady, measured strides because it was steeped in English autocracy, Scottish caution, and Irish earthiness . . . John Ross Robertson was born into this milieu and was conditioned by it until he became completely without guile, eternally impatient, and rarely neutral about anything” (Poulton 5).

Like his American counterparts, Robertson was possessed of a boundless optimism regarding the newspaper’s ability to work for the greater good. For him, the press acted as the “lungs of civilization, inhaling current history, science, art, politics, theology, literature and social problems, and assimilating them to the people from the highest to the lowest” (qtd. in Rutherford, Canadian Media 38). What was important to Robertson, and to the democratic consciousness, was that all levels of society were receiving the same information. And like his American counterparts, Robertson believed in the political necessity of a free press to comment fairly on the matters of the day. In his prospectus for the Toronto Telegram of 21 May 1866, he states: “Journals fettered by political ties and biased by political interests are not free to present to their readers these issues in the broad and comprehensive manner which is now more than ever desirable . . . Discussions will be presented freely, honestly, and in a spirit of justice to all parties, opinions, and men” (qtd. in Poulton 72).

Although Robertson never hid his Tory sympathies, he promised his readers that the Telegram would not be a simple mouthpiece for Sir John A. Macdonald. His prospectus promises “a newspaper, not an organ; it will have no patron but the public” (qtd. in Poulton 72). In this respect, Robertson’s views were similar to those of the American penny press. He accomplished this by printing a large number of wire stories, which were a constant source of pride for the newspaper. Robertson also took a distinctly American view when discussing objectivity and the work of a Telegram reporter: “[H]is primary object [is] to get the news he has sent for, and this he does irrespective of his own likes or dislikes, whether they be of a personal, social, or political character” (qtd. in Rutherford, Victorian Authority 81). Robertson also was quick to borrow the successful American approach to editorials:

Robertson took special pride in replacing the long-winded and patience weary leaders with colourful, short editorial paragraphs, another American innovation. The key to his success . . . was that he kept the “Tely” defiantly local . . . His

paper boosted civic ambitions and criticized civic leadership, always from the perspective of the ordinary citizen (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 54).

Such an approach proved immensely successful for the newspaper's profitability and the democratic consciousness of its readers. Popular enthusiasm surrounding the penny press was so high that all 3,480 copies of the Telegram's first issue sold out within one hour (Poulton 73). By 1878, the newspaper's circulation had risen to 6,885. In July, 1880, profits were sufficient to install a new press capable of printing 10,500 eight-page papers an hour. In 1888, Robertson was printing five editions between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. By 1891, circulation stood at 20,857 (Poulton 92).

Much of the success of the Telegram was due to the relationship it established with its readers. From its first edition, the Telegram announced to Toronto's working classes that it would voice their concerns: "Robertson preferred to write about people, and he did not regard politicians as people" (Poulton 25). Employing the belief that ordinary people could become interested in politics and become better citizens, Robertson filled the pages of his paper with every public document his reporters could dig up: "Robertson began printing details of city contracts . . . enabling citizens - for the first time - to see where their money was going" (Poulton 78).

One area in which the Telegram was distinctly Canadian was in its attitude toward the U.S. Like his competition, Robertson did not hesitate in criticizing Canada's southern neighbours for the perceived threat of economic imperialism. Such strong Canadian chauvinism did, however, meet the required mythology of the day: "Canadians have suffered long enough from the vexatory policy of the United States government, the illiberal interpretation of treaties, the grasping of petty advantage, and the over-reaching spirit which have invariably characterized its dealings with foreign powers" (qtd. in Poulton 83).

The key element in the Telegram's success was its emphasis on personal contact. Although it boasted about its paying the highest telegraph rates in Toronto, the paper's emphasis on local news kept an army of reporters busy talking to everyone connected with breaking news. This replacing of rhetoric with real words confirmed in readers' minds that their participation in their society was an essential component of urban life:

Robertson's methods and innovations caused a metamorphosis in the city's administration, and in Canadian journalism. There was a depression, and his reporters canvassed

businessmen about the economy. A heresy trial was in progress, and clergymen of every denomination were interviewed. These opinion polls were startlingly new to a public that had rarely been consulted about anything (Poulton 77).

### **Reform and Community-Building**

The penny papers of Maclean, Robertson and Sheppard were the crucial missing link in Canada's evolving democratic consciousness. It was these editors who took Brown's successful mix of advertising and passion for Reform and packaged it in newspapers that could be understood by those who possessed only a bare minimum of literacy skills. This was achieved using the same techniques as Pulitzer and Hearst: large headlines, extensive use of illustrations, contests, self-promotion and simple, standardized language. In addition, much of the content of Toronto's penny papers was American. Like the New York World, Toronto's three radical dailies also promoted a dedication to urban reform, civic responsibility and community. Their crusade also was similar to that undertaken by Mackenzie, in that Robertson and Sheppard incorporated a strong sense of morality into their crusade. More than simply alleviating poverty, these men sought the creation of a civil and humane society based on Loyalist principles: "They were inspired by the possibility of improvement, by a belief in their ability to mold the urban environment and to create a humane, rational society . . . They fostered a concept of the public interest based on the primacy of the civic community, social justice and order, and good government" (Rutherford, Urban Reform 315).

Just as Brown had advanced Mackenzie's fight for social justice and reform, Toronto's penny papers expanded that crusade to the entire population of Toronto. The penny press in Toronto expanded the definition of the general reader to include the working classes. For the first time, those working in the city's factories would have a publication addressed directly to them: "The popular newspaper . . . was far and away the most effective agent of a sense of community, a civic consciousness in the big city. It told people about their civic leaders and government, how the local sports heroes had fared, what the market was like, and where to go to find amusement" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 135).

Because of this, Toronto's penny press was able to foster in its readers the sense that they were not only active participants in their society, but that their participation was essential. Reading a newspaper was soon regarded as a civic virtue, as the papers sought to not only entertain readers but to inform them of their responsibilities as citizens in Canada's new democracy. Essential to a democratic

consciousness is this impression that readers have the capacity and the duty to improve society. Editors such as Robertson, Maclean and Sheppard understood that an engaged reading public was the key to this, and to their newspapers' profitability: "[The penny press] fostered that extraordinary surge of interest amongst the populace in the technique of public ownership of civic utilities, electrical power, even telephones and railways. The Ontario campaign for public hydro took on the guise of a holy crusade for economic progress, social justice, and political democracy" (Rutherford, Canadian Media 67).

As had happened previously in the U.S., the growing popularity of the penny papers had a profound impact on Toronto's elite party press. While Brown had shown that attracting readers outside a newspapers' target readership was possible, the penny papers made such a tactic necessary for a newspaper's survival. This financial reality also was beneficial to the democratic consciousness, as working class readers began to see that elite papers such as the Mail and the Empire were courting their opinions as well as those of the well-heeled. In this respect, the democratic consciousness was largely a by-product of the economics of newspapering:

A quality paper such as Toronto's Mail and Empire, its morning edition for the classes, published an evening edition for the masses . . . Competition . . . had forced newspapers to find readers among all classes of the community. By the end of the century, the popular press was an authority that both reflected and bridged the social gulf in the big city (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 77).

Newspapers were not unaffected by industrialization. In terms of their physical production, they had gone from being produced by hand to being printed on massive steam-driven presses. This was equally true of the Telegram, the World and the News. In contrast to the era of the colonial press, starting a newspaper now constituted a major investment of manpower and machinery. Newsprint was no longer sold in sheets, but in 100 lb. rolls. Twin cylinder presses capable of printing 20,000 sheets per hour, rose in cost from \$8,000 in 1872 to \$30,000 in 1878 (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 87).

What had not changed, however, was the precarious business of maintaining a newspaper once it began printing. Despite seeing circulation numbers increase steadily over the years, no newspaper was immune from financial collapse. George Brown was \$60,000 in debt when he lost control of the Globe in 1880, and E.E. Sheppard was forced to suspend circulation of the Toronto News in 1884. In spite of its popularity and a sharp decrease in the price of newsprint, The News "had seldom supplies of

paper for more than a few issues and sometimes hardly enough for one" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 106). For most editors this was not an uncommon situation.

Toronto's social landscape differed from that of New York in an important aspect. The move to urbanize did not result in an immediate flight of wealthy citizens from the city centre. Though this did occur in time, a significant number of wealthier citizens chose to remain in the city centre, their houses not more than a few blocks from the working classes: "While the wealthy were able to segregate their quarters, they were in general constrained to remain in the centre of the city in order to take advantage of urban amenities and manage the life of the city" (Goheen, Victorian Toronto 138). This settlement pattern, largely unchanged since the 1830s, prevented the inner city from falling into disrepair, as well as preserving a mix of social and economic classes within a single neighbourhood.

As in the era in which George Brown began publishing the Globe, the question of Canada's political future was far from being settled. In the years between 1880 and 1900, Canadian political thought still oscillated between increased political and economic integration with the U.S. and outright independence from Britain. Despite the division of powers outlined in the British North America Act, debates between Tories and Reformers perpetuated "[t]hat tedious battle over the exact structure of federalism, the respective powers of nation and province, [it] saw Conservative . . . organs campaign vigorously against the bane of "sectionalism" while their Liberal rivals strove to crush . . . the spirit of "centralism," each proclaiming its devotion to Confederation" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 180).

What had changed, however, was the political landscape in Canada West. A new political force had arisen, one which subscribed to neither Tory nor Reform. The new "Radical" movement rejected the party principle altogether, putting its faith instead in popular democracy. Its most articulate spokesmen were the penny papers of Robertson, Sheppard and Maclean: "Democrats by instinct, these dailies displayed a contempt for social convention and a disrespect for established authority linked to a faith in the wisdom of the common man and a deep admiration for success" (Rutherford, Canadian Media 49). And while these editors eagerly embraced and promoted independent Canada, they were often merciless in their criticism of the politicians and institutions who were directly responsible for its creation. By criticizing the politician's methods while applauding his goals, Toronto's penny papers perpetuated the dynamic that had been started by George Brown's Globe. The Radical movement gave Canadian citizens a new option in politics, one that replaced the old-world prejudices of Tory and Reform with a faith in the common man. And among its

most sacred tenets was its insistence on democracy: "The triumphant cry was first echoed by the people's journals, which seemed hell-bent on transforming Canada into a democratic utopia" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 161). It is not a coincidence that their conceptions of the common man and democracy - both ideas championed by Mackenzie - were largely American in origin. It can be argued that the "common man" in North America was largely a product of the penny press: "The typical newspaper endeavoured to reach a mass audience by supplying . . . much of the same kinds of information, entertainment, features, and comment. The logic of mass communication had fostered a roughly homogeneous journalism. The age of everybody's newspaper had dawned" (Rutherford, Canadian Media 53).

Despite appearing in Canada nearly 20 years later than their American predecessors, Canada's penny papers were quick to borrow many of the features and attitudes that had proven so successful south of the border. Newspapers such as the Telegram, the News and the World all boasted banner headlines, a wealth of advertising and a mix of local and international news, the latter being made available by the telegraph. As well, these papers all displayed a dedication to urban reform, organized labour, economic progress and democracy:

Canada's first mass media were, by persuasion but even more by nature, the spokesmen of democracy . . . By the 1890s, the press had begun to purvey that cult of the common man which would eventually attain a high place in the pantheon of Canadian orthodoxy . . . News columns opened much of society . . . to his eyes. Advertising sanctified his tastes, the special departments reinforced his passions, and the editorials flattered his wisdom (Rutherford, Canadian Media 72).

The democratic consciousness was undoubtedly the result of the interplay of advertising, news and commentary in one single newspaper, all made possible by the advancements in communications technology. However, it is necessary to examine each element in isolation to see how it fit into the newspaper itself, as well as to determine its role in forming the democratic consciousness.

### **Advertising - Farewell, Victoria**

No single feature was more important to the success of a newspaper in the 1880s than advertising. By running ads in the Globe which did not cater directly to the needs of his target audience, George Brown created an entirely new reason for buying a newspaper. This principle was perpetuated - and advanced - by all the editors of

Toronto's penny papers. What they altered were the scale, amount and frequency of the advertising that would appear in their newspapers.

There were two reasons for this, both of which trace back to one of the most important commercial developments of the industrial age - the department store. While such economic phenomena were already established in the U.S., it was not until 1869 that the department store came to Canada. And just as the Canadian press mimicked the American models, so too did Timothy Eaton when he opened his first store. Eaton's policy of "satisfaction or money back" also was the policy of most American department stores. Unlike the small merchant of the 1850s, the department stores' economic survival did not depend on the owner's personal reputation. The department store was for the most part an anonymous entity, as faceless as the factory that produced the goods it sold. What was essential to its success was a quick turnover of goods and name-brand recognition. The department store needed to create in the populace not only the need to buy (and buy often), but to buy specific brands. The most effective way to do this was through newspaper advertising: "[B]rand-name advertising was by the late 1880s the first spokesman of the gospel of mass consumption, the great ally of North American abundance" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 125).

In addition to its impact on Canada's economic growth, the department store also was influential in the country's transition from an oral to a written culture. For the small merchant or dry-goods wholesaler, prices were often determined after bargaining with the customer. As most goods were sold in bulk, such a flexible pricing policy was commonplace. With the arrival of Eaton's fixed pricing system, however, such interaction between buyer and seller was no longer possible - shopping ceased to be a transaction based on trust and consensus. But what the buyer lost in personal contact, he gained in his sense of social standing: "It made the humblest customer feel that he was on the same footing as everyone else so far as price was concerned, and that under a rule of 'satisfaction or money back,' there was little chance of having defective goods foisted on him" (Stephenson and McNaught 44).

The advertisements that appeared in Canada's later penny papers differed sharply from those first run by George Brown. Early Victorian tastes required that ads be sober and restrained. After 1870, however, the accelerated speed and larger scale of mass marketing demanded that ads create a sense of excitement about new products. It was the department store that overturned the Victorian prejudice against "puffery" in favour of a more American approach (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 123). Mass-

produced products such as shoes, coats, baking powder and soap began using the tactics originally the domain of patent medicines: "If some ads remained staid, many others employed slogans, wit, specific information, testimonials, 'reason why' explanations, or little chats to capture the reader's attention. The pedantic tone of an earlier time had given way to . . . the 'Tall Tale' of a democratic age" (Boorstin, qtd. in Rutherford, Victorian Authority 125).

### **News - Information and Entertainment**

As with the popular American press, news reporting in Canada's penny newspapers took two basic forms: the report and the story. The report resembled Schudson's view of news as information, in that it presented a logical, ordered account of an event. It described what happened, its causes and the principal actors. The report was, in fact, the precursor to the objective news story, and was practiced most often in the Globe. The report, which was the specialty of the penny papers, presented the reader with a much more melodramatic account. The report was intended to capture the atmosphere and drama of an event, not just the facts. The report engaged the reader on an emotional level, and was usually used when covering murders, suicides and other scandalous events.

It is important to note that Toronto's penny papers imported these approaches to newswriting from the U.S. virtually unchanged: "The Canadian journals are American in their whole tone, their makeup, their typography, their estimate of the value of news and their manner of presenting it. They patronize American press associations and 'syndicates' and much of their matter in consequence is furnished by American writers from an American standpoint" (Moffett 96).

What is more significant in terms of the democratic consciousness, however, was that Toronto's penny papers as well as its elite party papers used both forms of reporting. To sell newspapers, publishers realized they had to give their readers a mix of information and entertainment.

The other staples of the penny press were business and sports. Both of these domains were important in creating a democratic spirit in both Canadian society and Canadian newspapers. A growing number of men were entering business, and the fortunes of thousands more were dependent on it for their economic survival. Equally important was the way in which business and sports were covered. Entrepreneurs and local sports heroes received laudatory coverage, as the press saw their success as

indicative of the success of the city. As well, business and sports had come to complement politics as a source of drama and intrigue. As late as the 1880s,

business and sports were still very much the preserve of the "classes." But the press had popularized and promoted these kindred worlds, opening them to the world of the "masses." If politics and religion had been the enthusiasms of men in the nineteenth century, then business and sports were their counterparts in the twentieth century (Rutherford, Canadian Media 61).

### **The Role of the Journalist**

One might think it ironic that the people most responsible for the actual content of such revolutionary papers are most often overlooked in the literature surrounding the penny press. The truth, however, is that as an individual, the reporter was the least valued component of the newspaper. This applies equally to American and Canadian reporters. Of the hundreds of reporters who ever obtained a byline in the U.S., only a few, such as H.L. Mencken, Jacob Riis and Theodore Dreiser remain in the popular imagination. Famous Canadian journalists of this period are even fewer. One reason for this is the low regard for the occupation itself. Journalism in Canada "was too often the abode of the ne'er do well, the failed clerk, the dishonest scribbler, and the party hack" (Rutherford, Canadian Media 79). Unlike skilled craftsmen or the semi-skilled factory worker, the journalist needed very little training, and his wages reflected this. In 1884, the average yearly salary for a full-time reporter in Toronto was \$550, and he was usually working 62 hours per week: "Most often reporting meant a life of dependence and anonymity, as much drudgery as excitement, long hours and low pay" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 81).

Attempts to improve their lot met with little success. Unlike contemporary journalists, their predecessors were without the benefit of union protection, and were regularly fired without legal recourse: "The root problem lay in the fact that journalism was effectively a headless profession. Its natural leaders, the publishers, were more and more entrepreneurs first; their worries differed . . . from the concerns of the rank and file" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 87).

Although the majority of journalists have not attracted a great amount of scholarly research, their collective effect on Canada's democratic consciousness was considerable. Working in an age without press agents and spokespersons, the journalist was public's closest link to the newspaper. Journalists based their stories not on strategically prepared statements, but on personal interviews with citizens. As a result,

journalists were able to establish an oral culture at the street level. What was created between the two parties was an understanding that both were working for the common good: "The declared goal of the peoples' journalist was to sell a genuine newspaper, which would supply every reader with all the information he or she needed to understand the community and the world" (Rutherford, Emergence 177).

Equally important was the journalist's enthusiasm for progress, which equaled that of his editor. Journalists were often as enamoured of capitalism as their editors. While this might today be construed as bias, such an attitude was prevalent in the larger community. Journalists simply reflected the tenor and social contract of the times: "From the beginning of the century, journalists had rhapsodized about the Canadian potential in the smug belief the colonies would soon emulate the American achievement . . . So the press idealized the progressive farmer, the busy workingman, and above all the entrepreneur" (Rutherford, Canadian Media 24).

Where the penny papers differed from the competition was in their choice of news. All of Toronto's papers featured local and political news, but Robertson, Maclean and, in particular, Sheppard offered their readers a steady diet of sensation. The eclectic, sometimes unpredictable mix of stories made news not only informative but entertaining, portraying Toronto as an exciting place to live: "News made public affairs a grand spectacle, full of excitement and significance, heroes and villains" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 136). For entertainment value, the most reliable source of copy was the U.S. The telegraph assured a constant stream of vice and corruption, most often from New York: "Life and affairs in the United States . . . were an inexhaustible source of copy, the American scene becoming, so it seemed, a grand stage whereon the follies and fancies of mankind were acted out to please Canadian readers" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 134).

### **Myth-Making and Anti-Americanism**

It was not just in its news content, however, that influenced Canada's penny press. Papers such as the World, the News and the Telegram boasted an aggressive Canadian nationalism. The News of 13 January 1888 declared that the two countries were home to "two peoples different in the form of government, in thought, in mode of life, in aims, in idioms" (qtd. in Rutherford, Victorian Authority 160). On 29 June 1894, the News raised the level of its rhetoric even further, declaring that Canada's independence had had the effect of "raising the entire tone of our politics, broadening our views, and imparting the self-reliance and determination which those who

perpetuated dependence on others to rule and protected them can never attain" (qtd. in Rutherford, Victorian Authority 183). As with Loyalist myth, the rhetoric that filled these papers contained more than a trace of anti-Americanism. The penny papers were the most vocal supporters of Canada's newfound independence; however, their editors saw no conflict in their dependence on the U.S. Robertson, Sheppard and Maclean believed that a myth of nationhood was essential for the country's continued economic growth: "The daily press was the prime mythmaker . . . [no] form could reach so many people so often and on all manner of topics . . . [E]ditorials elaborated a series of nationhood which sometimes challenged but usually justified the emerging patterns of dominance in the country at large" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 156).

As with that of the Loyalists, the new Canadian myth was based at least as much in convenience as in historic reality. But it would have a lasting effect on the popular imagination in Canada. It is a favourite pastime of Canadians to stress their un-American nature, even if few people can define what it actually means to be Canadian. Much of this smugness is a result of the Loyalist and nationalist myths that were perpetuated by the penny press: "The press was only engaged in a normal task of mass communication, namely reconfirming the public's faith in its country's present. The wealth of editorials embellished a vision of Canada as the Victorian commonwealth par excellence, its people enjoying a way of life nowhere surpassed" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 189).

Parallel to the philosophies being promoted in the American press, an important component of this new mythology was democracy; in particular, it was American democracy that so interested Robertson and his colleagues:

Implicit in their radical rhetoric was the ideal of a triumphant democracy wherein the common man might stand free and proud. That found expression in the early demand for manhood suffrage, a disdain for social convention and snobbery, sometimes a suspicion of moral reform, and the innumerable campaigns against business and exploitation (Rutherford, Canadian Media 66).

By 1880, all of Toronto's newspapers had accepted a certain amount of democracy in Canada. However, it was the independent penny papers which led the charge for full manhood suffrage. The News of 26 November 1883 demanded "[n]othing but a government of the people, by the people, for the people"; on 19 November 1884, the World referred to the ballot as "the full right of citizenship" and on 17 July 1884, the News saw democracy as the only way to eliminate what it considered

"caste supremacy" in Canada (qtd. in Rutherford, Victorian Authority 161). This democratic fervour had been borrowed directly from the U.S., and had a profound impact on the Canadian reader:

The big city daily empowered the forces of progress in the modernizing community . . . [T]he very bias of popular journalism, its emphasis on mass literacy, made newspapers leading antagonists of the force of custom which buttressed old ways . . . The logic of mass communication was . . . akin to the process of industrialization or the idea of democracy in its ability to transform the social environment (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 8).

