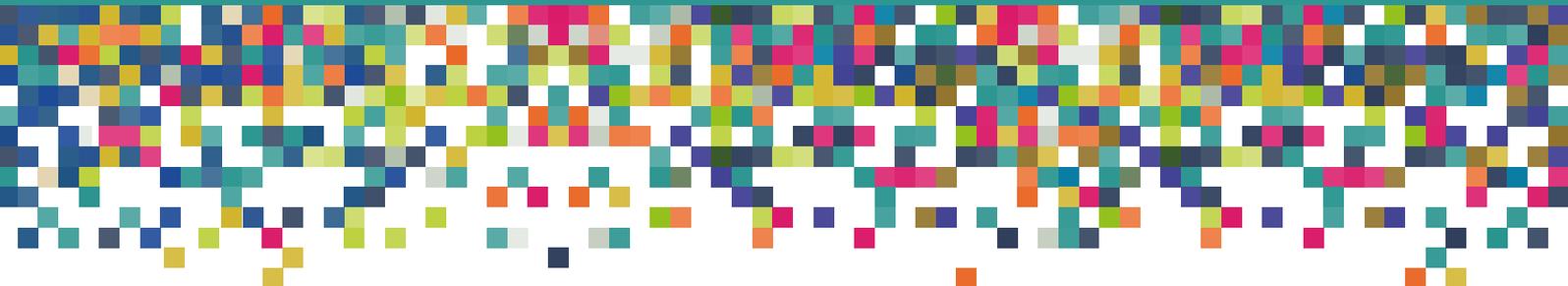




Media and
Communications

Media@LSE Working Paper Series

Editors: Bart Cammaerts, Nick Anstead and Richard Stupart



From Aesthetic Criticism to News Reporting

Rethinking the concept of Ecstatic News
through the Lens of French Print Cultural
Journalism

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Published by Media@LSE, London School of Economics and Political Science ("LSE"), Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE. The LSE is a School of the University of London. It is a Charity and is incorporated in England as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Act (Reg number 70527).

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation builds on the literature about the alleged 'crisis' in cultural journalism (Hellman and Jaakkola, 2011). Scholars point to the increased influence of commercial actors in cultural reporting, blurring the boundaries between 'high-brow' and 'low-brow' art and introducing new lifestyle-oriented topics (Kersten and Janssen, 2016; Kristensen and From, 2012; Verboord and Janssen, 2015). In light of these changes, new concerns regarding the space granted to cultural journalism and its quality have emerged (Verboord and Janssen, 2015). However, the newly wider range of topics has also led to a re-politicization of the field, whereby the culture pages become a site for political reflection (Kristensen and From, 2015). If cultural journalism's role is not to update in real time, this dissertation argues that it has the ability to expand its reach beyond aesthetic concerns and provide useful tools to understand current socio-political events. Very little research has been done on the discourses at play in the coverage of non-aesthetic topics by modern cultural journalism. This project aims to contribute to this relatively unexplored field by conducting a narrative discourse analysis on the well-established French Cultural Magazine Les Inrockuptibles. Aligning with the literature defending the political potential of cultural journalism (Riegert et al., 2015), this dissertation applies Chouliaraki's (2006) concept of 'Ecstatic News' to print journalism, thus investigating the strategies at play in the coverage of this specific type of events. It focuses on Les Inrockuptibles' coverage of 9/11 and the Charlie Hebdo attacks, qualitatively studying what happens when breaking news enters the cultural pages. This project demonstrates that print cultural journalism narratively situates ecstatic events beyond traditional time and space boundaries, thus inscribing them in a broader history of continuity and rupture. Valuing analysis, cultural journalism also becomes a platform for critical self-reflection on media practices, and reasserts the role of culture as a key point of reference in the meaning-making process of ecstatic news reporting.

1 INTRODUCTION

The limited literature on cultural journalism points to a recent shift in editorial approach, from a clear aesthetic angle to a more journalistic lens (Hellman and Jaakkola, 2011). This change of focus has been interpreted as a crisis by certain scholars (Berger, 1998; Carroll, 2009; Elkins, 2011; Elkins and Newman, 2008; McDonald, 2007; Pool, 2007; Rubinstein, 2006) and as an opportunity to evolve with the changing cultural landscape by others (Kristensen, 2010). It also reflects the uneasy status of arts reporters as