Canada's penny papers were also similar to their American counterparts in their approach to editorials. Stating their papers' position on issues was an important preoccupation for both Mackenzie and Brown, and they devoted several columns to this purpose. Commenting on important issues was equally important to Robertson and his colleagues; however, the space they devoted to direct commentary was far less formal than their predecessors: "The preachy tone, the convoluted argument, the verbal diarrhoea that afflicted the Victorian leader at its worst was gone. So too . . . was the grace, wit, vigour and scholarship of the leader at its best . . . The new style editorial was usually abbreviated, often bland, a collection of cant and cliché (Rutherford, Canadian Media 63).

An important difference in Toronto's penny papers, however, was their editorial flexibility. The U.S. had rejected British rule in favour of its own brand of democracy, a fact constantly promoted in its newspapers. Canada, however, was less eager to shed its colonial ties when they could be used to promote its national interests. Many editors celebrated Canada's English and American roots in the interest of forming a new Canadian myth: "Anglophone nationalists would have it both ways, declaring a British or American ethos, the style of argument depending on whether the momentary target was an arrogant republic or a paternalistic England" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 160). This flexible mindset has over the years been to Canada's great advantage.

This flexibility in Canada's political imagination has its roots not only in its history, however. As McLuhan states, simply living in such close proximity to the U.S. has dramatically affected the way Canadians view their own nationhood:

Canada's 5000-mile border is unfortified and has the effect of keeping Canadians in a perpetual philosophic mood which nourishes flexibility in the absence of strong commitments or definite goals. By contrast, the United States,

with heavy commitments and sharply defined objectives, is not in a good position to be philosophic, or cool, or flexible. Canada's borderline encourages the expenditure on communications on what might otherwise be spent on armaments and fortifications (Borderline 247).

Canadians' relationship with the United States has always been complex. It can be argued that despite the intervening decades and advances in communications between the flight of the Loyalists and modern-day Canada, Canadians' attitudes towards their southern neighbours has remained constant. As Creighton recounts, upon George Brown's arrival at Toronto in 1843, "[t]he burgeoning power and wealth of the United States . . . inspired in Canada a strange mix of envy and admiration, distrust and desire to emulate. In almost the same political argument, a Canadian could urge the American model of material progress and condemn the republic's lawlessness and mob-rule" (Careless, Brown 31).

It is a recurrent theme in the Canadian imagination that socially (and to a lesser extent, economically), the country is a separate entity from the U.S.. The protectionist National Policy of Sir John A. Macdonald, which was strongly supported by the penny papers, was commonly viewed as an exercise in nation-building. Macdonald's success in bringing about Confederation has earned him the reputation as a political nationalist. However, like Mackenzie, he strongly admired the American system of government, and based the division of powers in the British North America Act on the American federal system. On 9 February 1865, Macdonald had referred to the American system as "one of the most skillful works which human intelligence ever created . . . one of the most perfect organs that ever governed a free people" (qtd. in Moffett 30).

It was Macdonald's intent to use the railway to develop the West and protectionist trade policies to lessen Canada's economic dependence on the U.S. in order to stem the tide of young Canadians seeking their fortunes south of the border. While the rail did bring thousands of immigrants to achieve the first goal, its immediate impact was to transport large number of Canadians to major American cities:

It is to the cities that the people go when they wish an evening at the theatre, or to do any shopping of more than ordinary importance . . . In short, Buffalo and Detroit exert upon that portion of the Ontario peninsula that lies between them the magnetic attraction which a metropolis always exercises upon its tributary country . . . In spite of the distance, New York and Chicago are powerful magnets for the older parts of Canada . . . There is no citizen in Canada who does not have to meet the competition of a more important American city (Moffett 67).

What Macdonald and other Canadian nationalists since him have failed to see is that regardless of their intent, trade policies alone cannot compel people to remain in one place if there are greater fortunes to be had elsewhere (Moffett 67). The same can be said of ideas. The case for independent Canadian nationalism is weakened by the fact that the country's first long-distance telephone lines were not direct, but connected through the U.S. (Moffett 61). New Brunswick could talk directly to Maine, but not to Ontario. Ideas, be they political or social, respect neither borders, nor Acts of Parliament. Once the notions of democracy and capitalism had taken hold in the American press, no amount of iron could prevent their adoption in the Canadian imagination: "Canadians who live on the border . . . have before their eyes the fields and cities of a kindred people, whose immense prosperity they are prevented from sharing only by a political line, while socially and in every other respect the identity and even fusion is complete" (Smith 213).

There is little doubt that Robertson and his colleagues believed their pan-Canadian rhetoric. By the 1890s, they had accepted the belief that a strong state and economic protectionism were essential components of Canadian nationality and economic progress (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 170). In hindsight, however, their own economic fortunes, as well as those of their city, were irreparably tied to the American economic juggernaut: "For years hardly a day has passed in which the Canadian newspapers have not chronicled some new incursion of American capital . . . American stocks are heavily dealt in the Canadian exchanges, New York quotations are telegraphed to Canadian papers . . . all helping to create common financial interests on both sides of the boundary" (Moffett 108).

In contrast to the pan-Canadian chauvinism espoused by the World, the News and the Telegram, the Toronto Star ran a campaign for even further economic and political integration with the U.S. Continentalism had long been the rallying cry of Reformers, who viewed the individual as free to seek his fortunes in the place of greatest opportunity, regardless of its flag:

Continentalism really meant tying Canada's fortunes to the rising star of America's empire. Liberals dwelt on the apparent decline of Canadian agriculture, or the rise of combines and monopolies or the hard times of the workingmen or the swollen national debt, all to demonstrate the failure of the National Policy . . . What they argued . . . was that Canada and the U.S. constituted a single marketplace which politics had split asunder (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 185).

### Joseph E. Atkinson and the Star

The strongest proponent of continentalism was Joseph E. Atkinson, whose Toronto Star would become - and remain - the largest circulation newspaper in Canada. While not a Scottish Presbyterian, Atkinson grew up in poverty and took up the mantle of Reform in Toronto, continuing the campaign that had been started by Mackenzie and advanced by Brown. As a strong Methodist, Atkinson was possessed of the same compassion and moral sense for Toronto's working class that had driven his predecessors. And it was these values that were promoted in the pages of the Star.

Much as his American counterparts had envisioned decades earlier, Atkinson saw the newspaper as a truly mass medium: an instrument not of rhetoric or religious propaganda, but an agent for the advancement of civilization. Like Bennett and Day, Atkinson was convinced of the newspaper's capacity for effecting social change: "Civilization itself rests upon the mind and conscience of the whole people, and for this mind and conscience the press is the best vehicle of expression the world has yet evolved . . . It is closer to the people than courts or Parliament, and closer . . . than the church itself" (Harkness 76).

Much like his competitors, Atkinson valued a newspaper's political independence above his own party affiliation. Although he was a close associate of Liberal Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Atkinson took over control of the Star in 1892 on the condition that he would not be hampered by ideology: "I can come to the Star only on condition it is conducted solely by its own interest as a newspaper enterprise. It must be hampered by no other considerations" (qtd. in Harkness 21).

Atkinson's independence also was a shrewd business decision. With Toronto's industrial middle class now fully integrated into the Canadian social fabric, the age of overt newspaper partisanship was in rapid decline. For these readers, economics, entertainment and urban reform had replaced ideology, and Atkinson tailored his paper accordingly: "Atkinson saw that power was beginning to shift from the rich and important to the little people in the semi-detached houses, and he began to address himself to these alone [and] tailoring the news to their taste and fighting their battles for them in his editorial column" (Harkness 41).

The biggest casualty in Atkinson's crusade for the working classes was objectivity. But as Harkness explains, presenting the news in a balanced, fair and disinterested manner was not one of the Star's top priorities: "The Star did not consider objectivity a virtue. The newspaper stood for certain things, for certain principles, and it stood for them in every column from the weather on page one to the Eaton's ad on the

back page" (Harkness 61). Although this stance differed from that taken by the Globe and the other penny papers, it did not have a negative impact on the newspaper's circulation. Rather, it won Atkinson the respect of his readers: "[B]ecause it was generally used for ends the public considered desirable rather than for political or class purposes, public confidence in the paper was not weakened" (Harkness 61). In effect, it is this trust, based on a shared sense of responsibility to society, that public journalists are trying to restore in their respective constituencies.

To the democratic ideals already championed by the Telegram and its competitors, Atkinson added the final element in the press' democratic consciousness: the notion of public ownership. Atkinson had first been exposed to the idea during his days as a reporter for the World, and was soon an ardent convert: "He remained a public ownership man until his death" (Harkness 10). Atkinson saw public ownership of Toronto's utilities as the best way to assure the citizen a fair rate for his water and electricity, and to protect him from combines and monopoly. Atkinson's anti-combine stance was in substance not unlike Americans' mistrust of monopoly: "Competition is impossible when an individual or a corporation of these gets control of the coal lands, or the oil lands, or the water power in a country. The question is not between individual and public control, but between public control and monopoly" (Harkness 82).

Atkinson's newspaper also was similar to its competitors with respect to its attitude toward Britain. In effect, the Star espoused the same Liberal values as did the Colonial Advocate and the Globe. And Atkinson was not above borrowing the more admirable traits of the mother country in advancing his newspapers' campaign for social justice and reform:

There is in England a party that is out for glory and conquest, for military careers, for expansion, for centralization and for aggression. There is another party that believes the great need of England is social and domestic reform and betterment of the condition of the people. It is upon the side of the latter party that the people of Canada would naturally be arrayed (Harkness 89).

### **Social Harmony - Loyalism Revisited**

Toronto's rapid industrial expansion and the secular appeal of the department store did not, however, mean the end of the Loyalist ethos in Canada. Respectability, sobriety and Christian morality still dominated the Canadian imagination. The dissemination of these views came less and less from the pulpit, however, and more

and more from the penny press. Robertson and his competitors were capitalists of the first order, but seldom did they advocate economic gain at the expense of social harmony. Instead, they promoted social cohesion as essential to Canada's political and economic success. It was the intention of Confederation to create a unified nationality that surmounted ethnic, linguistic and provincial boundaries. In Toronto's penny papers, national unity and social order took precedence over any particular cause:

Commitment to the gospel of social harmony usually overrode sympathy for the underdog. Farm organizations that moved beyond the issue of rural improvement into the realm of commerce or politics soon came in for much criticism . . . Unions noted for their militancy could expect little press affection . . . (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 209).

As similar as working conditions in Toronto were to those of New York, and as avid an interest as its penny papers would show towards the Knights of Labour, Canada's industrial experience differed from its American counterpart in one key area. Canada's emphasis on social harmony prevented the formation of a true proletariat. Between 1867 and 1892, Toronto would see 141 strikes (Kealey 175). Unlike the American experience, however, Canada's labour movement did not pose a threat to the social order. This emphasis on social order is well in evidence in the Telegram of 17 July 1886: "Labour has no right to coerce the action of its own order or by force to abridge any of the rights of capital, while capital must learn that human labourers cannot safely be treated as unthinking machines" (qtd. in Rutherford, Victorian Authority 179). In this respect, Canadian penny papers differed significantly from their American counterparts. The Loyalist ethos held sway over both excessive individualism and political extremism.

### **Press and Business - Ownership Questions**

What had began as a myth in the colonial literature had, by the turn of the century, gained the support of Toronto's business community. Newspapers promoted a social contract in which every member of society was necessary for the city's continued economic and social progress. All of Toronto's penny papers supported the entrepreneur, who was seen as vital to the country's survival. Killing capitalism, claimed the Telegram, "would mean [an] end to all great enterprises, an end to construction of railways and telegraph lines, an end to the establishment of manufactories, an end to all projects in which capital had to be invested" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 210).

However, such advocacy did occasionally raise questions about the newspapers' ability to comment fairly on business matters. It is a question that continues to plague all media, one which grows more complicated with each successive corporate merger. As early as 1899, J.S. Willison could find no conflict of interest in the growing commercialization of the newspaper industry: "[There is] no reason to conclude that the corporations have a dominating voice in the press or the public life in Canada" (qtd. in Rutherford, Victorian Authority 205).

Criticism of the penny papers came also from Conservative party organs. Their chief criticism was their lack of principle, that these papers stood for nothing and offered readers merely pre-fabricated opinions which they did not always hold. However, it was precisely the abundance of opinion available in newspapers of the day that allowed the individual citizen to form her own decisions - competition and criticism are also key components of the democratic consciousness.

### Papers and Politicians

By the end of the century, Canadians' opinions regarding freedom of the press had been significantly advanced. Successive journalists from Mackenzie through Atkinson had worked towards this goal, using similar tactics and holding similar convictions. Each understood the importance of language in forming a connection with their readers, and each imbued their papers with a strong moral sense of social responsibility and a dedication to Reform. In this respect, Toronto's penny papers were very similar to their American originators. One crucial difference, however, was the myths these papers constructed. While they were indeed champions of the common man, they were insistent that the common man not take precedence over the greater good: "[Their] crusades did not threaten the social fabric but rather employed the prevailing myths to condemn people, practices, or institutions that hindered the progress of the city or the country" (Rutherford, Victorian Authority 196).

In sum, the penny press in Canada made the articulation of politics and social issues a daily event. This was made possible by advances in printing and communications technology. The spread of the telegraph across the North American continent incorporated Canadians' attitudes regarding the nature and definition of news into those already established in the U.S. The penny press in Toronto was in large part a carbon copy of its American originators, with one key difference. Upper Canada's Loyalist heritage did not disappear with the arrival of industry in Toronto. Rather, the themes of social harmony and survival were renewed and strengthened as they were

incorporated into the larger myth of Canadian nationalism. In comparison to the American penny papers, the influence exerted by the Telegram and its competitors on the popular imagination was short-lived. Canada's smaller population did not permit for the degree of sensationalism that was common in the U.S., and even the most radical dailies soon became family papers once they had been established. Nevertheless, their emphasis on civic participation and urban reform was sufficient to form a long-lasting democratic consciousness in the Canadian public. As Rutherford recounts in A Victorian Authority:

The popular press had prospered because it met new social needs born out of the sweep of modernity. The emerging bourgeois democracy required an increasing level of mass involvement in the daily round of life. People at the top . . . had to be able to communicate with the publics below. Likewise, these publics needed some agency to voice their concerns and so influence the establishment . . . The emerging society demanded a citizenry with sufficient knowledge to make reasonable decisions about how to vote, what to buy, where to invest, how to find jobs, even what to believe. Older institutions . . . could not adequately serve all these ends (232).

## CHAPTER FOUR: COMING FULL CIRCLE

### Introduction

The end of the twentieth century finds the United States at a crossroads in its democratic experience. Americans are turning away from politics in unprecedented numbers. Voter turnout has dropped to nearly an all-time low. The 1988 presidential election saw voter turnout at its lowest rate since 1924 (Dionne 317). Equally worrisome is the sentiment that usually accompanies this reduction in voter participation. As David Mathews has stated, "the very concept of good citizenship seems to have atrophied because politics has taken the form it has" (32).

This chapter, therefore, will deal with the requirements for a truly democratic society, and the extent to which the American political system has drifted away from its own democratic traditions. It will examine Americans' current state of disillusionment regarding their political process and a principal source of their frustration - the media. It will then examine the problems posed by the codes and conventions of contemporary newspaper reporting in perpetuating that frustration. Finally, it will explain how the public journalism movement is attempting to restore the democratic tradition and reconnect newspaper readers to their government. One of the most innovative ideas in contemporary media, public journalism presents an excellent opportunity for newspapers to rediscover their democratic responsibilities, and for readers to reassert their status as disinterested citizens.

### **The Democratic Essentials**

Central to the democratic process is the disinterested citizen. A creation of ancient Greece, to elevate a person to the status of citizen was to liberate him from tribal, occupational, regional and other loyalties in order to create a new society based on participation and deliberation: "The new political subdivisions of Athens were deliberately constructed so that each one was a kind of political Noah's Ark. People of different tribes, occupations, and regions were brought together - just as citizens. Politics was invented . . . to allow strangers . . . to work together" (Mathews 200).

The new democratic structure accorded the citizen unprecedented freedom, but it did not relieve him of his responsibility to others. His obligation to work with his fellow citizens toward a common good was the basis of democracy. In the transfer of power from an oligarchy to the newly-formed citizenry, government became less concerned with controlling the population than with letting that population create its

own society: the idea that citizens could give direction to their own lives lies at the heart of Western civilization (Saul 47). Laws were not imposed by an elite body, but created out of citizens' deliberation for the common good: "The revolutionary power of politics is not in creating advocates for particular policies but in actually transforming people so they no longer see themselves as victims of the system . . . In that expanded notion of politics, the public and its citizens are not peripheral, they are central" (Mathews 209).

To effect social or political change first requires the creation of a political will: lasting change cannot be achieved without effectively utilizing citizens' abilities in identifying a common good. To do this, the citizenry must become aware of the problem to be resolved or the goal to be achieved: "Once people are aware of their choices and the ethical and practical dilemmas that accompany them, the public can begin to come to grips with them" (Yankelovich 84). However, this entails more than a citizen simply knowing the problem exists. It must be presented in a manner that engages him on a personal level; it must be shown that the problem has a direct effect on his own welfare.

Essential to raising citizens' consciousness and engaging them in a particular problem to be resolved is language. As has been illustrated in the previous chapters, language is not merely a tool with which to sell baking soda, but the citizen's sole means of self-knowledge and the key to ensuring his effective participation in society. The primacy of relevant public language in bringing about social change is not a new concept. As John Ralston Saul explains, language has always been the principal catalyst for social progress: "It is through language that we will find our way out of our current dilemma, just as a rediscovery of language . . . provided a way out for Westerners during the humanist breakthrough . . . in the twelfth century . . . Language, when it works, is the tool that makes it possible to invoke reality" (171).

Once the citizenry is informed and engaged in a problem, it can proceed to the second step in the democratic process: deliberation. This is a crucial stage, as it is through the deliberative process that previously unconnected citizens become a public, bound to each other in the understanding of their obligations to the greater good. As Mathews observes, deliberation is only possible if people see themselves as citizens: "People become a public through the connecting process of deliberation . . . To deliberate means to weigh carefully both the consequences of various options for actions and the views of others . . . Without the discipline of serious deliberation, it is impossible for a body of people to articulate what they believe to be in the best interest of all" (111).

It is also through deliberation that citizens identify the choices they face, and the possible consequences of each. Deliberation is essential to the successful resolution of any problem, at any level of government: "Making . . . choices together and acting on them together requires the same kind of serious deliberation that deciding on national policy requires" (Mathews 125).

Language is equally crucial to the deliberative process. Nothing can be resolved if citizens are unable to agree on the information and choices being discussed. As Daniel Yankelovich observes, successful deliberation requires that all participants speak the same language: "Democracy depends on discovering modes of communication free from domination and distortion. Here the diversity of people's points of view, far from being an obstacle to truth seeking, becomes an asset" (227). Should the deliberative stage suffer from insufficient information or a distorted view of the choices presented, citizens cannot arrive at the next stage of the democratic process: public opinion (Yankelovich 85).

The true definition of public opinion bears little resemblance to the rash of statistics presented by contemporary media. Contrary to the often unpredictable nature of the data presented for public consumption, true public opinion is based not on ideology or emotional responses, but on consensus. It is, by its very nature, consistent: "The only way to develop . . . consensus is to ground it on public judgment [which] depends on creating the circumstances under which representative thinking can thrive" (Yankelovich 233). It is this emphasis on consensus that makes possible the creation of political will, which in turn effects lasting political and social change: "Without public judgment, issues fester unresolved virtually without time limit; with public judgment, issues can be resolved quickly, saving years of strife, turmoil, waste and danger" (Yankelovich 117). The capacity for citizens to enact social change through consensus and deliberation is not a new concept. Contrary to contemporary attitudes, it is not economics that makes social change possible, but the political will of the citizenry. As Saul explains, "[t]here is absolutely no indication that the Industrial Revolution . . . had a self-rectifying mechanism to achieve any social balance . . . It was the citizenry and democracy that forced the economic mechanism into a socially acceptable and reasonably stable shape . . . the shape of a civilization" (117).

### **The Roots of Political Cynicism**

There are several reasons for the distressing developments in Americans' views towards their political system. Most, however, stem from their perception that

politicians - at all levels of government - are no longer interested in their input as citizens. To a majority of the American public, Abraham Lincoln's credo "government of the people, by the people, for the people" sounds increasingly like hollow rhetoric (Mathews 13). Many Americans now share the belief that their representative, deliberative system of democracy has been subjected to a "hostile takeover" by experts, pundits and special interest groups. It is a transformation they neither requested nor approved: "Americans feel that their political isolation has been thrust upon them. It is not something that they have - nor would have - chosen for themselves" (Mathews 15). According to Mathews, it is this transfer of power from the citizen to the special interest group that has caused many Americans to turn passion into frustration into cynicism:

They cared so deeply that their frustration ran to anger and cynicism . . . These Americans felt they had been pushed out of the political system by a professional class of powerful lobbyists, incumbent politicians, campaign managers - and a media elite. They saw the system as one in which votes no longer made any difference because money ruled. They saw a system with its doors closed to the average citizen (12).

Canadians also have seen a distressing increase in cynicism regarding their public institutions. In 1992, they overwhelmingly rejected the so-called Charlottetown Accord. The bill, a second attempt to accommodate Quebec in the Constitution after the failed Meech Lake Accord, also would have brought sweeping reforms to the Constitution. After months of extensive and expensive negotiations - the total bill exceeded \$86 million - the government proposed a series of reforms including an elected Senate, an acknowledgment of First Peoples, and a recognition of Quebec as a "distinct society." Also included in the accord was the so-called Canada Clause, which was to have been added to Section 2 of the Constitution Act of 1867. The clause purported to embody "fundamental Canadian values" such as a respect for individual and collective human rights. In an almost exceedingly optimistic tone, the Tory government of Brian Mulroney promoted the accord under the concepts of unity and prosperity.

Following the failure of Meech Lake in 1988, the federal government had sponsored 30 polls to determine its public reaction (York A1). To promote the Charlottetown Accord, the Tories again used its wealth of resources. The party spent more than \$12 million on polling and focus groups to determine the public position most conducive to a successful referendum result (York A1). For the duration of the referendum campaign, not one public move was left to chance.

What is important to note is the manner in which the accord was presented to the public and the news coverage it received. York University media professor Seth Feldman observed very early in the campaign that in promotional television ads and on national newscasts, the \$105 million referendum campaign was covered much like an election: “At the end of the news item, we [were] informed that the campaign-style tour [had] been a success. The bandwagon [was] rolling” (C1). What was missing from television’s election-style coverage, however, was an opposing view. On the eve of the referendum, political columnist Richard Gwyn illustrated how opposing views to the accord were impossible to be found anywhere in the news media:

On the one side . . . everybody who is anybody. The Prime Minister and every provincial premier. Almost all their opposition parties. Every newspaper, in its editorials. The entire business and financial establishment, and almost all of the academic and legal establishment . . . One Yes ad was signed by a long list of members of the Order of Canada. On the other side, nobody (B1).

In promoting the accord, the federal government engaged in what amounted to a propaganda campaign of a sort not seen since the conscription crisis of 1942. In the months leading up to the referendum, every possible tactic was used to ensure that Canadians would vote Yes. It was readily apparent that the Tories were not interested in allowing the Canadian public to debate the merits of the accord. As Environics pollster Michael Adams observed, “The elite is terrified of people. It thinks they are ignorant and not to be trusted” (qtd. in Gwyn B1). In place of public dialogue, Canadians were told that to reject the accord would be to initiate “the beginning of the dismantling of Canada.” As Graham Fraser of the Globe and Mail observed, the Tories’ removing limits placed on campaign spending “would make it possible for corporations . . . and interest groups to ‘saturate the airwaves’ . . . and severely reduce the capacity of opponents to wage a fair debate” (A1). The Tories also refused the Globe’s access to information requests regarding polling results on the basis that such information would damage federal-provincial relations.

A more accurate reason for the Tories’ refusal to release polling results was that the accord was viewed by most Canadians as “a project unpopular and likely to fail” (Winsor and Graham A1). The federal government’s own pollsters had warned as early as June 1991 that Quebecers were more than twice as likely to be concerned about pollution as Constitutional reforms. Outside Quebec, the accord could generate very little public interest. This was in part due to Environics pollster Michael Adams

observation of Canadians' growing frustration with their political elites, which he had divined as early as 1990. As Gwyn stated, "Canada's tradition of elite wheeling and dealing behind closed doors ha[d] passed its shelf life" (B1). An overwhelming number of Canadians wanted the Constitutional question resolved quickly in order to concentrate on the country's flagging economy.

The referendum campaign also revealed the extent to which special interest groups had worked their way into the Canadian political landscape. As Gwyn observed, special interest groups had succeeded in turning the federal government's greatest asset - its technical competence - into its biggest weakness: "The elite's role has been reduced to getting the right representative 'balance' on government boards and task forces" (B1). A similar observation was made by Globe and Mail columnist Jeffrey Simpson, who saw the increasing influence wielded by interest groups on Canadian politics as a potentially dangerous development for its society: "The current round of Constitutional negotiations has emerged as the apotheosis of interest group politics, which may sadly reflect contemporary Canadian reality but hardly provides a vision for Canada" (qtd. in Gwyn B1).

The failure of the Charlottetown Accord was not due to inherent flaws in the document itself. What Canadians rejected, rather, was the arrogance of their political elites: "The point isn't that people don't like the Constitution. It's that the elite keeps telling them they have to like it" (Gwyn B1). Even "alternative" national leaders such as then First Nations Chief Ovide Mercredi and Canadian Labour Congress president Bob White had serious difficulty arriving at a consensus among their supporters (Gwyn B1). On the eve of the referendum, Gwyn saw in Canadians' rising populism the same sentiment that was sweeping Eastern Europe: "Canadians, traditionally content to settle for 'peace, order and good government,' are swept up in a populist uprising that probably is without equal in the Western world" (B1).

Constitutional matters, and their coverage in the national press, remain contentious topics in Canadian democratic life. Much has been written concerning Canada's adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in conjunction with the patriation of its constitution in 1982. Martin Lipset in Continental Divide argues that more than free trade, Canada's adoption of the Charter has resulted in a dramatic "Americanization" of its society and its institutions (qtd. in Manfredi 234). Much like the American Bill of Rights, the Charter seeks to protect elements of individual liberty such as freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Where the Charter differs from its American counterpart, however, is in the inclusion of

section 33. This so-called notwithstanding clause allows legislatures to override judicial review of legislation in the interest of preserving peace order and good government.

University of Western Ontario law professor Robert Martin also has observed that with its emphasis on individual rights, the Charter represents a "fundamental break with Canadian historical tradition," and has been a principal contributor to the "Americanization" of Canadian political and social values. More important, however, is the extent to which judicial interpretation of the Charter has gone in creating and perpetrating an orthodoxy based on individual rights.

It is Martin's view that within every society rests an orthodox way of thinking, which is articulated through institutions such as the judiciary, universities and, most importantly, the media. Though this orthodoxy is shared equally by all three institutions, it is the media, through their wide reach and accessibility, that is the most effective way of spreading and maintaining it. Such an interpretation of the news corresponds with Innis' view of news as a social hieroglyph. In Martin's view, the most troubling aspect of orthodoxy is that it obviates the need for independent thought: "If you work in the Canadian media, you learn what is correct and not correct."

An excellent example of contemporary Canadian orthodox thought is the national media's coverage of the Supreme Court decision regarding Delwin Vriend. A former lab instructor in Alberta, Vriend was fired in 1991 after he revealed his homosexuality. As Alberta's Individual Rights Protection Act makes no provision for prevention of discrimination based on sexual orientation, Vriend was denied the ability to appeal his dismissal. In covering the case, Canada's elite national press gave Vriend its full support, charging the Alberta legislature with outdated attitudes toward sexual orientation and job performance. It was the Supreme Court's view that to exclude sexual orientation in Alberta's human rights legislation would have "dire and demeaning" consequences, and was an invitation for even more instances of discrimination:

The very fact that sexual orientation is excluded from the IRPA, which is the Government's primary statement of policy against discrimination, certainly suggests that discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation is not as serious or as deserving of condemnation as other forms of discrimination. It could well be said that it is tantamount to condoning or even encouraging discrimination against lesbians and gay men. Thus this exclusion clearly gives rise to an effect which constitutes discrimination (40).

However, Martin claims, nowhere in the media was discussed what he viewed as the key question in a democratic society. In his view, the issue was not whether sexual orientation should be included in Alberta's human rights legislation, but who, in a free and democratic society, should be making those decisions. The Alberta legislature had twice debated - and twice rejected - amending its legislation to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation on the grounds that such instances were rare, and that legislation is ineffective in changing public attitudes. But as contemporary Canadian orthodoxy automatically regards all minorities as victims, this was not seen as the "right" way to think. Regardless of one's personal views on the matter, Martin stresses the need to abide by the decisions of the legislature: "If we are going to have any notion of democracy in this country . . . we have to respect those choices."

The fact that this question was not raised in Canada's national press until after the decision was made public illustrates the extent to which the orthodoxy of individual rights has permeated national institutions. What poses the most serious threat to democracy in Canada is that its courts, universities and media - the institutions most capable of independent thought - may share an outdated orthodoxy. In such an arrangement, information and values may tend to be circulated among these institutions without being subjected to critical thought. Barriers to reform may thus subvert the democratic process, with the Canadian press compounding the problem by failing in its duty to present alternatives to their readers in its role as guardian of democracy. These are problems first articulated by Lippmann.

Martin charges the Supreme Court with replacing the decision of Alberta's democratically elected government with what it and the national media viewed as the "right" answer. However, Martin maintains: "The aim in a constitutional democracy . . . isn't always necessarily to get the right answer. The processes matter. And we have absolutely disregarded the processes . . . We think the only question is getting the right answer." What is dangerous to democracy is that these answers are not arrived at through deliberation and debate, but by what Martin views as an outdated orthodoxy which views victims as having that "right" answer, regardless of the legitimacy of their claims. In its ruling, the Court makes a clear connection between "homosexuals and other disadvantaged groups" (3). In this respect, the substitution of a "right" answer for deliberation and debate illustrates many aspects of corporatism. In both cases, social objectives are determined not by the citizenry, but by special interest groups and an overriding orthodoxy.

Martin views the Vriend case as one in which section 33 of the Charter might have been used to reassert the decision of Alberta's democratically elected government. However, the notwithstanding clause has been seriously discredited in recent years. Brian Mulroney viewed its inclusion in the Charter as rendering the entire document worthless; also, anger in English Canada over its use by the Quebec legislature to override judicial review of Bill 101 has not completely subsided.

Americans (and Canadians) did not arrive at such a cynical outlook toward their politicians by themselves. Many of them see the media - in all their forms - as the main contributors to their disillusionment. In contrast to the penny press era, many Americans see modern media as working not on behalf of the public, but contributing to the gap between the public and its politicians. A 1994 Times/Mirror poll revealed that 71% of Americans agree that "the news media gets in the way of society solving its problems" (Merritt 4).

This is particularly true of the elite national press, whose apparent emphasis on personal scandal and partisan maneuvering, is of little concern to anyone outside the media themselves. Whether focusing on these scenarios on their own volition or acting on the directives of their respective news organization, journalists' extensive coverage of petty rivalries and rhetorical arguments have contributed greatly to the current climate of cynicism. As Merritt has observed:

[T]he great majority of what Americans know - and hate - about politics they get through journalists. The false choices contrived by the politicians are presented through traditional journalism as THE choices. Since most Americans do not see their views reflected in extremes, they do not see their interests reflected in the debate (Rosen and Merritt 21).

In addition to this disillusionment with the state of their political system, Americans (and Canadians, too) are also coming to grips with social fragmentation. The last decades of the twentieth century have seen a gradual erosion of many of the social, political and economic institutions that had previously provided the foundations of the social contract. Whereas community organizations, church congregations and even amateur sports leagues once maintained Americans' sense of community, their importance in the urban experience has been steadily declining. Simply put, the American social contract is under siege: "Crime and other community-related problems - and our inability to combat them - suggest that we are put at risk by social trends that are making the country 'a random collection of atomized individuals . . . with no connectedness or responsibility for one another'" (Leo, qtd. in Mathews 128).

As illustrated in the preceding chapters, newspapers have been an important element in shaping and maintaining a sense of community in both the U.S. and in Canada. Their status as a social institution owed as much to their providing readers the predominant pseudo-environment as to the information they conveyed. However, newspapers, as well as other forms of media, also have fallen victim to fragmentation, the reasons for which will be discussed below. As Jack Fuller has observed, weakening the socially edifying influence of the newspaper can provoke dramatic results in the reading public and in the media themselves:

When knowledge shatters, this invites the kind of adversarial contest that is rapidly supplanting all other forms of discourse. Dueling experts for hire wield sharp fragments at one another while the crowd looks for blood. Without a way of relating the competing assertions to any system of thought that would help to explain or evaluate them, people . . . are ready to think the worst of everyone, including the journalist himself (189).

In Why Americans Hate Politics, E. J. Dionne traces the roots of Americans' growing alienation from the political process. It is his assertion that beginning in the 1960s, the country's political landscape began to shift away from a focus on citizen-based deliberation to a focus on competing ideologies: "The purpose of democratic politics is to solve problems and resolve disputes. But since the 1960s, the key to winning elections has been to reopen the same divisive issues over and over again" (16). This transition has been brought about by Republicans and Democrats alike. Dionne accuses both parties of having "conspired to wage war on public life" through different but equally successful tactics. The strategies of both Republican and Democrat bear a strong resemblance to the fear of mob rule that characterized the pre-Jacksonian era:

Both [parties] profoundly mistrusted the decisions that a democratic electorate might arrive at. The left increasingly stopped trying to make its case to the voters and instead relied on the courts to win benefits for needy and outcast groups. The right waged wholesale war on the state and argued that government was always the problem and never the solution . . . The result has been less democratic politics in which voters feel increasingly powerless (Dionne 332).

Since the 1960s, Dionne states, public debate has been forced into what he calls a rhetoric of false choices, which has effectively eliminated the common ground citizens require to engage in deliberation and to arrive at a consensus: "The false choices posed

by liberalism and conservatism make it extremely difficult for the perfectly obvious preferences of the American people to express themselves in our politics. We are encouraging ‘either/or’ politics based on ideological preconceptions rather than a ‘both/and’ politics based on ideas that broadly unite us” (14).

This regression to ideology produces in the citizenry a mindset that replaces the ability to see issues in their complexity with what Yankelovich calls compartmentalized thinking. In this frame of mind, Yankelovich claims, “people can maintain contradictory and conflicting opinions without being mentally discomfited. [For example:] When people think about preserving . . . jobs, they endorse protectionism. When they think about consumer values . . . they oppose protectionism” (31). In Breaking Up America, Joseph Turow illustrates how advertisers’ transition away from mass-marketing to specialized niche marketing also has contributed to this mindset:

In urging the allegiance of target audiences to narrow clusters of media, the strategies discouraged the creation of central media-meeting places where all sorts of people could congregate to sample each other’s views, news and entertainment. The strategies also discouraged audiences from visiting media clusters not designed for them, thereby lessening an opportunity for them to get a feel for social diversity and ask how they and others fitted into the larger society (92).

This dynamic is further perpetuated by political parties’ dependence on opinion polls, which work not to seek out a possible common ground between opposing viewpoints, but to perpetuate the ideological divide: “The focus group may be the perfect symbol of what has happened to democracy in America. Insofar as ‘the people’ are consulted by political leaders these days, their reactions are of interest not as a guide to policy but simply as a way of exploring the electorate’s gut feeling, to see which kind of message might move them most” (Dionne 311).

Such a framework is fundamentally anti-democratic, as it prevents citizens from identifying problems to be solved by any methods other than those offered by Republican or Democrat. As Saul has observed from his Canadian perspective, reducing social and political problems to ideological arguments denies the place of the disinterested citizen as the centre of the democratic process: “A social system that defines progress as the total of a myriad of more or less water-tight compartments denies the possibility of a citizen-based society. It therefore denies the individual as a source of legitimacy” (164).

It is this emphasis on ideology and compartmentalized thinking that has allowed many of the problems of contemporary American society - from inner-city crime to race

relations to campaign finance reform - to fester unresolved for decades. Increasing polarization has taken politics away from deliberation and replaced it with political posturing and short-term thinking: "Problems are solved; issues are merely what politicians use to divide the citizenry and advance themselves" (Dionne 332).

Also troubling is the failure of these competing ideologies to garner any strong public support. There is very little similarity between the contemporary Republican and Democratic parties and their nineteenth-century incarnations. As Dionne has observed, the differences between the two parties is now more rhetorical than concrete: "The two broad coalitions in American political life - liberal and Democratic, conservative and Republican - have become so unstable that neither side can afford to risk very much. That is because the ties that bind Americans to each other, to their communities, and thus to their political parties have grown ever weaker" (17).

Thus, in addition to its reducing public policy decisions to short-term partisan contests, this regression to ideology has resulted in a chronic political paralysis. With neither the Republicans nor the Democrats enjoying solid, committed public support, neither side is willing to commit to innovative, daring policy solutions that might alienate their increasingly fickle voter base. As Dionne states, "[l]asting reform in a democratic society cannot take place in the absence of a broadly based consensus" (27). For both sides of the ideological divide, the safest course is no course at all: "One of the principal reasons for America's failure of political will is that America's leadership has not presented the public with realistic choices, and on occasion has actually created obstacles deflecting the public from working through the issue" (Yankelovich 101).

The most worrisome characteristic of this situation is its inflexibility. Rather than working to create an environment that encourages deliberation and progress, a dependence on ideology forces both camps to capitalize on and perpetuate the public's increasing cynicism surrounding the democratic process: "To appeal to an increasingly alienated electorate, candidates and their political consultants have adopted a cynical stance that . . . plays into popular cynicism about politics and thus wins them votes . . . At the end of it all, the governing process . . . becomes little more than a war over symbols" (Dionne 17). As will be illustrated below, it is the self-fulfilling nature of such a framework that public journalism is trying to eliminate.

### **The Corporatist Agenda**

The source of this retreat to ideology, and the distancing of politics from the citizenry extend beyond the U.S.' own borders. In The Unconscious Civilization, John Ralston Saul illustrates how the Western tradition of citizen-based democracy itself has

been overtaken by a system he describes as corporatism. In such an arrangement, the citizen is robbed of his democratic rights and potential in favour of special interest groups. In corporatist structures, legitimacy lies not with the disinterested citizen, but with the group. Public policy is achieved “not through democratic discussion or participation, but through negotiation between the relative groups based upon expertise, interest and the ability to exercise power” (Saul 31). In corporatist structures, knowledge and language are viewed not as tools with which to identify the common good, but as mechanisms of social control. Having been robbed of its potential to doubt, deliberate and criticize, the citizenry finds its only means of dissent in angry populism.

Much of the cynicism directed at politicians and journalists is, in effect, the result of the corporatist influence. Americans are angry at the media, which they charge with complicity in bringing about such a situation. It is a fact not lost on David Broder, one of the most respected political journalists in America: “The result has been that even as we have decried these tactics, we have magnified their effectiveness by publicizing the very messages we deplore. And in the process, we have probably deepened public cynicism about politics without doing anything that might remedy the practices that make people cynical” (B1).

The essential component in the corporatist structure is the control it exercises over public language. For democracy to work, language must be tied to a potential for action. As far back as ancient Greece, the citizen’s right and his ability to participate in his society was rooted in the oral culture: “[S]peech is what makes a man a political being and wherever the relevance of speech is at stake matters become political by definition. The polis was a way of life in which speech and only speech made sense and where the central concern of all the citizens was to talk to each other” (Dewey, qtd. in Carey 84). Corporatism, however, which rewards those with specialized knowledge, replaces a public language accessible to the citizenry with technical jargon and propaganda.

To implement an effective corporatist structure, therefore, it is essential first to control the language of public discourse. As Carey has observed, replacing the citizen’s own language with specialized jargon effectively replaces the citizen as a locus of power with those holding expert knowledge: “Lacking an oral culture, one may easily fall prey to experts in knowledge who do our knowing for us, who inform us but whose knowledge does not easily connect to our actual experience, and the basic transactions of life” (165). This can be said of politics as well as of law, medicine,

economics and, in particular, journalism. As Yankelovich observes, interest groups use a language that excludes those without inside knowledge of their respective domains: "Unwittingly and automatically, they use technical jargon that excludes the public. They dismiss the views of citizens who do not command their factual mastery of the subject" (4). In Making News, Gaye Tuchman illustrates how a simple shift in semantics - using the term "big business" instead of "corporate capitalism" - can disguise reality and prevent the public from seeing issues in their true complexity:

As a metaphor, "big business" invokes images of the competitive marketplace of an earlier era, not the contemporary economic situation. Linguistic practices such as these hamper an analytic understanding of societal issues. Like the web of facticity with which they are associated, such practices unintentionally create and control controversy by limiting possible analyses of the interrelationship between and among phenomena (164).

As is the case with polarized public debate, corporatism prevents citizens from fully participating in their society. With public policy now consisting of rhetorical arguments and specialized jargon, the citizen is at a nearly complete loss to make sense of what he sees or hears in the media. In the corporatist model, political debate becomes the exclusive domain of experts and spokespeople, whose commitment to democracy is overshadowed by more immediate partisan goals: "One of the difficulties faced by citizens today is making sense of what is presented as material for public debate, but is actually no more than the formalized propaganda of interest groups. It is very rare now in public debate to hear from someone who is not the official voice of an organization" (Saul 61).

Tuchman has examined this practice in much detail. She cites a 1970 study by Kapsis et al., which found that news reports of riots draw heavily upon police versions rather than citizens' versions (94). Her own research, compiled after observing the operations of several newsrooms over a period of six months, brings her to a similar conclusion:

News reports of student strikes use university sources . . . to estimate how many students attend classes - despite the obvious self-interest explicit in the official amount. Estimates of the effectiveness of union strikes are taken from such legitimated officials as union heads and industry spokespersons to present conflicting truth-claims, rather than from workers or shop stewards (95).

Another important element of corporatist structures is its emphasis on simplistic solutions. Rather than working toward a common good, corporatist structures offer a simplified, romantic vision of the “good old days.” In exchange for the right to criticize, the citizen is offered a simplistic recipe for personal economic prosperity. However, these so-called benefits are only available to those who have mastered the new language and suppressed their individuality to their particular interest group. Saul states that Western societies are in a state of unconsciousness, which prevents them from defining the reality of their own problems. As a result, these problems - be they social, political or economic in nature - remain unsolved. The citizenry eventually loses interest in solving them, and in its cynicism begins the search for a scapegoat: “Without a language that functions as a general means of useful communication, crisis slips into self-delusion and romanticism, both of which are aspects of ideology, both aspects of unconsciousness” (47).

Concurrent to the rise of corporatism in the West has been a dramatic increase in the amount of information available to the public. But instead of producing a better-informed, more democratically active citizenry, such massive amounts of information have instead brought about a sense of confusion. Charles Cooley observed this phenomenon very early in this century. Cooley claimed that the mass press had created “an over-excitation which weakens or breaks down character” (qtd. in Czitrom 100). As Fuller illustrates in News Values, the problems created by surplus information have not gone away: “Information overload manifests itself emotionally as a profound sense of loss of control” (188). The spread of new information technologies such as the internet has only contributed to this trend. Americans can now choose from a myriad of information sources; however, the information available often does not provide them with any increased potential to participate as individual citizens. As Saul explains, the internet has in large part become simply another outlet for corporatist propaganda: “Even as the information highway takes form, the public and private interests are carving it up as an information control system and a sales mechanism . . . Already government departments and corporations are beginning to flood the internet with their rhetoric, all in the name of public debate” (140).

The proliferation of information available to the public also has contributed to Western society’s slip into Saul’s state of unconsciousness. It is Saul’s contention that a true democratic consciousness cannot be maintained by information alone. It is only by citizens’ exercising their own capabilities that they are able to define and shape their own reality: “The true characteristic of consciousness is not simply knowledge, but a

balanced use of our qualities so that what we know and say is related to what we do . . . It is a balancing act that makes the narrow certainty of ideologies impossible" (181).

The increase in information also has contributed to the fragmentation of the social contract in the U.S. Far from providing citizens with a coherent view of the world from which the citizenry could arrive at consensus, the preponderance of unsolicited information, lacking in both relevance and context, has erected a barrier between citizens that prevents participation and democratic action. In Amusing Ourselves to Death, Neil Postman observes that this trend began with the arrival of the telegraph:

In both oral and typographic cultures, information derives its importance from the possibility of action . . . But the situation created by the telegraph . . . made the relationship between information and action both abstract and remote. For the first time . . . people were faced with the problem of diminished social and political potency . . . For the first time, we were sent information which answered no question we had asked, and . . . did not permit the right of reply, [creating] a neighborhood of strangers and pointless quantity; a world of fragments and discontinuities (qtd. in Merritt 8).

Postman is not the first to express concern about the potentially dangerous effects of surplus information. In The Public and its Problems, Dewey illustrates that democratic action is dependent not upon the amount of information available for public consumption, but on the public's ability to understand its meanings in common: "Our Babel is not one of tongues but of signs and symbols without which shared experience is not possible" (qtd. in Czitrom 111).

Corporatism, meaningless information and a public language stripped of its relevance to the citizenry, all pose serious threats to the democratic order, particularly when they appear in the guise of encouraging democracy. When acting in concert, these trends create a political and social environment that encourages cynicism, paralysis and corruption. Citizens are unable to define problems in terms relevant to their own experience, and are therefore dissuaded from seeking solutions. Any notion of the common good is replaced by a powerful sense of self-interest: "Inability to commit oneself to believe in anything that transcends one's private interests leads to a weakening of commitment in family and community and to the self-absorption that is sometimes called narcissism" (Sullivan, qtd. in Dionne 334).

This attitude creates a reciprocal dynamic between the citizenry and its leaders in which both sides feed off the cynicism of the other: "Worse, we are cultivating this loathing in our elites. We encourage them to think of us - the citizenry - with contempt, and so to think of ourselves in the same way" (Saul 22). Such a dynamic creates a climate hostile to democratic self-government. As Saul explains, removing the public from its rightful place as the centre of a democracy allows the ascendance of leaders whose loyalty is not to the citizenry, but to their particular interest group: "If individuals do not occupy their legitimate position, then it will be occupied by a god or a king or a coalition of interest groups. If citizens do not exercise the powers conferred by their legitimacy, others will do so" (74).

All of these problems apply to contemporary journalism. Were this not the case, the rampant cynicism seen in the American public regarding its political system would not have occurred. As Merritt has observed, the health of a nation's democracy and its media are mutually dependent: "It is no coincidence that the decline in journalism and the decline in public life have happened at the same time. In modern society, they are codependent. Public life needs the information and perspective that journalists can provide, and journalism needs a viable public life because without one there is no need for journalism" (4).

The erosion of American journalism as both a social institution and a foundation for its democratic society is due to several factors. Objectivity, while useful in fostering Americans' emerging democratic consciousness in the penny press era, is now seen by media scholars as a false and unnecessary barrier between the journalist and his constituency. Journalists' time-honoured detachment has also allowed most political coverage to simply perpetuate the polarization of contemporary public debate while avoiding any obligation to deliberation or consensus. Journalism also is suffering from institutional inertia, which has discouraged efforts to reform the craft, either from within or without.

The economics of modern journalism also have worked against the press' democratic obligations. With most urban newspapers being either part of a chain or simply another revenue source for a large corporation, many newspapers have been forced to restructure to ensure the highest return for their shareholders, not to their readers. Finally, new information technologies such as the fax machine and the internet now allow journalists to write front-page stories without ever talking to a source in person.

### The Objectivity Question - From Lippmann to Rosen

During the penny press era, the belief that a journalist could report the truth using the same dispassionate approach as a scientist quickly became standard practice for newspapers across the continent: "Just as scientists discovered the facts about nature by using normatively established objective methods, so, too, the news media and the news professionals would use their methods to reveal social reality to the news consumer" (Tuchman 161). The spread of telegraph wires and the need for newspapers to attract as many advertisers as possible ensured that journalists would be dissuaded from writing a story from their own interpretation. In this framework, democracy would be strengthened through dispassionate, detached observation. News and truth were seen to be synonymous.

However, the failings of objectivity to provide the reader with such truth were in evidence at almost the same time as newspapers were adopting it. In reporting the Paris riots of 1848, Horace Greeley observes in his New York Tribune of 24 July the nearly impossible nature of conveying the complexity of an important story in sufficient detail: "These events are so multiplied and varied in their character that it is impossible to grasp them in their totality . . . distorted and erroneous accounts are spreading in every direction . . . I will, therefore, simply state what I have seen myself and acts of which I can guarantee the authenticity" (qtd. in Pickett 96). Such an admission in contemporary journalism is rarely, if ever, seen.

In Public Opinion, Walter Lippmann clearly differentiates between news and truth. Lippmann believes news to be comprised of single, isolated events such as murders, fires, accidents and baseball scores. For the journalist, reporting these events requires very little reflection or interpretation. Truth, however, consists of hidden facts which are put into context and acted upon (226).

A fundamental problem arises when the journalist fails to distinguish between these two concepts. Reporting a house fire conveys the details of an isolated event. It does not convey truth. The danger for a democratic society lies in the journalist's application of the same reporting technique to a house fire as he does the problems of urban housing or industrial poverty: "Unless the event is capable of being named, measured, given shape, made specific, it either fails to take on the character of news, or it is subject to the accidents and prejudices of observation" (Lippmann 229).

Lippmann does suggest that the press is important in maintaining a democratic society: "[A]n effective public opinion exists when the individual minds that make up the public possesses correct representations of the world. The newspaper serves its democratic function when it transmits such representations to the individual members of

the public" (qtd. in Carey 81). However, he views the press' distressingly chronic failure to convey accurate information as a threat to shaping constructive public opinion. In place of an accurate rendition of reality, Lippmann charges the press with creating stereotypes. It is his view that newspapers' creation of a social vision - what he calls the pseudo-environment - consists of reducing complex issues and events into simple concepts. The most effective means for the creation and dissemination of these stereotypes was the telegraph:

The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain . . . stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception (59).

Lippmann found little comfort in the rudimentary codes of conduct that had evolved out of the penny press' increased profits and social import. With their crusading spirit and large circulations, Pulitzer, Dana and Hearst had earned the immense respect and dedication of their readers. For Lippmann, however, none of this could ensure that the journalist would provide an accurate impression of the outside world. In Lippmann's view, no journalist could step outside his own response to an event:

There is no discipline . . . which has authority to direct the journalist's mind when he passes from news to the vague realm of truth. There are no canons to direct his own mind . . . His version of the truth is only his version . . . And the more he understands his own weaknesses, the more ready he is to admit that when there is no objective text, his opinion is in some vital measure constructed out of his own stereotypes according to his own code . . . He knows that he is seeing the world through subjective lenses (227).

Lippmann also was keenly aware of the dangers of newspaper objectivity to other social institutions. As the papers of Pulitzer and Hearst provided the U.S. with its only pseudo-environment, the information they conveyed was accepted as truth, and in turn acted upon by governments and schools alike. Lippmann points out that when those elements of society most capable of effecting social change also suffer from distorted or inaccurate information, the strength of a nation's democracy is further weakened: "[I]t is because they are compelled to act without a reliable picture of the world that governments, schools, newspapers, churches make such small headway against the more obvious failings of democracy" (230).

Lippmann's criticism of objectivity in news reporting also touched on a problem addressed by contemporary media scholars and public journalists alike: the extent to

which it discourages citizen participation by removing the personal dimension of the news. While it is true that it was precisely the abundance of telegraphic, objective news that the penny papers used to encourage their readers to become active citizens, this occurred during an era in which journalists and the reading public alike shared common aspirations and a common language, and before the onslaught of surplus information propagated by the recent information explosion. As will be illustrated below, it is one of the principal goals of public journalists to overcome this distancing to re-establish a personal relationship with their reading public. Media scholars from Lippmann to McLuhan to Jay Rosen all have stressed the need for the public to feel personally involved in the news. Without such a rapport, a public will to solve problems cannot be created: "News which does not offer this opportunity to introduce oneself into the struggle which it depicts cannot appeal to a wide audience. The audience must participate in the news, much as it participates in the drama, by personal identification" (Lippmann 224).

A notable attempt to liberate journalists from the constraints of objective reporting and engage the reader on a personal level occurred during the 1960s. Reporters such as George Plimpton, Norman Mailer and, most notably, Tom Wolfe, experimented with incorporating literary techniques such as ellipses, dialogue and exclamation points into traditional news reporting. This so-called New Journalism re-introduced the craft of storytelling to journalism, while retaining the need for accuracy. What resulted was a more dynamic, more personal and more engaging type of reporting. As Wolfe recounts:

What interested me was not simply the discovery that it was possible to write accurate non-fiction with techniques usually associated with novels and short stories . . . It was the discovery that it was possible . . . in journalism to use any literary device, from the traditional dialogisms of the essay to stream-of-consciousness . . . to excite the reader both intellectually and emotionally (Wolfe 15).

The final important element in Lippmann's critique of the press' failure to enrich democratic life is the sporadic nature of its reporting. There is little doubt that newspapers in Lippmann's era succeeded in raising public awareness about pressing political and social issues. However, it was their failure to seek out the origins of such problems and see them through to a resolution that allowed them to fester. Journalists' hunt for the next "big story" has gone largely unaltered since the days of Pulitzer. Such an attitude toward the news creates an adrenaline surge in the media that simply cannot be sustained (Fallows, News 132). Newspapers' examining problems in more detail in order to encourage their resolution would indeed constitute the deliberative process: "It

is only when the work by a steady light of their own that the press . . . reveals a situation intelligible enough for a popular decision" (Lippmann 229).

It is Tuchman's concept of the news net - the strategic placing of reporters in locations where news is most likely to happen - that contributes to the press' sporadic reporting. In Tuchman's view, only those events deemed important enough to be caught in the news net will be reported on. While this practice ensures that major stories receive ample coverage, it also severely limits the picture newspapers can offer of the outside world:

Instead of blanketing the world by their independent efforts, the news media and the news services leave the same sorts of hole in the news net, holes justified by a professionally shared notion of news . . . The netlike formation of the dispersion of reporters is of theoretic importance, for it is a key to the constitution of news. The spatial anchoring of the news net at centralized institutional sites is one element of the frame delineating strips of everyday reality as news (23).

Another problem with the news net that has continued into contemporary journalism is its hierarchical, elitist nature. Tuchman sees the net as working on three key assumptions: that readers are interested in events at specific localities; that readers are concerned with activities of specific organizations and that readers are interested in specific topics (25). That a successful journalist must know his readership is widely accepted by scholars and educators alike. However, the news net replaces the potential for a journalist to directly communicate with his readers with a ready-made set of assumptions about them. Clive Cocking has observed, however, that journalists' blind reliance on the news net prevents them from correctly interpreting readers perceived antipathy towards the news:

If the public is bored with anything, . . . it is the way the news media, particularly the newspapers, cover politics . . . What they want is journalism that reflects their real day-to-day concerns as citizens. For editors to suggest that this would of necessity be boring . . . shows how divorced from the real world these ashen-faced newsroom shut-ins have become and how they've lost sight of one of the oldest journalistic maxims - there are no dull stories, only dull writers (297).

Contemporary scholarly discussion of objectivity in news reporting continues to address the shortcomings first outlined by Lippmann. However, the discussion is now considerably more complex. The initial failings of objective news reports have in the intervening decades become entrenched in journalistic culture and perpetuated by

journalism educators. In addition, media scholars also must contend with a media environment that is considerably more complex than that of the days of Pulitzer and Hearst, and in Canada, Atkinson and Robertson. Scholars must address objectivity in a climate of corporate newspaper ownership, sophisticated niche marketing and electronic communication. Even at the height of their careers, the toughest competition Pulitzer and Hearst ever faced was with each other. Fighting for profits and circulation in a media culture including radio, television and the internet could not have been imagined.

In such a media culture, Jay Rosen looks upon objectivity as “a very bad, unworkable philosophy for [the] task of re-engaging citizens in politics and public life” (Beyond Objectivity 53). For Rosen, the tenets of objectivity deny any admission by the journalist that his work may influence public attitudes. Such a bind, he charges, denies a journalist the use of his own imagination (Who's Afraid?).

Rosen, one of the leaders of the modern public journalism movement, also views objectivity as a contract between journalists and their employers. In such an arrangement, journalists enjoy the right to report the news independently in exchange for their keeping their own opinions out of their work. It is an arrangement, Rosen observes, that arose early in the twentieth century as newspapers grew in economic complexity (Beyond Objectivity 48). However, he charges journalists’ employers with failing to live up to their responsibilities. Media owners’ emphasis on profits and cost-cutting have severely hampered journalists’ ability to carry out their work according to the contract of objectivity (Beyond Objectivity 48). It is here that journalists find themselves in a bind. Altering the contract to reflect the new economic reality of journalism would require that journalists address their own role in society, which contradicts the key elements of objectivity: “The process of correction requires a self-conscious mental intervention that is at odds with the concept of objectivity” (Fuller 15).

Furthering the ideas first articulated by Lippmann, Rosen also addresses the journalist’s views of objectivity as truth. Rosen agrees with Lippmann that truth is essential to ensuring the survival of democracy: “The pursuit of a disinterested truth is vitally important to any democratic political community” (Beyond Objectivity 51). However, Rosen discredits objectivity’s claim to truth by observing that even those institutions that were most committed to transparency have since turned away from such an approach: “Not even in the hard sciences do they really see the pursuit of truth this way. Certainly almost every important development in the human and social sciences over the last 20 or 30 years has worn away at the intellectual validity of the journalists’ theory of truth” (Beyond Objectivity 49).

Rosen also views objectivity as a routine which allows journalists a ready-made format for their writing. He claims that the contemporary journalistic emphasis on balance - requiring journalists to seek out views contrary to those being presented by politicians - is a flight from truth rather than an avenue into it (Beyond Objectivity 50). Such an approach, Rosen claims, allows for journalists to satisfy their obligation to free and open debate while avoiding any criticism of their work: "It produces a kind of criticism that is in fact easily and regularly discounted by journalists themselves, which is a way of living without criticism" (Beyond Objectivity 50). Such a "balance" bares no resemblance to the deliberation necessary for true democratic participation.

Detachment also creates in many journalists what Merritt calls a "trained incapacity" to understand their environment and a working climate in which transience is common (19). While transience also was common during the penny press era, reporters such as Jacob Riis, H.L. Mencken and Theodore Dreiser, and in Canada, Pierre Berton, displayed in their writing a profound attachment and genuine interest in the fate of their cities. But as Merritt observes, contemporary journalistic detachment allows journalists to report on their community without holding any personal stake in it: "Transience chills passions about place and time . . . problems in the current town need not be resolved, only reported on" (42). For ambitious journalists, covering local problems is simply risk-free reporting: "[R]eporting on something wrong involves no risk, requires no extension of faith. But reporting on something right involves the risk that it can always go wrong. Detachment allows [journalists] to avoid that risk" (19).

A continued reliance on objectivity and detachment is but one of the problems in journalism that has contributed to Americans' erosion of faith in their political system. Reporting in 1947, the American Commission on the Freedom of the Press charged that as it was practiced, "the press ha[d] developed a curious sort of objectivity - a spurious objectivity which results in half-truths, incompleteness and incomprehensibility" (Peterson, qtd. in Osler 92). Theodore Peterson's criticism of traditional objectivity was extensive. Among his criticisms were that objectivity discouraged journalists from providing background to the facts they presented, and that it encouraged them to accept information from their sources at face value (Osler 92).

The format of news reporting, particularly in the elite national press, inadvertently erects barriers that deny any possibility of deliberation, perpetuating instead a hierarchical relationship between journalists and their readers. Newspapers' continued hunt for the "big story" has perpetuated their unnatural, episodic coverage of important issues. Journalists' reliance on "official" sources imposes limits on the types of information they convey. Their emphasis on "balance" simply mirrors the ideological

polarization that has come to dominate public debate. As Fuller has observed, institutional traditions and the habits of modern journalists are no longer relevant to the nature of modern communication. Journalism will need to be more flexible, journalists more intuitive, if the newspaper is to survive:

[I]n an environment in which newspapers' principal competitors all move at the speed of light while the newspapers hum along at the speed of trucks in traffic, the traditional approach . . . has gone way out of date. Newspapers today need writers and editors who do not think in the old forms or the old categories but are able to discover the proper approach to each particular piece (128).

Journalists' emphasis on "balance" is one of the biggest barriers to the press re-establishing a deliberative process in its pages. Because the traditional definition of balance involves merely providing opposing viewpoints to the issue in question, the typical newspaper report forces the reader to choose a side instead of seeking a common ground between any number of views. Framing issues in such an "either/or" format is convenient for journalists and politicians alike, as it minimizes the time and effort necessary to construct a story. Because newspaper reporting has taken on a predictable, formulaic structure, press agents and spin doctors are always ready with a healthy supply of ready-made opinions on any given issue: "Much of what is in our news is there because journalists are looking where the light is. Coverage that is easy, cheap, and convenient for the newsbusiness drives out anything else" (Fallows, News 144). And because balance and objectivity deny the journalist any acknowledgment of his own role in the process, there is very little incentive to change the format to allow citizen input: "Working through is now such a hit-and-miss affair because the media have little concept of when they are helping and when they are hurting . . . Because the media make no provisions for a working through stage, they can hardly be expected to be careful not to mess it up" (Yankelovich 86).

Another reason for the absence of a deliberative stage in contemporary journalism also dates back to the 1947 Commission on the Freedom of the Press. Among its five tenets was the notion that journalists were responsible for the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of society (Osler 70). Taken at face value, such a task seems suited to the impact journalism can wield upon the public. However, the members of the Commission felt that rather than allow the citizenry to identify and define its own goals, it was better for journalists to decide on them, as well as their appropriate solutions. This elitist, cynical notion stems from pessimistic post-war thinking, which viewed individuals as lazy, selfish and endowed with less than spectacular intelligence.

What public journalists have realized, however, is that the reading public can indeed grasp complex issues and does want to be included in the debate about matters that concern them. In 1991, after conducting in-depth interviews with residents of Wichita, Kansas, Sheri Dill, of the Eagle, found that “[j]ournalists tend to compartmentalize these issues as discrete problems: education, the economy, crime, and so on. The people we talked to, however, saw the whole better than we did. They saw that crime might be a result of poor education, which in turn led to low economic status. They had the ‘big picture’” (qtd. in Miller 17).

In the current mainstream media, it is in the best interests of journalists and politicians alike to raise issues, but not to provide any pretense as to their resolution. Without issues to discuss, both would be out of work: “Politics as a whole . . . suffers when interest groups and legislators lock themselves into predictable positions, like guests on a talk show . . . [I]ssues themselves become less interesting than they might be, and much less likely to be resolved” (Fallows, News 117).

Journalists’ dependence on spokespersons and official sources can hinder the establishment of the deliberative process, and therefore contribute to the spread of the corporatist agenda. With journalists being called upon to explain an increasing number of issues, their reliance on those with specialized knowledge also has increased. Not only is this knowledge often clothed in technical jargon, those that supply it may be more interested in furthering their own agenda than contributing to a healthy public debate: “The news largely consists of information supplied by sources who may sincerely support democracy in the abstract, but who must in each specific encounter with the press subordinate that ideal to the protection of their own political interests” (Enteman 19).

Lippmann’s observations about the problems incurred by episodic framing are also a recurrent theme in contemporary journalistic criticism. Newspapers continue to act more as a “searchlight” than a constant beam. This prevents citizens from seeing issues in their true, complex nature, allowing politicians to avoid making steps to solve them. As Shanto Iyengar has observed, “[e]pisodic framing contributes to the trivialization of public discourse and the erosion of electoral accountability . . . The portrayal of recurring issues as unrelated events prevents the public from cumulating evidence toward any logical, ultimate consequence” (qtd. in Merritt 77).

In addition, issues that do make it into the public arena are discussed not as they are raised by the citizenry, but presented to and by the media in weekly installments: “The question sets a rhythm to politics that permits the media to play timekeeper, umpire, and finally, judge. It is a question that would not occur to an ordinary citizen”

(Fallows, News 176). This format is suits not the public, but elite newsrooms and the producers of television magazine shows (Fallows, News 94).

The final element in the continuing gap between journalists and their constituents is the widely-held view that journalism works on an exclusively one-way transmission model. Journalists' status as purveyors of information and access to people beyond the reach of ordinary citizens has imparted in the media a belief that journalists enjoy a higher social status than the citizen: "These elites may be sincerely devoted to the principles of democracy, but their outlook is . . . elitist. They think they know better than the public because they are well educated and articulate. They have superior knowledge [and therefore] superior moral virtue" (Yankelovich 53). This belief, a still-influential remnant of the social responsibility theorists of the Chicago School, was useful during America's post-war period. Now, however, the social elitism displayed by many journalists has seriously hampered citizens' ability to generate the political will necessary to resolve long-standing social and political problems:

Political communication could virtually be defined as the transmission of messages and pressures to and from individuals who are demonstrably unequal: the highly informed and the abysmally ignorant, the highly powerful and the pitifully powerless, the highly involved and the blissfully indifferent. Thus, the very structure of political communication involves a division between movers and shakers at the top and bystanders below, imposing limits on the participatory energy the system can generate (Gurevitch and Blumler 271).

### Institutional Inertia

These elements, adopted over the course of a century, have resulted in journalism taking on the characteristics of a social institution. Balance, objectivity and a reliance on official sources are now firmly entrenched in contemporary journalistic culture to the point where its codes of ethics and conduct are as intractable as those of government institutions. Mainstream journalism is now just as resistant to change as those institutions whose codes of conduct are written in law: "Reform of the political communication process is seriously hampered by professionally rooted inertia in the media and by the coziness of the relationship between journalists and politicians" (Gurevitch and Blumler 279). That American journalism also enjoys the freedoms enshrined in the First Amendment makes efforts to reform it even more difficult. Journalists are hostile to criticism of their own work, yet find no fault in pointing out the flaws of others. As Yankelovich observes, "journalism is full of crochets and idiosyncrasies. It has its own standards of quality that it fusses over to the point of

obsession. But it does not give a hoot about anyone else's standards of quality and is prepared to override them without a moment's hesitation" (182).

That journalism should be so resistant to change does not bode well for democratic societies. A craft that in the era of Pulitzer and Hearst held among its tenets to be the voice of the people has become insular and Byzantine to all except its practitioners. Though the American press is still outwardly dedicated to the preservation of democracy, its organization and product displays many of the characteristics of corporatism: the need for specialized, increasingly technical knowledge, an emphasis on formalized training and the adoption of a language all its own: "[Reporters] often act as if their real audience is made up of the other reporters or government officials they consider their peers" (Fallows, *News* 240). What rarely surfaces in contemporary journalism is evidence of productive, citizen-based deliberation. As Merritt observes, "[e]quivocation may be reflective of the real world, but it makes for bad copy . . . compromise, [which] reflects what reasonable people might think or want to do about an issue rarely surfaces in our reporting" (70).

The institutional inertia in contemporary mainstream journalism also can be traced to language. So long as the journalist continues to write stories framed in the rhetoric of false choices, he foregoes any personal involvement or stake in the issues he is reporting on. Should the journalist adopt a different perspective in his work, however, he risks not only his own career, but the political fortunes of both sides of the ideological divide and the economic stability of his employer:

When a cereal company starts adding raisins to the corn flakes, nobody's political interests are threatened, but if a news organization were to let reporters write in the first person, it could affect political power. The safest course for organizations faced with a web of conflicting pressures may be to stand still. Enduring self-imposed paralysis and sticking to familiar practices allows news firms to play contending factions against each other by invoking their continued adherence to "neutral and objective" journalism (Enteman 130).

#### **Advertisers - Finding Their Niche**

In addition to the inertia created by journalistic conventions, the economics of journalism have also played a significant role in the distancing of newspapers from their readers and the subsequent weakening of democratic will. Advertising, without which the penny press could not have existed, has shifted from mass marketing to specialized niche marketing. With their appeal to as broad a range of the population as possible, advertisements during the penny press era were instrumental in the evolution of Americans' democratic consciousness. Modern advertising techniques, however, have

largely undone much of this. Joseph Turow illustrates how many advertisers now court only those customers they deem most lucrative, while actively discouraging others: “The proposition was that to maximize their profits, marketers should not only reward their very best customers, they should push away, even alienate, those who were less valuable” (146). As early as 1980, Turow contends, Fragmentation, Fractionalization, Regionalization and Decentralization were advertisers’ new buzzwords. So prevalent is this approach now that trade journals refer to mass-marketing techniques as “naïve sentimentalism.” As Penny Hawkey, of the advertising firm McCann Erickson, so aptly stated, “The audience - the mass mind as we know it - is breaking up” (qtd. in Turow 90).

As a result, department stores such as Macy’s and Wannamakers in Philadelphia, once the biggest advertisers of the penny press era, have been seriously weakened by specialty stores and mass-discount chains such as Wal-Mart. By targeting increasingly specialized niche markets, much modern advertising is indicative of the compartmentalized thinking seen in public debate. In Breaking the News, James Fallows describes the extent to which advertising has changed:

The big community-wide paper, the big department store, and the big, concentrated downtown shopping district are artifacts of a lost era of marketing to a broad American middle class. Over the last three decades, retailing and publishing alike have steadily narrowed and refined their focus, to reach more carefully selected subgroups or a more segmented American population (68).

Turow has observed advertisers’ new tactics aimed at “splicing and dicing” the American people into sophisticated special interest groups with distressing accuracy. He charges advertisers not only with capitalizing on the negative currents in American society, but with actively promoting them for their own profitability. Beginning in the 1980s, Turow observes that

[t]he basic proposition was that society was increasingly fractured, frenetic, suspicious and individually self-indulgent, and that emerging media were reflecting that. Ad people believed that their role was not to challenge this idea or to work against it. Rather, it was to exploit it for their own purposes by making sure they could signal target audiences and customize commercial messages for them in as many different media as possible (158).

The roots of these trends can be found in the American economy. Beginning in the late 1970s, Turow illustrates, the American middle class began to decline as a profitable, homogenous market. Between 1969 and 1983, the proportion of American families with middle class incomes dropped from 62.4% to 55.9% (Turow 41). During

this period, the U.S. saw its middle class become increasingly polarized between lower income families and affluent dual-income couples: "U.S. society was becoming more polarized than ever before; a substantial number of people was moving down and a substantial number was moving up. The majority class was getting smaller by the year" (Turow 41). At the same time, Turow claims, a number of special interest groups began to exert their influence on American society: "America seemed split asunder into innumerable special interests - gray power, gay power, red power, black power. Sunbelt and frostbelt, environmentalists and industrialists . . . all more aware of their claims on society" (Hapoineu, qtd. in Turow 40). The result, Turow claims, was an erosion of Americans' emphasis on mutual cooperation and togetherness so suited to mass-marketing techniques.

Also not to be overlooked is the influx of Hispanic immigrants to the U.S., particularly in California, Texas and Florida. After the 1990 census, statisticians predicted that Hispanics, or Latinos, soon would overtake blacks as the second largest racial group in America (Turow 84). Complicating matters were the divisions within the Spanish-speaking community. Animosities between Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans proved daunting for advertising executives; nevertheless, Hispanic Americans were too large a market for advertisers to ignore: "In an era when niches were becoming popular, such people represented a real opportunity for firms to expand their market shares" (Turow 84).

In addition to Americans' increasing ethnic divisions, Turow illustrates the country's growing geographic alienation. For advertisers, the spread of satellite communications, faxes and electronic mail have rendered geography largely irrelevant to their profitability: "Huge media firms interested in target marketing increasingly find it far more useful to distribute materials for far-flung customers with similar tastes than to produce [products] for audiences of relatively narrow geographical areas who have little in common" (Turow 198). The importance of the city as an economic engine is further weakened by Americans' growing interest in gated communities, which offer its residents peace and security away from the city. In 1994, an estimated four million people lived in such communities. In California, gated communities account for nearly two-thirds of all new housing construction (Turow 194).

In many respects, advertisers' transition from mass-marketing to sophisticated niche marketing mirrors the compartmentalization and polarization that has come to characterize American political culture. Rather than emphasize deliberation and community building across gender, race and income, modern advertising techniques very cynically capitalize on the perception that Americans are a self-indulgent,

suspicious and frenetic lot. As Turow observes, these perceptions arose concurrent to the polarization of the nation's political debate: "[Pollsters] saw it rooted in long-term trends nurtured by the left that celebrated difference. They saw it upheld by the right-leaning political and economic tendencies evident in the election of Ronald Reagan" (49).

A particularly distressing element in modern niche marketing is the belief that economic gain is no longer a social responsibility, but an individual one. Unlike the penny press era, in which advertisers created brand-names to appeal to a heterogeneous mass, marketers now have completely reversed the dynamic. Advertisers are being encouraged to view each individual person as a brand, tailoring their products for an individual personality. As direct marketer Lester Wunderman rather calmly explains, "[i]t is each consumer who is becoming a brand. I am a brand - and each of you are brands. Brands defined by the needs and priorities which are unique to us. There are, in fact, 260 million brands in the United States" (qtd. in Turow 178). Such an approach gives credence to McLuhan's prediction that "instead of peddling mass-produced commodities, advertising is going to become a personal service to each individual" (qtd. in Turow 173).

Such niche markets are the creation of specialized, strategic media research. Turow has described advertisers' use of database research as a "market research arms race." While it is true that early advertising agencies also engaged in researching newspaper readers' demographics, the practice has been elevated to new levels of sophistication. In the 1970s, inexpensive computer technology allowed advertisers unprecedented access to databases such as credit card records, long-distance telephone bills and area codes. One such application, entitled PRIZM (Potential Rating Index for Zip Markets), is so accurate that it can draw upon thousands of census and consumer statistics to produce accurate portraits of any neighbourhood, "right down to the cereal in the cupboard and the antacid in the medicine cabinet" (Turow 45). By the mid 1980s, the 35 largest companies in the U.S. had erected central telephone centres with 2,500 interviewing stations, were constantly mailing out 640,000 questionnaires and had created permanent test data collection sites in 50 cities (Turow 44). Turow also illustrates how, using advanced printing technology, ads in magazines still considered mass-market publications such as Time, People, Sports Illustrated, Entertainment Weekly and Life can be tailored to individual subscribers' own profiles (152).

Advertising, while not the sole cause of social fragmentation, has indeed contributed to it: "Whether ad people like it or not, they are centrally responsible for images of social division" (Turow 194). While it is necessary for manufacturers - and

newspapers - to ensure a continued profit, the techniques they use to target their customers contribute greatly to the gap between producer and consumer:

Audiences are "known" to the media primarily as statistical aggregates produced by ratings services and market researches, and the media's orientation to their audiences is dominated by numbers . . . [A]n audience known mainly through numbers is open to oversimplification, stereotyping, and even contempt . . . Authoritative communicators tend to dismiss the audience as if it were capable only of absorbing what the system supplies (Gurevitch and Blumler 284).

### The Problems with Corporate Ownership

Corporate ownership of media also has significantly contributed to the gap between newspapers and their readers. While the profit motive lay at the heart of the origins of the penny press, the production of the newspaper was an end in itself. The end of the twentieth century, however, finds many American newspapers as simply one entity in the holdings of large corporations. An unfortunate result is that newspapers are often forced to adopt the same marketing techniques used by enterprises less essential to the common good. In 1995, the Times/Mirror company, owner of the Los Angeles Times, appointed Mark H. Willes as its chief executive officer. A former General Mills executive, Willes had no previous newspaper experience. However, he proceeded to "refresh" the newspaper much as he had General Mills' cake mixes and cereals. In doing so, Willes subjected the newspaper to the same economic imperatives as food products: "If you're not the low-cost producer, you're not going to have the kinds of [profit] margins you need to work with" (qtd. in Fallows, News 71).

Another problem posed by corporate ownership of newspapers is the secrecy of its operations. This runs in direct opposition to newspapers' need to be accessible to their readers. As Gurevitch and Blumler illustrate, a newspaper owed by a large corporation is less likely to present news that could challenge its profitability:

Their inner workings are rarely opened to voluntary outside scrutiny. And they seem committed to the presentation, not of a broad spectrum of ideas but of mainstream opinion currents, whose flows are bounded politically by the two-party system, economically by the imperatives of private enterprise capitalism, and culturally by the values of a consumer society (Gurevitch and Blumler 269).

Such a climate also can have a serious impact on journalists own morale. As employees of large corporations, they become just as vulnerable to layoffs and corporate downsizing as workers in other industries. Journalism has never been known

as a stable occupation, but the looming fear of dismissal brought on by unseen market forces can affect negatively journalists' dedication to the common good:

The long-term financial pressures on the news business have a subtle effect on reporters, by diminishing their sense that they are reaching a broad audience that cares about their work . . . Reporters have come to think of themselves as employees trapped in a "sunset industry" . . . jealously protect[ing] their own financial interests rather than having the luxury of worrying about their "responsibility" to the public (Fallows, *News* 70).

Such an encircled mentality can have a negative impact on journalism as a whole. As Saul explains, a rash of downsizing in any industry does not bode well for the company's long-term profitability or the work environment of those who remain: "When you cut seriously, the first thing to go is creativity and risk-taking. The company slips into an encircled mentality. Employee morale plummets and so does productivity . . . The general term for this is corporate anorexia" (103).

#### **File Not Found - The Wired Journalist**

The final element contributing to newspapers' distancing themselves from their readers is technology. While face-to-face contact with their sources was essential for journalists of the penny press era, advances in technology have allowed contemporary journalists to avoid personal contact in favour of telephones, faxes and the internet: "[T]he belief [is] that the only way to report nowadays is to stay in the office and work the telephones" (Delaney 27). As Dicken-Garcia illustrates, journalists' increasing dependence on technology has had a profound impact not only on their craft, but on society as a whole: "Technological change represents cultural change and the broadest level; and a lesser level, it signified alterations in social institutions over time. In journalism, this has meant changes in ways of conducting tasks, which in turn have led to changes in standards" (237).

It is important to observe that journalists' dependence on technology increased dramatically during the 1960s, at the same time that political debate in the U.S. was reverting back to its ideological origins. Thus, newspapers inadvertently contributed to the polarization of American political debate: "[R]eporters narrowed their sources to the leaders and officials and highly paid flacks who made themselves conveniently available . . . This meant further isolation of reporters from human contact, from their live sources . . . Reporters could get on page one without ever interviewing a single source face to face" (Delaney 28). Such habits have become so entrenched in

journalistic culture in the intervening decades that reporters during the 1992 and 1994 elections were unaware of the country's most pressing political issue: voters' increasing anger and disillusionment toward their own government (Delaney 27).

Contemporary newspaper reporting also suffers from its dependence on public opinion polls. Much like the specialized research conducted by advertisers and politicians, public opinion polls can often produce a distorted, simplistic and potentially damaging picture of the public's attitudes. As Haynes Johnson points out, polls "do not replace the greater insights that can be gleaned from the laborious, time-consuming process of face-to-face interviewing. That is the journalist's principal province, and responsibility. No poll . . . can plumb the complexities and contradictions of individuals" (26).

### **Back to Basics - Public Journalism in Theory and Practice**

It is these problems that public journalism attempts to remedy. Public journalism is not a fixed style of news reporting, nor is it a formula for a new type of political coverage. It is simply a philosophy that attempts to liberate journalism from the outdated and artificial constraints it has imposed upon itself. Not only do public journalists acknowledge the link between journalism and public life, they celebrate it: "Rather than assuming that a vibrant civic culture exists - or simply lamenting its absence - the public journalist takes responsibility for helping support and even create it" (Rosen and Merritt 7).

It was following the 1988 presidential campaign that Davis Merritt, editor of the Wichita Eagle, began to consider the implications of traditional political reporting techniques on his readers. As Dionne recounts, the campaign was indicative of all that had gone wrong with American politics:

[The campaign] left Americans with ashes in their mouths over the state of their political process. It had been a brutish, backward-looking, divisive campaign. Most of the issues Americans really cared about had gone largely undiscussed. The future had gone undebated. Our politics was still trapped in the past, and the voters hated what they saw (317).

The 1988 presidential campaign, however, was not the first instance in which cynicism was widely considered the dominant characteristic among politicians and journalists alike. Nor is this dynamic limited to the U.S. Two books, Following the Leaders and The Boys on the Bus illustrate with alarming detail the insular,

manipulative and cynical environment of an election campaign. More than daily political coverage, campaign journalism offers a concise example of many of the negative aspects of contemporary political journalism.

In Following the Leaders, Clive Cocking offers an inside account of the Canadian federal election campaign of 1979. It was a contest between incumbent Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Conservative leader Joe Clark and New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent. In Cocking's analysis, the campaign strategies of front runners, Trudeau and Clark, combined with the failure of the national press to provide thorough coverage resulted in a great disservice to the Canadian electorate and the democratic process. It was an era in which energy policy, price controls and national unity - serious national issues all - required serious attention. Yet, Cocking asserts, newspaper journalists were reduced to covering - "literally, figuratively and mindlessly" - what he called a mobile television spectacular: "Not only did the media show little inclination to examine politicians' responses to important regional problems affecting peoples' lives . . . but they largely also failed to go much beyond the platform rhetoric to do some serious analysis of what the leaders were saying . . ." (295).

The 1979 campaign was remarkable not for the daring policies offered by the candidates, but for the cynicism and arrogance of the journalists who were observing it: "Cynicism pervaded the entire campaign like the cloying aroma of cheap perfume . . . Lack of respect for politicians of course comes naturally to journalists . . . , but in this election . . . reporters seemed to take a particularly dark, contemptuous view of the whole process" (Cocking 280). The national press was still resentful of Trudeau's 1974 campaign of "pseudo events" and weary of his governing by Gallup poll. And they were no more impressed by his "au naturel" campaign strategy, intended to stress his leadership qualities by disallowing any dialogue with the electorate. Nor were they impressed with the Clark campaign, which many journalists referred to as "eight weeks in a cocoon" (Cocking 281).

The arrogance of the national press was no more evident than in its coverage of the Broadbent campaign. Cocking contends that by dismissing the NDP's chances of victory from the outset, journalists denied voters fair coverage of what was seen by some as the most comprehensive economic platform being offered (284). In this case, Broadbent's fate was in large part sealed by Canada's elite national press, not by its electorate. The media had denied the electorate an accurate portrayal of the range of choices available.

An important element in the press' uneven coverage of the leaders stems from trends within newspapers' own organization. As Cocking observed, campaigns are often viewed as tests in which a reporter's fate can be determined: "National elections are the ultimate tests of upwardly (or downwardly) mobile journalists. To perform well is to be marked for bigger and better things as an editor, bureau chief or national columnist; to fail is to begin a swift slide into the purgatory of an obscure deskman's job" (273). Cocking extends this observation to the daily workings of a newsroom, viewing newspaper labour relations as similar to the medieval lord-serf basis. It is Cocking's assertion that although some journalists enjoy such a work environment, its long-term effects on the industry are largely negative: "[Journalists] seemed to both love and fear the attention in a kind of narcissistic paranoia . . . Whatever the diagnosis, it doesn't inspire confidence to discover that the ranks of Canadian journalism are so full of fear and trembling. But that's the reality. The average newsroom seems to breed insecurity" (273).

Living with such pressure to perform creates what Cocking calls a journalistic neurosis, comprised in large part of a constant fear of criticism: "It's an affliction that affects not individual reporters and editors but the whole system of journalism. [It] stems from a guilty awareness that journalists are not as responsible, accurate, knowledgeable, probing and tough as the image they like to project" (274). Forced into the limiting conventions of contemporary political journalism, reporters are deprived of their ability to express doubt, a key element of the democratic process.

Existing concurrently to the cynicism and claustrophobia that is the modern political campaign, however, has been some journalists' desire to do a better job. Journalists widely admit that economic competition and carefully-orchestrated campaigns usually results in "pack journalism," in which television, radio and newspaper reporters all blindly cover the same story. As Crouse has observed, the practice is not looked upon favourably even by those in the "pack" itself: "Many reporters and journalism professors blame it for everything that is shallow, obvious, meretricious, misleading or dull in American campaign coverage" (8).

It is also important to note that many journalists, both Canadian and American, have recognized and agree with Lippmann's criticisms that the press (albeit sometimes inadvertently) often fails to provide its readers with an accurate rendition of reality. While covering the 1979 campaign, London Free Press reporter George Hutchison observed:

We have a tendency to cover what the politicians say, not what they do . . . The election media is not doing its job . . . It's not covering news or issues, it's covering politics and the political scene as the politicians see it . . . Is it very important what Pierre Trudeau says, or is it what is happening to prairie wheat farmers in economic terms? Surely we have lost our sense of reality (qtd. in Cocking 294).

Prominent American political journalists also have made such observations. For nearly 30 years, David Broder has stressed the need for campaign reporters to address the views of the electorate, not those of the candidates: "A presidential campaign is not the property of the two candidates. It ought to belong, in some real sense, to the public. It's the only change [sic] every four years when they ought to be able to get their questions answered and get the kind of commitment that they're interested in" (qtd. in Crouse 97). So firm is Broder in his dedication to the smooth functioning of American democracy that he left the New York Times for the Washington Post because of the Times' killing or altering many of his analytical pieces in favour of covering more "popular" topics (Crouse 90). During the 1968 presidential campaign, Broder was one of the few prominent national reporters to talk directly to the voters.

Haynes Johnson is another prominent American journalist who has recognized the importance of talking with the electorate. His so-called Mood of the Country series for the Washington Post was instrumental in constructing a national dialogue about the country's concerns and its future. These in-depth, deeply-researched articles appearing in 1970, 1971 and 1972 offered evidence of the trends in American political life that Dionne has brought to light: the fractionalisation of the Republican and Democratic parties, voters' declining party loyalty and a deep public distrust of politicians (Crouse 124). But as such changes could not be measured by traditional polling methods, they went unnoticed by the majority of the country's newspapers (Crouse 125). It was on these articles that Johnson and Broder based their coverage of the 1972 presidential campaign. In both method and motivation, Broder and Johnson's reporting was, in essence, public journalism. What is ironic, therefore, is that the work of two of the country's most progressive, committed and respected political journalists appeared in the Post, whose current editor has denounced public journalism as professional heresy.

It was during a gubernatorial race in 1990 that Davis Merritt, editor of the Wichita Eagle, decided to take a different approach to covering an election campaign. The Eagle undertook a program entitled "Your Vote Counts," which identified 12 statewide issues. During the final two weeks of the campaign, the newspaper explored

these issues in detail and invited readers to participate in the discussion. The Eagle also encouraged readers to register and vote. Following the campaign, research indicated that readers were enthusiastic about the effort, reading more political news and providing much positive feedback (Miller 11). Voter registration in Charlotte also increased. During municipal elections in 1991, the Eagle used many of the same techniques, such as issues polling and co-operating with other media. Though voter turnout dropped, the Eagle's readership increased, as had readers' understanding of the issues.

In the summer of 1992, the Eagle began its "People Project," which reviewed four major community issues over a period of 10 weeks. An important innovation in this project was the Eagle's shift from coverage from official sources and "experts" to ordinary citizens. The newspaper also gave the project significant front-page play. Among the principles driving this new coverage were enlisting readers to identify community problems, illustrating the essentials for useful public dialogue and adopting a solutions-oriented tone. As Edward Miller observed, "It's no longer sufficient for a newspaper to declare something is a problem and that someone else should fix it" (13).

One of the best-documented public journalism projects is the Charlotte Observer's "Charlotte Project," which took place during the presidential election campaign of 1992. A joint effort between the Observer, WSOC-TV and the Poynter Institute for Media studies, the project was a comprehensive, innovative attempt to reconnect voters with their newspaper and with the democratic process:

Driving the project was the conviction that American democracy depended upon an informed and active electorate, and that the primary role of the press was to facilitate the public discourse necessary to make the system work. In . . . simple words, the press had to make the campaign serve the interests of the voters instead of the candidates or the press (Miller 10).

Redirecting campaign coverage to reflect the interests of the voters first required changes to the Observer's newsroom. Departments were rearranged to incorporate not only political reporters, but those from the education, health, media and even religion desks. The motivation behind such a move was that traditional newsroom "fiefdoms" were often a barrier to explaining the interconnectedness of campaign issues (Miller 29). In addition, reporters would have to change any previously-held notions regarding their readership: "Most important, attitudes about readers would have to change. They were to become partners, not just customers" (Miller 18). To better convey both the newspaper's objectives, the Observer also redesigned its layout to feature detailed grids that facilitated comparisons between candidates' and citizens' views (Miller 18).

To illustrate the complex nature of campaign issues, the Observer printed a series of short vignettes entitled "Choices." The first of this series involved a family's dilemma when their child needed hospitalization: "To politicians, the issue was family leave, but to the family involved, and to the hundreds of readers who had similar experiences, the problem was how to handle family emergencies and still hold onto your job" (Miller 33). Another element in the Observer's innovative coverage was its "Children's' Agenda," which featured stories about health care, jobs and the cost of higher education. To accompany these stories, the newspaper provided information on three related themes: improving public education, higher pay for teachers and the affordability of college. To round out the coverage, the newspaper included a summary of candidates' positions on education (Miller 35).

Central to the Observer's "reader-driven" coverage was its adoption of a "Citizens' Agenda." The Observer and WSOC-TV surveyed 1,003 people and spent \$18,000 on polls to let the readers determine the issues they wanted their candidates to address. The Observer also recruited a panel of citizens to advise the newspaper about these issues for the duration of the campaign. Poll results revealed that readers were particularly concerned about the economy, education, family, crime, health care and environmental issues (Miller 21). Subsequently, the Observer dedicated one week to in-depth coverage of each issue: "Readers were the reason 'why' the story was told; they were also 'how' it was told. They were becoming the context for the year's most important story, not just its consumers" (Miller 28).

The Citizens' Agenda provided Observer readers with three important elements not found in traditional campaign coverage. First, it helped readers better understand the complexity and the dynamic of the campaign by creating a reciprocal dynamic between readers and newspaper: "Reader-identified interests triggered responsive coverage in the Observer, followed by reader comment on that coverage, which then generated more reporting by the newspaper and additional reader input" (35). Second, it exposed candidates' use of "dirty tricks." To denounce one candidate's use of racial issues, Observer reporter Henry Eichel used not the newspaper's editorial column, but its news pages: "It was not unusual for the Observer to attack racism in its editorials, but it was unusual to have an 'attitude' in a news story. In this case, however, that 'attitude' was the public's" (Miller 37). Third, the Observer made a conscious effort to reduce the amount of "horse race" polling, which reduces campaigns into a simple race between candidates at the expense of explaining issues. In addition, readers were invited to submit questions that would be used by Observer reporters during the campaign: "It's your agenda, the newspaper was saying to its readers, and here's what we're

doing to pursue it" (Miller 49). Finally, the Observer printed information on how and where to register to vote.

The "Charlotte Project" did indeed offer readers a different style of campaign coverage. A content analysis of the Observer showed that the newspaper succeeded in its transition from covering campaign strategies to covering issues. Coverage of campaign strategy decreased from 21% in 1988 to 11% in 1992. In addition, the Observer's use of "horse race" polling fell from 6.1% to 1.4% (Miller 65).

To evaluate the readership response, the newspaper sought to answer two questions: were Observer readers better served; second, did this new approach change their perceptions of political campaigns? The results were mixed. Surveys showed that readers' understanding of local and state issues decreased. Some readers said other papers were more informative. Also, some readers sensed a bias in the Observer's coverage. However, a large proportion of Observer readers said they felt more positive about the newspaper's role in making them part of the political process. Many readers said the paper had helped them make a decision on whom to vote for. Also, readers said they felt more connection between the coverage of candidates and the issues that affected them personally (Miller 68). Finally, voter registration in metro Charlotte increased dramatically, with 59,000 more people registering than in 1988. This increase was directly attributed to the Observer's efforts (Miller 51).

In terms of the newspaper's own operations, the "Charlotte Project" saw itself shift from being "sales-driven" to "market-driven." While it remained essential to sell newspapers, this new approach "implies a new, more intimate relationship, one that begins with listening to readers" (Miller 75). The project also resulted in an increased sense of empowerment among Observer reporters themselves. Listening to readers in place of spin doctors and campaign managers worked to restore an oral culture between citizen and journalist:

Reader involvement empowered reporters dealing with candidates. Months of listening to readers and using their questions and opinions as part of the news report had "licensed" reporters as readers' agents . . . The balance of forces had shifted, and candidates were quick to pick up the change. As [project director] Rick Thames said, "We weren't just a newspaper anymore; we were the electorate" (Miller 77).

The changes brought about by the "Charlotte Project" also renewed a sense of excitement and public service at the newspaper that have not faded in the intervening years. As Editor Rich Ossel observed, "For us, it meant a reinvigoration of the creativity of the paper. We do things now in an atmosphere of enterprise and innovation that probably wasn't there before" (qtd. in Miller 83). Rick Thames, project director

and now city editor at the Observer, voiced similar observations: "Most reporters and editors are invigorated by the two-way discussion. And cross-departmental cooperation is easier as a result of the project, which showed we could involve readers with great results" (qtd. in Miller 83).

In essence, public journalism is an attempt to return newspapers to their core values and practices: establishing a meaningful, personal relationship with their readers, listening to the concerns of citizens, re-establishing a sense of community among their readership and contributing to their readers' democratic consciousness. It is a goal first articulated by Tocqueville that has been seriously undermined in recent decades: "In order that a society should exist . . . it is required that all the minds of the citizens should be rallied and held together by certain predominant ideas; and this cannot be the case, unless each of them sometimes draws his opinion from one common source, and consents to accept certain matters of belief at the hands of the community" (9).

It is not necessary, however, to look to Tocqueville to find sufficient justification for the goals of public journalism. David Broder of the Washington Post in January 1990 exhorted his colleagues to pay closer attention to the effects of their work on the reading public: "We have to help reconnect politics and government - what happens in the campaign and what happens afterward in public policy - if we are to have accountability and genuine democracy in this country" (qtd. in Rosen, Community Connectedness 5).

One area in which public journalism differs greatly with traditional objectivity and balance is its emphasis on deliberation. Public journalists have recognized the political paralysis brought about by the polarization of public debate, and realize that the key to reconnecting their readers to the political process is to provide a forum where a consensus can be established: "The most basic form of politics is conversation about these choices and what is really in the public's interest" (Mathews 40). Public journalists recognize that it is only after citizens have discussed and agreed upon the choices they face that they can cast their vote. Voting is the not the first step in the democratic process; it is the last.

Unlike the traditional concept of journalistic balance, public journalism's emphasis on deliberation allows citizens to see problems in their entirety and their complexity. It is a failing of contemporary mainstream journalism that issues are dissected to the point at which their causes and repercussions appear unrelated. By encouraging citizen deliberation, however, public journalism allows citizens to understand the interconnectedness of a given problem: "People do not become clear

about . . . issues by breaking them down into their simplest elements. People want a public dialogue that helps them see connections among issues and between specific problems and those things they have learned to value" (Mathews 42).

Public journalists' emphasis on deliberation also succeeds in breaking down the polarization that has come to characterize contemporary political reporting. Encouraging deliberation, either in public forums or through the pages of a newspaper, prevents issues from falling into Dionne's rhetoric of false choices. By avoiding the ideological divide, citizens can frame problems in a manner which makes possible their resolution: "The way a problem is framed almost predetermines the kind of solution we will find and whether there will be any shared sense of purpose . . . Deliberation . . . appeals to people because it opens up the framing of issues and because it builds a common purpose and political will" (Mathews 183).

Deliberation also is instrumental in returning to citizens the power of language. As has been illustrated, framing issues in terms of ideology prevents their resolution by removing the possibility of consensus. Conversely, citizens' discussing issues with their own language creates the political will necessary for consensus and democratic action: "Politically, when citizens rename problems and frame issues in their own terms, they increase their power. And when they come up with opinions that go beyond the conventional ones, they are better able to counter the convergence of external forces that would otherwise drive policy decisions" (Mathews 189). During the "Charlotte Project," the Observer illustrated the important difference between an "issue" and a "problem": "Issues is a word used by politicians and journalists. People don't have issues; they have problems. And the diversity of human problems defies easy categorization" (Miller 31).

Also key to the public journalism philosophy is its emphasis on community: "The drive to belong, to be part of a larger community, is one of the oldest and deepest of human drives" (Yankelovich, qtd. in Mathews 129). Practitioners of public journalism believe that it is through peoples' sense of community that they can regain their legitimacy as citizens. Through re-establishing community links, citizens are able to create and direct the political will necessary to solve problems through the democratic process:

People in these groups tend to participate as individual citizens, not as representatives of parties or organizations. The legitimacy of these associations depends on the breadth of their membership, their diversity . . . Their sense of politics also leads them to create alliances comprised of all those interested in contributing to the well-being of the community (Mathews 164).

Media scholars and some media executives have recognized the need for newspapers to contribute to re-creating citizens' sense of community. Jay Rosen holds within the public journalism philosophy a term he describes as community connectedness. It is a concept that addresses Americans' increasing social fragmentation and the crusading democratic spirit of the penny press:

Community connectedness points with alarm to our growing sense of dislocation from the communities where we live, and from the wider political community we inhabit as citizens of the world's oldest democracy. It also takes what had earlier been a premise of the daily newspaper - the existence of a public attuned to public affairs - and makes that the newspaper's project" (Community Connectedness 5).

James K. Batten, chair of Knight-Ridder, is one such media executive who has realized the importance of community to newspaper readers. A 1992 Knight-Ridder survey revealed that people who say they feel a real sense of connection to the places they live in are almost twice as likely to be regular newspaper reader as those who say they lack community ties (Rosen, Community Connectedness 13). It is to Batten's credit that Knight-Ridder is one media corporation that has fully endorsed public journalism projects by its newspapers across the country.

Fortunately for public journalists, Americans' cynicism toward politics has not completely discouraged them from exercising their democratic rights. Rather, many Americans have turned their attentions and energies toward more immediate, local concerns. Merritt cites Americans' civic renewal movement of the past few years as an important source of inspiration for successful public journalism. David Mathews has dubbed this phenomenon "citizen politics." In practice, it involves all the elements of the democratic process, yet is not labeled as such by those involved: "Conventional politics stresses the need for leaders who will create 'solutions.' Citizen politics stresses the importance of citizens claiming their own responsibility and becoming solutions themselves" (126). Much of the difficulty in engaging citizens in organized politics is rooted in the language used to describe it, and its emphasis on winning over the possibility of change. A study by the Harwood group found that Americans do indeed want to participate in their society, so long as they can define its terms and goals (Mathews 36). For those practicing "citizen politics," the key is not the certainty of its outcomes so much as the possibility it presents for change: "Americans believe that genuine political reform has to begin not with legislation but with people" (Mathews 38).

Americans' predilection for democratic participation is nothing new. As was illustrated in chapter one, Tocqueville over a century ago recognized their fondness for action, and the newspaper's important role in facilitating such action. It is this role of facilitator that public journalists seek to restore to American newspapers. Indeed, Tocqueville now has become required reading for journalists wishing to participate in newspapers' democratic renewal (Fallows, *News* 259).

This same desire for change also can be found in many working journalists. It is a desire for change, not a dedication to objective reporting, that many people cite as their motivation for undertaking a career in journalism. As Merritt has observed, "Nobody will admit that they're in journalism because they're . . . detached people." Once employed within the media, however, journalists find they must downplay their own natural affinities and passions in favour of the constraining codes of objectivity and balance: "It is one of the best kept secrets of journalism that reporters do believe in things - even in the things they criticize. They should be willing to acknowledge this truth with pride, and then do their duty as journalists by telling the truth" (Fuller 91).

Jan Schaffer, of the Pew Centre for Public Journalism, has found that journalists derive a great deal of professional satisfaction by becoming more involved in the communities they report on: "There's no question that journalists seem to derive a great deal of professional satisfaction doing public journalism." Schaffer also has observed that journalists' increased activity in their communities leads them to story ideas that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. Thus, public journalists often discover important stories occurring outside Tuchman's concept of the news net: "They're finding that when they do participate, they get a lot of good story ideas." Liberated from the influence of "official" sources and the confines of the newsroom, public journalists are re-discovering the human interaction with their readers that was once at the core of the craft. As Fuller has observed, increased community involvement allows journalists to act on their natural affinities for activism: "Personal involvement by newspaper people in civic and charitable activities can help solidify the bond . . . This is not an onerous duty, since people are attracted to work in newspapers in the first place because they find value in the large and direct civic role newspapers play" (97). These journalists' re-discovery of journalism's human dimension is essential to restoring the oral culture between reporters and the public during the penny press era.

Newspapers engaged in public journalism have drawn sharp criticism for their occasional sponsoring of town meetings. These meetings, undertaken in the interest of "starting where citizens start," are intended to give citizens and journalists alike a better

understanding of the needs and concerns of the community. The town hall tradition is not new to American public life. As Mathews has noted, Americans were meeting as early as 1633: “Early officials regarded the town gatherings as so important that they tried to suppress them. Despite their efforts . . . town meetings and their tradition of public discussion survived . . . In Boston, the town meeting was the only legal forum people had for expressing their views” (103). It is this tradition of public deliberation in America that has been wilfully ignored by politicians in recent decades. In ignoring this tradition, however, public officials are discounting the oral character of their own constitution: “The strength of the town meetings became the strength of the U.S. Constitution. The town meetings influenced a national constitution that was unique among democratic constitutions in that it was created by talk” (Mathews 105).

Nor is the town hall tradition alien to the operation of American newspapers. Pulitzer and other editors of the penny press era were well-known for their sponsoring of citizen forums in the interest of determining community concerns. Granted, these forums also figured into the newspapers’ need for self-promotion, but such an admission does not discount their importance in forging readers’ democratic consciousness. Roy Peter Clark, of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, views such forums not as marketing ploys, but essential components in a journalist’s reporting, as they offer the journalist the best way to view how citizens have approached a particular problem. Jan Schaffer also points out that such public forums “magnify the learning of the journalist” and may dissuade him from approaching a story in the traditional manner. Instead of seeking out opinions to fit his preconceived idea of the story’s final shape, a journalist may withhold his framing until he sees the manner in which citizens have approached a particular issue. Rather than stressing the need to write, Merritt says those engaging in public journalism need first to listen to citizens: “The person trying to practice public journalism needs to do a lot more . . . listening to people than we are inclined to do.”

Like contemporary mainstream media, newspapers engaged in public journalism also use public opinion polls and focus groups. However, such research methods differ from those of advertisers and other media organizations in that they are not interested in finding citizens’ reactions to contentious issues, nor are they created in the sole interest of increasing circulation by divining what readers want from their newspaper. For the public journalist, opinion polls and focus groups work in concert with town halls as mechanisms which allow citizens to identify and debate the difficult choices faced by their community.

Citizen forums also constitute an important part of a public journalists' education. In addition to traditional competencies such as writing skills and good news judgment, Clark stresses the need for public journalists to understand their community at the grassroots level. For Clark, reporting what occurs at city hall is not the way to understand how a community functions. With regard to formal training, Merritt's views closely resemble the journalist's need for a well-rounded education first advocated by Charles Dana. Merritt sees democratic theory, history and a good grasp of the Dewey/Lippmann debate as components of a public journalist's training. At the heart of a public journalist's education is his ability to understand the possible implications of his story, something often overlooked in contemporary journalism education. As Merritt observes: "You can teach someone how to stenographically report on a meeting without ever giving any thought to the implication of what they're doing."

Public journalism also addresses the problems created by the press' failure to follow problems through to a possible resolution. During the "Charlotte Project," the Observer provided its readers a detailed, thoroughly researched presentation of the candidates' positions. These included not only what a particular candidate had said the day before, but his and his party's previous positions stretching decades back. Such a strategy allowed voters to build up a more comprehensive, more detailed understanding of each candidate's views.

Another essential element in public journalists' education is the attempt to instill in younger journalists a new set of reflexes to better reflect the complexity of a given story. As journalists' and editors' news judgment is shaped by the practical demands of the business - deadlines being the most prominent - once instilled they are difficult to change. With the mechanization of the penny press came a mechanization of news selection. As Lippmann explains, selecting the days' news stories from the constant stream of wire copy involved submitting each story to a rapid sequence of tests:

Every bulletin requires a swift but complicated judgment. It must be understood, put in relation to other bulletins . . . and played up or played down according to its probable interest for the public, as the editor conceives it . . . The final page is of a definite size [and] must be ready at a precise moment . . . Always there is the precarious urgency of the buying public, the law of libel, and the possibility of endless trouble (222).

It is these reflexes, Merritt believes, that must be refashioned in journalists in order to allow them to see problems in their complexity. And he concedes this cannot be achieved overnight.

Another difficulty in newspapers' engaging in public journalism is the transience that is characteristic of all media. Clark points out that in many cases, reporters assigned to cover communities are simply using the job as a stepping stone to a position at a larger paper. In addition, they are most often young, unmarried and childless, and therefore less likely to share readers' concerns or understand in depth the communities they cover. For public journalism to succeed, Clark contends, newspapers "need to . . . help young journalists to become more rooted in communities no matter what their career aspirations might be."

Much like the telegraph, the internet has dramatically increased the level of conversation between different regions of the country. Like the telegraph, the internet respects neither time nor space. However, the internet has yet to have an impact on public journalism comparable to that of the telegraph on the penny press. The impetus to exchange information and ideas has indeed contributed to the creation of Americans' sense of community. However, Clark contends that the ephemeral nature of the internet can be hostile to values central to public journalism. Public journalism, he contends, works on the assumption that citizens live in a real community and share concerns with their neighbours. Merritt agrees that the internet can and has been used to make journalism a two-way communication. However, he stresses that the information available on the internet is too voluminous to provide a basis for deliberation. Deliberation, Merritt contends, can only succeed if its participants agree on the problem to be discussed. To this point, very little of the information available on the internet is shared.

Public journalists do acknowledge the potential in the modern media environment in re-engaging citizens in political life. As Schaffer points out, few people give much thought to the source of their information. Be it through radio, television, newspapers or the internet, Schaffer contends, most people just want "the news." They care little about the economic competition between different media outlets, except when all offer the same polarized, predictable content. However, by co-operating with television and radio stations, as some newspapers in the public journalism movement have done, Schaffer believes media companies can restore their credibility in citizens' eyes.

Public journalism also recognizes the need for newspapers to be profitable, regardless of whether they are owned by corporations or by private individuals. Its practitioners realize that decades of declining circulation and readership cannot be remedied by simple changes in layout or switching to colour photography. Public

journalism is not a quick-fix solution. Rather, it is a long-term turnaround strategy that seeks to restore what has gone missing from American newspapers since the 1960s - their human dimension:

[I]t is a mistake to think of a newspaper as merely a conveyor of data. If it is vital, a newspaper has a personality, a spirit, a sensibility, and a voice, just as a human partner does. If in these ways it speaks the language of its audience, it will build a genuine human bond with them. If it does not, it will become irrelevant to their lives (Fuller 94).

Undertaking public journalism projects such as the "Charlotte Project" requires significant investments of time and money, which are in short supply at a majority of American newspapers. Fortunately, many public journalism projects have been underwritten, in whole or in part, by non-profit, non-partisan organizations and charitable trusts such as the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio, and the Pew Center for Public Journalism, in Washington, D.C. Such support, however, also has raised questions in the scholarly and journalistic community. As Clark has observed, newspapers' co-operation with such organizations can call into question the newspapers' independence, as well as the ethics of the entire undertaking. Nevertheless, Merritt contends that when done properly, public journalism need not pose a threat to newspapers' profitability: "If public journalism works, it will be a good thing for the bottom line."

As logical and as optimistic as public journalism sounds, implementing it in American newsrooms has not been an easy task. The thought of journalists' abandoning their codes of objectivity and balance to directly address the impact of their work on the public has met with considerable resistance. Since its inception, public journalism has been criticized by those within the industry as simple pandering, a cynical marketing ploy and professional heresy. This should come as no surprise. Having enjoyed the status of social institution for nearly a century, journalism has proved its resistance to change: "Press content, the most immediate harbinger of changing values, generates criticism when it counters familiar, traditional values . . . [C]ritics want to kill the messenger that disturbs the form or content" (Dicken-Garcia 233).

However, much of the criticism directed at public journalism can be considered a debate over semantics. Merritt agrees it was necessary to give a name to the philosophy, but doing so raised the possibility that it would, in Lippmann's analysis, be reduced to a stereotype. Public journalism may have definable goals, but there

remains a wide variance in the techniques used to bring these goals about. Thus, the image and objectives of public journalism have suffered because of journalists' practice of stereotyping.

Much scholarly work focuses on the impact on politics by the press as an entity. What has not been studied in as much detail is the journalist's own role in political culture: "[A]lthough the present generation frowns on political involvement by journalists, the press' political effect is one of the most discussed and perhaps least understood issues today" (Dicken-Garcia 231). It is this role that public journalism addresses directly.

Much of the criticism of public journalism is based on the belief that journalists must remain detached from the events they report - in spite of its flaws, objectivity must be maintained at all times. Critics state that journalists must not become personally involved in issues or become advocates for a particular candidate or policy. Jane Eisner, of the Philadelphia Inquirer, writes that journalists' "central mission is to report the news, to set priorities, to analyze but not to shape or direct events or outcomes. Subsume or diminish the central mission," she argues, "and we become like any other player in society, like any other politician, interest group, do-gooder, thief" (E7).

Public journalism efforts also come under criticism for their sponsoring of public forums, particularly when they involve candidates for public office. Both Leonard Downie, Jr. of the Washington Post and William Woo of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch are strongly opposed to a newspaper dictating an agenda to candidates. Downie states: "Telling political candidates that they must come to a newspaper's forum, or that they must discuss certain issues . . . is very dangerous stuff. That is not our role . . . If newspapers are lax in covering these activities, then we should do our job better. We shouldn't change our job" (qtd. in Fallows, News 263).

However, partisanship and advocacy are not part of the public journalism philosophy. Merritt stresses that public journalists should encourage and, in some cases, sponsor public deliberation in the sole interest of citizens arriving at their own consensus on issues that affect them:

Adopting the goal of helping public life go well would not mean abandoning good judgment, fairness, balance, accuracy or truth. It would . . . mean employing those virtues on the field of play, not from the far-removed pressbox; not as a contestant, but as a fair-minded participant whose presence is necessary in order for outcomes to be determined fairly . . . by the contestants (Merritt 94).

Newspapers experimenting with public journalism do not advocate their own solution over another, nor do they seek to resolve problems according to their own interests. And Merritt agrees that there remain some situations in which traditional reporting techniques can be used. However, David Broder in 1990 gave credence to the idea of newspapers' obligation to the disinterested citizen: "It is time for us in the world's freest press to become activists, not on behalf of a particular party or politician, but on behalf of the process of self-government" (qtd. in Fallows, News 254). In a media culture dominated by polarization and propaganda, public journalism seeks only to restore the deliberative tradition of American democracy to its newspapers.

One area in which public journalism differs from the penny press era is in the excitement for the news it created in the public. In spite of its crusade for urban reform and civic engagement, Pulitzer's World never lost its equally important goal of entertaining its readers. Public journalists, however, are currently less concerned with the latter than with the former. Clark concedes that some public journalism efforts have suffered from newspapers' taking too serious a tone in their reporting, or adopting a nearly evangelical stance in trying to win back readers. However, Clark contends that public journalism can make interesting reading, provided the stories are framed in a manner that illustrates the reader's own stake in the topic being covered. As it stands now, however, public journalism has yet to instill the same enthusiasm in its readers as did the sensational reports in the New York World or the New York Evening Journal.

Nevertheless, Clark, Merritt and Schaffer point out that a number of public journalism projects have succeeded in re-engaging readers in their communities and in politics. Schaffer calls attention to the Charlotte Observer's "Taking Back Our Neighborhoods" project. Designed to improve race relations in the city, it produced an 82% recognition rate in citizens, much higher than any series the Observer had previously undertaken. By 1995, 170 newspapers across the country had begun experimenting with some form of public journalism (Fallows, News 254). Much like the so-called New Journalists of the 1960s, Clark points out that framing and shaping news stories around citizens' concerns has spurred several experiments in different writing styles. Some are failures, he admits, but they are "interesting failures."

In Wichita, Davis Merritt says the public journalism philosophy has inspired several discussions in newsrooms across the country, discussions which would not occur were reporters simply relying on their traditional reporting styles. Merritt is hesitant to claim a direct link between the Wichita Eagle's practicing public journalism and increased citizen awareness; however, since 1992, the number of active

neighbourhood organizations in Wichita has increased from four to 70. Public journalism has not had a positive effect on the Eagle's circulation; however, Merritt contends that since adopting public journalism as its operating philosophy, the quality of citizen participation in his city has improved.

## CONCLUSION

The election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency in the U.S. laid the foundations for America's democratic consciousness. The Jacksonian era saw ordinary citizens receiving unprecedented power to exert their will on the country's political landscape. The Jacksonian period was one of optimism, enthusiasm and egalitarianism, all characteristics found in settlers' experience of the American frontier. Jackson's faith in the ability of the common settler to enact his own laws remains one of the most dramatic examples of Americans' commitment to self-government. With white manhood suffrage being accorded nearly automatically in the 11 frontier states, the ability of the eastern political establishment (including its banks) to control the country's politics began to decline. By mid-century, the elitist filters designed by Jefferson to keep the mob at bay had disappeared.

In Canada, the road to popular democracy was not as easily attained. United Empire Loyalists, expelled from the colonies after the American Revolution, had no desire to repeat these experiences in Upper Canada. Their experience of revolution had left them mistrustful of the mob, choosing instead to remain loyal to decorum and social harmony under the protection of the British Empire. Loyalism contained many of the elements sought by American revolutionaries (such as individual freedom), with an additional emphasis on decorum. Having been expelled despite agreeing with many of the principles driving the revolution, however, many Loyalists came to view American-style democracy as treason. Despite the arrival of responsible government and expanded suffrage to the Canadian public, the Loyalist heritage would reappear in the pan-Canadian chauvinism of Toronto's later penny papers.

This suspicion of democracy was perfectly suited to the Family Compact. This small, tightly-knit group of Anglican clergy and professionals played upon Loyalists' fears of American-style democracy to secure their own control over the affairs of Upper Canada. With its emphasis on stability through deference, the Compact portrayed itself as guardian of Loyalist principles. In practice, however, the Compact displayed little, if any, adherence to such principles. Its emphasis on deference and social hierarchy stood in direct opposition to the Loyalist principles of social harmony and equality. Their domination of the colonial economy kept many settlers in crushing poverty and prevented the implementation of badly-needed urban reforms that had already been achieved in the U.S. Finally, the Compact's domination of Upper Canada's political affairs discounted any possibility of responsible government.

The roots of Canada's democratic consciousness lay within religious communities outside the influence of the Anglican church. With its flexible

organization, itinerant clergy and emphasis on group participation in church activities. Methodism provided much of the impetus for the colony's sometimes grudging concessions to democracy. Also not to be overlooked is the large Loyalist contingent in the Methodist church. It was in this congregation that many Loyalists could share their political ideas and common experiences of the frontier. And as with Loyalism, the Methodist church made no mention of class.

Common to the democratic consciousness in both countries was the creation of the "common man." Both Jacksonian democrat and Loyalist exile shared similar experiences of the frontier. Regardless of settlers' previous social standing or education, the frontier instilled in them a spirit of egalitarianism which would come to dominate the political attitudes of the penny press. As well, editors from Mackenzie to Atkinson to Pulitzer all dedicated their newspapers to the betterment of the common man.

The common man was in large part a result of the changing economic landscape in both countries. The American and Canadian economies at the turn of the nineteenth century were dominated by the mercantile and shipping interests of a small eastern elite. In Canada, Montreal's exploitation of the shipping routes along the St. Lawrence river kept Toronto a simple way station until well into the 1880s. Industrial America came into full maturity during the Civil War, as the conflict dramatically increased the need for goods produced in large quantities in the shortest time possible. The country's industrial expansion continued virtually unchecked for the remainder of the century, as large factories replaced smaller craftsmen and apprenticeships gave way to child labour. It would be the rise of corporations and trusts, however, that provided much of the impetus for penny papers' crusades for urban and social reform. Corporations' increasing dominance of American industry also gave rise to the labour movement, which figured prominently in the popular press. The Knights of Labour also were active in Canada; however, the Canadian labour movement did not garner similar support in the popular press. It was the legacy of the Loyalist experience that social harmony was to take precedence over the perceived grievances of any particular group. A common element in both Canada and the U.S. is the social contract created by industrial production. Captains of industry such as Andrew Carnegie and John Rockefeller certainly did not circulate in the same circles as their employees, but these men could not have made their fortunes without a healthy supply of semi-skilled workers.

The end of the twentieth century, however, has seen a dramatic unraveling of this social contract in both countries. While manufacturing has not disappeared from the

Canadian and American economies, it no longer can be seen as the economic backbone. Rather, the new economy is fueled in large part by unseen market forces and instantaneous currency transfers taking place on a global scale. Unlike the era of mass production, the new economy has seen a return of secretive, often Byzantine, practices known of and controlled by only a select few. What has not changed, however, is the fact that these activities carry consequences that extend beyond this insular world.

The global economy is one of the major causes of citizens' political disenfranchisement. Much like the American Reform movement of the 1880s, people are now coming to realize that an unfettered reliance on unseen market forces can bring poverty as well as prosperity. Unlike that previous era, however, the majority of newspapers have yet to call for a wide-ranging examination of society's new priorities. This is particularly true of the Canadian media, whose advocating neo-liberal economic policies as the way to social salvation has existed virtually unopposed for more than a decade.

Also worrisome for the course of democracy in both countries is the direction being taken by advertising. In publishing the Sun, Benjamin Day sought not the business of New York's mercantile elite, but that of its small, independent merchants. Its overwhelming success to merchants and newspapers alike resulted in the advent of advertising agencies and newspapers' adopting standard advertising rates. The importance of advertising increased unabated through the 1880s to the point where a newspaper's editorial desk found itself in constant conflict with advertisers, the former being more interested in the newspaper's circulation than its editorial principles. Quite often this resulted in newspapers' printing "puffs" (thinly-disguised ads masquerading as news), and journalists' devoting much of their energies to covering department store and factory openings. As questionable as this type of reporting sometimes appeared (even to newspaper readers), frequent, favourable coverage of department stores was viewed by reporters and readers alike as evidence of the city's progress and prosperity. With their low prices and emphasis on customer satisfaction, department stores did contribute to the democratic consciousness. Indeed, the department store is in large part the creation of the Sunday newspaper.

The later decades of the twentieth century, however, have seen a dramatic reversal of such mass marketing techniques. With Fragmentation as the industry's new buzzword, advertisers are now targeting not an anonymous body of consumers, but members of specialized niche markets. Unlike the penny press era, these new, so-called image tribes are based not on geographic proximity, but on the similar tastes of their members. Advertising campaigns no longer serve as meeting places for people of

different backgrounds to share and exchange ideas; rather, they serve to reinforce the tastes and prejudices of individuals within these image tribes. Inexpensive computer technology has made it possible for advertisers to exploit a wide range of consumer information. When combined, credit card records and zip codes allow advertisers to market goods and services to increasingly specialized individual tastes. Unlike the penny press era, during which mass consumption was key to a manufacturer's survival, niche advertising seeks to create in the consumer brand loyalty that will last a lifetime. In essence, much modern advertising, particularly that of luxury goods, resembles a private club open in which marketers seek only those consumers they deem to be the most lucrative. Those failing to meet these "standards" are either ignored or actively discouraged from "joining." While Benjamin Day may not have envisioned advertising as a factor in his paper's democratic objectives, it was indeed an important element in establishing a democratic consciousness. Thus, the transition from mass marketing to niche marketing carries similar implications today.

Also essential to the creation of the democratic consciousness was the industrial city, which embodied the political, social, economic and technological changes of the era. What is important to observe is the social contract created in cities such as New York and Toronto. This contract held that life in the industrial city was a shared experience among all economic and social classes. While the industrial city was marked by poverty, disease and crime, it also offered immigrants diversions, attractions and amusements which had previously been the exclusive domain of the privileged classes. That Pulitzer and Robertson revealed both sides of the urban experience to their readership was instrumental in creating not only civic pride, but the public and political will necessary to initiate urban reforms. That they included in this dichotomy a great deal of self-promotion worked to solidify the respect of their readers and elevated reading a newspaper to a civic duty.

The end of the twentieth century, however, has seen a sharp decline in both civic pride and an unraveling of the industrial social contract. Polarization and alienation have come to characterize many American cities. A growing fondness on both sides of the border for clean, anonymous suburbs and gated communities has resulted in many former industrial cities such as Detroit falling into disrepair. While it is true that alienation and loneliness also were part of the penny press era, citizens could look to newspapers such as the New York World and the Toronto Telegram as supplanting, or in some cases, creating, the social ties necessary to survive. That the popular press could create the political and social will necessary to combat poverty and corruption is one of its most enduring legacies. It is this legacy that public journalists are working to

restore to American journalism. It is, however, a daunting challenge, as corporate ownership, institutional inertia and a reliance on objectivity all work to ensure that urban problems are simply reported on, not solved.

The penny press could not have attained such impressive profits and circulation without advances in technology. Indeed, the story of the penny press is also that of the evolution of printing technology. In the span of less than a century, newspapers had evolved from humble four-page affairs produced entirely by hand to 24-page editions replete with illustrations and coloured banner headlines, produced by linotype and printed on steam presses. With each advance in printing technology came an increase in the circulation of many popular papers.

More important to the democratic consciousness, however, was the arrival of the telegraph. The organic nature of electric communications established a national central nervous system which allowed Americans (and later, Canadians) to communicate with each other almost instantaneously. The immediate quality of telegraphic news was key in creating the human interest story, an important element in the democratic consciousness. With their front pages filled with disparate items of telegraphic news, the penny papers allowed readers to see the entire community in action and interaction. The telegraph eroded the importance of local and state authorities to create a disembodied national authority. Communication became the most important element both in the spread of Universalism and in the rise of the urban middle class.

Unfortunately, the technological advances that brought an entire continent into communication has severely reduced the importance of physical communities. While the penny papers of Pulitzer and Robertson were rooted in their cities, advances in telecommunications have rendered geography largely irrelevant. This is particularly true for advertisers, who often find it more profitable to market products and services to select consumers thousands of miles apart. Technologies such as the internet may have the ability to create virtual communities, but there is little evidence that these disembodied, electronic communities can yet generate the public and political will needed to confront the problems of modern urban life.

The penny press brought unprecedented changes to American journalism and to American society. With Benjamin Day's humble Sun through to Pulitzer's World, ordinary citizens came to realize that their lives were interesting not only to themselves, but to the community. By creating newspaper readers where none had previously existed, editors such as Day, Bennett and Greely were in large part responsible for creating the democratic consciousness in the American populace. The penny press took politics and newspapers, both of which previously being the exclusive domain of the

monied classes, and put them in the hands of the common workingman. With popular democracy rapidly replacing the social hierarchy of the east, New York's penny papers provided the shared, relevant information essential to ensuring the proper functioning of the democratic process.

Also significant is the influence of the penny press on America's established newspapers. Having been available by subscription only and written to reinforce party loyalties, the so-called party papers saw their readership decline after the arrival of papers such as the Sun and the Herald. Quite surprisingly, the penny press also attracted upper class readers, who found its coverage of business and sports to be more relevant to their daily lives than party rhetoric. The party papers' attempts to discredit these crude, independent upstarts through charges of blasphemy and corruption having failed, they had no choice but to lower their prices and begin courting the opinions of people they had previously deemed irrelevant to national affairs.

By the 1880s, the penny press in New York had taken two divergent paths. Newspapers such as Pulitzer's World offered their readers a steady diet of sensation, crime and human interest, while Adolph Ochs' Times sought a more refined class of reader, one whose need for sober, reliable information outstripped the need to be entertained. However, neither camp could survive without occasionally borrowing the techniques of the other. All newspapers featured both the emotional story and the sober report, and it was this mix that accorded them their human dimension.

An important element of the penny press is its emphasis on Reform. Whether the problem be the need for a new morality (as was the case in the 1830s), or combating urban squalor (as it was during Pulitzer's day), editors, critics and journalists all viewed the newspaper as the principal element in creating the will necessary to initiate reforms. Waves of immigrants to New York delivered millions of readers to Joseph Pulitzer, who took it upon himself to campaign not only for their protection, but also for their right to participate fully in the American democratic experience. Indeed, the newspaper was seen by many as outstripping the pulpit as a tool for social progress and salvation.

Canada's penny press shared many of the similarities of its American predecessor. However, the Loyalists' experience following their expulsion from the colonies was a dominant factor in shaping Canadians' attitudes not only toward democracy, but also in the editorial tone of papers such as the Telegram. Like Benjamin Day, William Lyon Mackenzie also wanted to bring the press to the common man. Unlike Day, however, Mackenzie viewed his Colonial Advocate more as an extension of the pulpit than as a vehicle to attract advertising. Nor did his newspapers exhibit the

same entertainment value as those of his American contemporaries. Both the Advocate and the Constitution were arduous reads, replete with Bible passages, sermons and political essays. Despite the abysmally low literacy rates in Upper Canada, however, Mackenzie's papers were widely read and considered sufficiently dangerous to the Compact's hold on the colonial imagination to have his press thrown into Toronto harbour.

With George Brown's Globe, Canadian journalism took another important step in forming the democratic consciousness. The Globe was the country's first "popular" paper, in that it attracted readers outside Brown's Reform party readership. In addition, Brown was the first to use a newspaper to attack his political rivals. Until his arrival, Canadian journalism had been dominated by the hermetically-sealed ideologies of Tory and Reform. In punching holes through these rhetorical walls, Brown both advanced and elevated the political discussion in Upper Canada. With his emphasis on decorum and order, Brown also brought a respectability to the popular press that had been conspicuously absent in Mackenzie's day. By increasing the amount of advertising in his paper, and by running the serialized novels of Charles Dickens, Brown created in Canadian journalism a reason to read a newspaper for reasons other than news or political commentary.

The final step in the evolution of Canada's penny press came with the independent papers of Robertson, Sheppard and Maclean. Democrats all, these "maverick" editors were the most vociferous critics of shady politics and social snobbery. Most importantly, all three were devoted to urban and social reform during the city's rise to industrial prominence.

There was much about these papers that was American, both in inspiration and in content. Toronto's penny press depended heavily on American wire services for the bulk of its American and international news. Had Pulitzer's and Hearst's papers not attained their impressive circulations and record-breaking profits, and had Toronto not been as dependent on New York for its transportation routes, it is quite conceivable that Canada's newspapers would have retained their party affiliations into the twentieth century. However, Canada's penny papers were most notable for their pan-Canadian chauvinism, which sometimes bordered on blatant anti-Americanism. The American experience, it was sometimes viewed, was being played out for Canadians' own amusement. Nationalism was seen as an important element in Canada's economic progress, the most telling evidence of this being the editorial support accorded to Macdonald's protectionist National Policy. With Canada having only recently gained its independence from Britain, the papers of Robertson, Maclean and Sheppard engaged in

a vigorous campaign for Canadian nationalism whose most important element was its emphasis on social harmony. As committed to democracy and individual rights as these men were, however, Upper Canada's Loyalist ethos required peace, order and good government above any particular cause. Even Joseph Atkinson, an ardent supporter of free trade and individual freedom, frequently exhorted Canadians' preference for decorum in the interest of furthering the national cause.

One area in which both countries shared similar experiences was the role of the individual journalist. As newspapers grew in profits and circulation, the small, one-man operations of Day and Mackenzie gave way to businesses whose operating structures were nearly identical to those of industrial manufacturers. On both sides of the border, the journalist was often the least important, most expendable part of the newspaper's operations. The need to write objective news eliminated in all but a few notable cases the journalist's ability to use lively, creative language. Reporters who could not quickly master the pyramid lead, or whose fondness for adjectives injected too much colour into their reports were unceremoniously fired without legal recourse. Nevertheless, during the 1880s, ambitious young men (and women) ready to try their hand at journalism were in abundant supply. The profession has changed little in the intervening decades. While journalists in Canada and the U.S. now boast union protection and earn living wages, labour relations at many newspapers remain entrenched in the feudal lord-serf model. Contemporary journalism has seen the rise of star reporters, but in both countries these comprise a mere fraction of the total number of people working in the industry. However, these reporters cum pundits can wield tremendous influence over public attitudes toward virtually any contentious topic.

The most contentious legacy of the penny press was its establishment of objectivity as the modus operandi of newspaper reporting. What began as an efficient method to convey the essentials of a story in an era of unreliable communications has been adopted as an essential, inflexible component in journalism education on both sides of the border. Objectivity also has its roots in the emphasis once placed on empirical observation in the sciences. Whether it be biology, psychology or journalism, transparency was seen as the sole guarantor of truth. In newspaper reporting, this resulted in journalists applying the same reporting techniques to house fires as to political corruption. However, as Jay Rosen has observed, even those institutions most responsible for transparency no longer maintain that truth can be ascertained through dispassionate observation alone. And, as Walter Lippmann observed early in this century, no journalist, no matter how well-intentioned, can escape his own personal, subjective response to an event.

This reliance on outdated and discredited thinking does not bode well for democracy. Lippmann has illustrated how objective reporting leads to stereotypes, which invariably create in the citizenry a distorted view of the outside world. When this distorted picture is passed on to other social institutions, the ability of the citizenry to accurately define its own reality is severely hampered. Objective reporting has become orthodoxy in newspaper reporting. And as Robert Martin has observed, orthodoxy is antithetical to independent thought.

It is this legacy of objectivity and the constraints it places on journalists that public journalism addresses. Public journalists have recognized that a blind adherence to objective reporting allows journalists to deny their own influence on public attitudes while perpetuating the impression that social and political problems are too complex to solve. Public journalists also have recognized that the American political system has been co-opted by spin doctors and media relations officials who deliberately frame problems as short-term partisan contests. Since the 1960s, the American political debate has regressed to its partisan roots, with both Democrat and Republican displaying a profound contempt for the electorate's ability to understand complex problems and an impatient mistrust of the democratic process. What has resulted is the gradual spread of the corporatist agenda and a public language stripped of its relevance to all but those holding specialized knowledge.

What public journalists realize is that as in ancient Athens, a truly democratic society needs a forum in which to debate shared, relevant information. It is only through deliberation that the citizenry can generate the political will necessary to solve long-standing urban problems. However, journalists' adherence to objectivity and "balance" has worked only to perpetuate the polarization of the national political debate. Public journalists seek to liberate journalists from this framework and allow them to experiment with other types of reporting. In essence, public journalism is simply a re-iteration of journalistic principles first observed a century ago by Tocqueville and articulated by leading American journalists such as David Broder for the past 30 years.

As heretical as this sounds to many journalists and editors, there is significant evidence that the public is indeed sophisticated enough to understand the interconnectedness of seemingly insurmountable problems, and that when readers are viewed as active citizens (as opposed to passive news consumers), they are often eager to participate in their resolution. By appealing to their readers' intelligence and initiative, such newspapers as the Wichita Eagle and the Charlotte Observer have worked to reestablish the link between themselves, their readers and, most importantly,

the democratic process. Contrary to the attitudes of the elite national press, Americans' enthusiasm for collective action is not in decline. What needs to change, rather, is journalists' arrogant unwillingness to participate in matters they themselves deem insignificant or uninteresting.

The success of such projects as the Eagle's "Your Vote Counts" and the Observer's "Charlotte Project" also have proved that a newspaper need not risk its financial viability in providing thorough, thoughtful reporting. More so than layout changes, colour photography or shallow tabloid-style coverage, public journalism proves that a newspaper can regain its declining readership, provided it offers readers relevant, useful information. The fact that many of the 170 newspapers practicing some form of public journalism are owned by chains also reveals that newspapers need not be reorganized along the lines of food products to turn a profit. Sadly, it is an observation sorely lacking in contemporary Canadian journalism. Despite some journalists' own observations about the superficial nature of campaign coverage, there seems to be little incentive to reform Canadian journalism along the lines of public journalism. Consequently, it suffers from the paternal elitism of a previous generation. That this country cannot boast a single non-partisan institute devoted to media research is also a black spot on its national media. None of this bodes well for the future of Canada's democratic institutions.

It is important, however, to also include a note of caution here. Done poorly, or done with inadequate resources, public journalism runs the risk of becoming either shoddy reporting or falling into the hands of cynical marketers seeking inexpensive ways to make the newspaper appear more "personal." As public journalism is not a formula, there is also the danger that, as some critics have charged, public journalism reads more like a new age manifesto than relevant political analysis.

The simple goal of public journalism is to re-engage citizens in the democratic process, and to re-establish the newspaper's role in facilitating that dialogue. As illustrated by Day, Greely, Mackenzie, Robertson and Pulitzer, a newspaper that is not afraid to embrace its readership can be successful. And democratic.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baldasty, Gerald J. The Commercialization of News in the Nineteenth Century. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992.
- Beaven, Brian B.P.N. "Partisanship, Patronage, and the Press in Ontario, 1880-1891: Myths and Realities." Canadian Historical Review 64 (1983): 317-351.
- Bauch, Hubert. "It's Our Future, Why Don't We Care?" Toronto Star 29 June 1992: A1+.
- Berger, Meyer. The Story of the New York Times, 1851-1951. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951.
- Brinkley, Alan. The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People. New York: Knopf, 1993.
- Broder, David. "Five Ways to Put Some Sanity into Elections." Washington Post 14 Jan. 1990, final ed.: B1. Nexis. 8 Dec. 1997.
- . "Voters Taking Back the Campaigns." Washington Post 27 Dec. 1992, final ed.: C7. Nexis. 8 Dec. 1997.
- Brown, Craig. "The Nationalism of the National Policy." Nationalism in Canada. Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966. Rpt. in Readings in Canadian History: Post Confederation. Eds. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith. Toronto: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1982. 22-28.
- Brown, George. "Confederation Day: The Dominion of Canada." Globe. 1 Jul. 1867: 1.
- Byrd, Joann. "Conversations with the Community." Washington Post 5 Feb. 1995, final ed.: C6. Nexis. 8 Dec. 1997.
- "Canada: Degrees of Agreement." Globe and Mail 15 June 1992: A15.
- Careless, J.M.S. Brown of the Globe. Vol. 1. Toronto: Macmillan, 1963.
- . "Some Aspects of Urbanization in Nineteenth-Century Ontario." Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Ontario. Ed. F. H. Armstrong. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974. 65-79.
- Carey, James W. Communications as Culture: Essays on Media and Society. New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Case, Tony. "Public Journalism Denounced." Editor & Publisher 12 Nov. 1994: 14-15.
- . "Can Journalists be Joiners?" Editor & Publisher 30 Jan. 1993: 15+.
- Clark, Roy Peter. Telephone interview. 21 Jan. 1998.

- Clifton, Doug. "Creating a New Forum to Help Solve Community Problems." Miami Herald 6 Mar. 1994: C4. DIALOG File 702: Miami Herald.
- Cocking, Clive. Following the Leaders. Toronto: Doubleday, 1980.
- Cohen, Marshall. The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill: Ethical, Political and Religious. New York: Random House, 1961.
- Creighton, Donald. Dominion of the North: A History of Canada. Toronto: Macmillan, 1962.
- Crouse, Timothy. The Boys on the Bus. New York: Random House, 1973.
- Czitrom, Daniel J. Media and the American Mind. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.
- Delaney, Paul. "How Technology Spoils Reporters." Nieman Reports Spring 1995: 27-29.
- Dicken-Garcia, Hazel. Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.
- Dionne, E.J. Why Americans Hate Politics. New York: Touchstone, 1991.
- Duffy, Dennis. Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.
- Earl, David W. L., Ed. The Family Compact: Aristocracy or Oligarchy? Toronto: Copp Clark, 1967.
- Eisner, Jane R. "Should Journalists Abandon their Detachment to Solve Problems?" Philadelphia Inquirer 16 Oct. 1994: E7. DIALOG File 633: Phil Inquirer.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Selected Essays. New York: Penguin, 1982.
- Emery, Edwin. The Press and America: An Interpretative History of Journalism. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1962.
- Enteman, Robert M. Democracy Without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Fallows, James. Breaking The News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy. New York: Pantheon, 1996.
- . "Did You Have a Good Week? The New Unit of Political Significance." The Atlantic Dec. 1994: 32-33.
- Feldman, Seth. "Who is Being Served by Public Service Ads?" Globe and Mail 6 May 1992: C1
- Fidler, Roger. "Newspapers in the Electronic Age." The Peoples' Right to Know: Media, Democracy, and the Information Highway. Eds. Frederick Williams and John V. Pavlik. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Press, 1994.

- Finch, Jerry. "Should Press Take on the Role of Referee on Public Issues?" Richmond [Virginia] Times-Dispatch 11 Dec. 1994: F2. DIALOG File 709: Richmond Times-Disp.
- Fischer, Jack. "This Type of Project Won't Solve Newspapers' Problems." San Jose Mercury News 13 Nov. 1994: F4. DIALOG File 634: San Jose Mercury.
- Fitzgerald, Mark. "Community Involvement is His Credo." Editor & Publisher 27 Mar. 1993: 20-21.
- Fouhy, Ed. and Jan Schaffer. "Civic Journalism - Growing and Evolving." Nieman Reports Spring 1995: 16-18.
- Fraser, Graham. "No Spending Limit in Referendum." Globe and Mail 13 May 1992: A1+.
- Fuller, Jack. News Values: Ideas for an Information Age. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Gurevich, Michael and Jay G. Blumler. "Political Communication Systems and Democratic Values." Democracy and the Mass Media. Ed. Judith Lichtenberg. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Glaberson, William. "A New Press Role: Solving Problems." New York Times 3 Oct. 1994, late ed.: D6. Nexis. 8 Dec. 1997.
- . "Press: Fairness, Bias and Judgment: Grappling with the Knotty Issue of Objectivity in Journalism." New York Times 12 Dec. 1994, late ed.: D7. Nexis. 8 Dec. 1997.
- Goheen, Peter G. "Currents of Change in Toronto, 1850-1900." Victorian Toronto, 1850 to 1900. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970. Rpt. in Readings in Canadian History: Post Confederation. Eds. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith. Toronto: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1982. 217-245.
- . Victorian Toronto, 1850-1900. Diss. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Granatstein, J.L. et al. Nation: Canada Since Confederation. 3rd ed. Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1990.
- Gwyn, Richard. "Don't Tell Us What to Think." Toronto Star 25 Oct. 1992: B1+.
- Hann, Russell. "Brainworkers and the Knights of Labor: E.E. Sheppard, Phillips Thompson, and the Toronto News, 1883-1887." Essays in Canadian Working Class History. Eds. Gregory S. Kealey and Peter Warrian. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976. 35-57.
- Harkness, Jonathan. J.E. Atkinson of the Star. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963.

- Harwood, Richard. "Civic Journalism 101." Washington Post 17 Jan. 1995, final ed.: A19. Nexis. 8 Dec. 1997.
- Herd, Harold. The March of Journalism: The Story of the British Press from 1622 to the Present Day. London: George Allan and Unwin, 1952.
- Hicks, John D. A Short History of American Democracy. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1943.
- Hofstadter, Richard. The American Political Tradition. New York: Knopf, 1957.
- Holland, Robert. "For News Biz, a Shift to a New Paradigm?" Richmond [Virginia] Times-Dispatch 28 Dec. 1994: A9. DIALOG File: 709: Richmond Times-Disp.
- Holy Bible: New International Version. 1973. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1990.
- Hoyt, Michael. "The Wichita Experiment." Columbia Journalism Review Jul.-Aug. 1992: 43-47.
- . "Are You Now, or Will You Ever Be, A Civic Journalist?" Columbia Journalism Review Sept.-Oct. 1995: 27-33.
- Ignatieff, Michael. The Needs of Strangers. Toronto: Viking, 1984.
- Innis, Harold. The Bias of Communication. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1951.
- Jacobs, Joanne. "So, We'll be Taking Some Responsibility." San Jose Mercury News 10 Oct. 1994: B9. DIALOG File 643: San Jose Mercury.
- Johnson, Haynes. "Shoe Leather, Shoe Leather, Shoe Leather." Nieman Reports Spring 1995: 26.
- Juergens, George. Joseph Pulitzer and the New York World. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1966.
- Kealey, Gregory. "Hogtown: Working Class Toronto at the End of the Century." Working Class Toronto. Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1972. Rpt. in Readings in Canadian History: Post Confederation. Eds. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith. Toronto: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1982. 175-193.
- Kilbourn, William. The Firebrand: William Lyon Mackenzie and the Rebellion in Upper Canada. Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1956.
- Laghi, Brian and Kirk Makin. "Court Protects Gays." Globe and Mail (3 Apr. 1998): 43 pars. Online. Internet. 6 Apr. 1998.
- Landon, Fred. "The Common Man in the Era of the Rebellion in Upper Canada." Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Ontario. Ed. F. H. Armstrong. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974. 154-170.
- Leacock, Stephen. "Greater Canada, An Appeal: Let Us No Longer Be A Colony." 1907. Rpt. in Readings in Canadian History: Post Confederation. Eds. R.

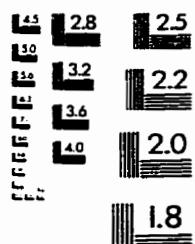
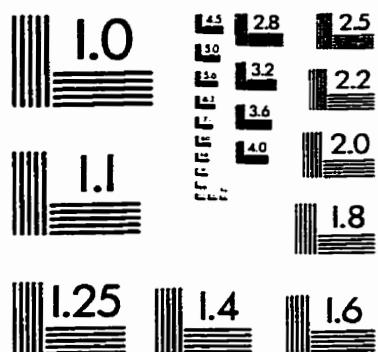
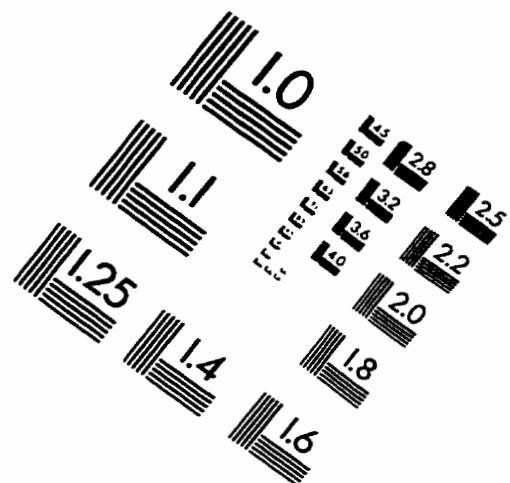
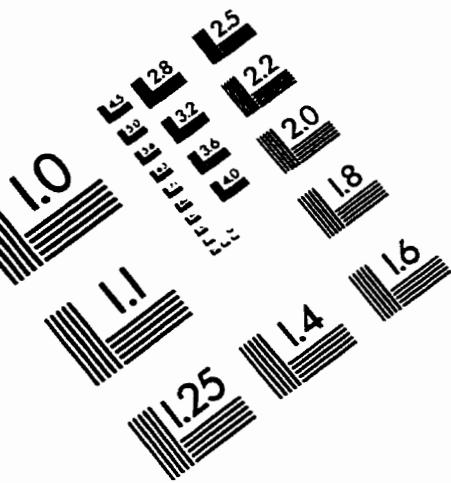
- Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith. Toronto: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1982. 108-113.
- Lippmann, Walter. Public Opinion. 1922. New York: The Free Press, 1965.
- Makin, Kirk. "How Far Should Judges Go?" Globe and Mail (2 Apr. 1998): 20 pars. Online. Internet. 6 Apr. 1998.
- Manfredi, Christopher P. "Inalienable Rights and Reasonable Limits: The Bill of Rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms." Canada and the United States: Differences That Count. Ed. David Thomas. Peterborough: Broadway, 1993. 234-251.
- Martin, Robert. Personal interview. 7 Apr. 1998.
- Martin, Robert and G. Stuart Adam. A Sourcebook of Canadian Media Law. 2nd. ed. Carleton Library Series 181. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994.
- Mathews, David. Politics for People: Finding a Responsible Public Voice. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
- McCollum, James Foy Jr. "The Medium in the Mirror: How Journalists in the 1880s and 1890s Viewed 'New Journalism'." Diss. University of Alabama, 1996.
- McCormick, Peter. "The Will of the People: Democratic Practice in Canada and the United States." Canada and the United States: Differences That Count. Ed. David Thomas. Peterborough: Broadview, 1993. 172-191.
- McLuhan, Marshall. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.
- . "Canada: A Borderline Case." The Canadian Imagination. Ed. David Staines. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977.
- Merritt, Davis. Public Journalism and Public Life: Why Telling the News is Not Enough. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995.
- . "When a Newspaper Steps Forward with its Values." Editorial. Wichita Eagle (11 Jan. 1998) 23 pars. Online. Internet. 11 Jan. 1998.
- . Telephone interview. 20 Jan. 1998.
- Miller, Edward D. The Charlotte Project: Helping Citizens Take Back Democracy. St. Petersburg: Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 1994.
- Moffett, Samuel E. The Americanization of Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.
- "National Referendum Could Cost \$105 Million." Toronto Star 6 May 1992: A 14.
- Nevins, Allan and Henry Steele Commager. A Pocket History of the United States. New York: Washington Square, 1970.

- Norman, Bud. "Eagle Editor to Take a New Look at Journalism." Wichita Eagle 26 Dec. 1993: B1. DIALOG File 723: The Wichita Eagle.
- "Notwithstanding's Claws." Editorial. Globe and Mail (6 Apr. 1998): 5 pars. Online. Internet. 6 Apr. 1998.
- O'Brien, Frank. The Story of the Sun. New York: George H. Goran, 1918.
- Oppel, Rich. "We'll Help You Regain Control of the Issues." Charlotte Observer 12 Jan. 1992: A1: DIALOG File 642: The Charlotte Observer.
- Osler, Andrew M. News: The Evolution of Journalism in Canada. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993.
- Park, Robert and Ernest W. Burgess. The City. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.
- Pickett, Calder M. Voice of the Past: Key Documents in the History of American Journalism. Columbus: Grid, 1977.
- Poulton, Ron. The Paper Tyrant: John Ross Robertson of the Toronto Telegram. Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1971.
- Putnam, Robert D. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Rosen, Jay. "Beyond Objectivity." Nieman Reports Winter 1993: 48-53.
- . "Who's Afraid of Public Journalism, and Why?" Salon (9 Jul. 1996): 16 pars. Online. Internet. 9 Jul. 1996.
- . Community Connectedness: Passwords for Public Journalism. St. Petersburg: Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 1993.
- Rosen, Jay and Davis Merritt. Public Journalism: Theory and Practice. Dayton: Kettering Foundation, 1994.
- Rutherford, Paul. The Making of the Canadian Media. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978.
- . A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.
- . "The Emergence of the New Journalism in Canada, 1869-99." Canadian Historical Review 56 (1975): 161-191.
- . "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1880-1920." Canadian Historical Association Papers (1971): 203-224. Rpt. in Readings in Canadian History: Post Confederation. Eds. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith. Toronto: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1982. 303-320.
- Salcetti, Marianne. "The Emergence of the Reporter: Mechanization and the Devaluation of Editorial Workers." Newworkers: Toward a History of the Rank and File.

- Eds. Hanno Hardt and Bonnie Brennen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995. 48-74.
- Saul, John Ralston. The Unconscious Civilization. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1995.
- Schaffer, Jan. Telephone interview. 23 Jan. 1998.
- Schramm, Wilbur. Mass Media and National Development. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964.
- Schudson, Michael. Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers. New York: Basic Books, 1978.
- . Origins of the Ideal of Objectivity in the Professions. 1976. Diss. New York: Garland, 1990.
- Shaw, Donald L. "News Bias and the Telegraph: A Study of Historical Change." Journalism Quarterly 44 ( 1967): 3-13.
- Singer, Benjamin D., ed. Communications in Canadian Society. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1975.
- Smith, Allan J. "Old Ontario and the Emergence of a National Frame of Mind." Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Ontario. Ed. F. H. Armstrong. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974. 194-217.
- Smith, Goldwin. Canada and the Canadian Question. 1891. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971.
- Smythe, Dallas W. Dependency Road: Communications, Capitalism, Consciousness, and Canada. Norwood: ABLEX, 1981.
- Spencer, David R. "Alternative Visions: The Intellectual Heritage of Nonconformist Journalists in Canada." Newworkers: Toward a History of the Rank and File. Eds. Hanno Hardt and Bonnie Brennen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995. 160-189.
- Steele, Robert M. Ethics of Civic Journalism: Independence as the Guide. St. Petersburg: Poynter Institute for Media Studies (June 1995): 550 pars. Online. Internet. 8 Feb. 1998.
- Stein, M.L. "In Praise of Public Journalism." Editor & Publisher 12 Nov. 1994: 15+.
- . "Beware of Public Journalism." Editor & Publisher 6 May 1995: 18-19.
- Stephenson, H.E. and Carlton McNaught. The Story of Advertising in Canada. Toronto: Ryerson, 1940.
- Taras, David. "A Question of Character: Political Reporting in Canada and the United States." Canada and the United States: Differences that Count. Ed. David Thomas. Peterborough: Broadview, 1993. 326-342.

- Tocqueville, Alexis de. Democracy in America. Trans. Henry Reeve. New York: D. Appleton, 1912.
- Tuchman, Gaye. Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality. New York: The Free Press, 1978.
- Turow, Joseph. Breaking Up America: Advertisers and the New Media World. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Vipond, Mary. The Mass Media in Canada. 2nd ed. Toronto: James Lorimer, 1992.
- Vriend vs. Alberta. 25285. Supreme Court of Canada. 2 Apr. 1998. 64 pgs. Online. Internet. 10 Apr. 1998.
- Wernick, Andrew. Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology and Symbolic Expression. Newbury: Sage, 1991.
- Winn, Billy. "Public Journalism - an Early Attempt." Nieman Reports Winter 1993: 54-56.
- Winsor, Hugh. "The High Cost of Feeling Better." Globe and Mail 26 May 1992: A1+.
- . "Constitutional Tab Likely to Rise." Globe and Mail 25 Nov. 1992: A6.
- Winsor, Hugh and Graham Fraser. "Tories Ignored Own Polls." Globe and Mail 19 Nov. 1992: A1+.
- Wolfe, Tom. The New Journalism. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.
- Yankelovich, Daniel. Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991.
- York, Geoffrey. "Pollsters Profit from Unity Issue." Globe and Mail 3 Oct. 1992: A1+.

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



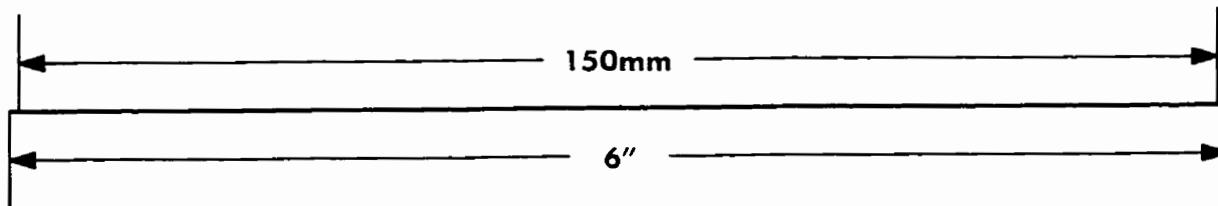
1.1

2.0  
1.8

1.25

1.4

1.6



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc.  
1653 East Main Street  
Rochester, NY 14609 USA  
Phone: 716/482-0300  
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc. All Rights Reserved

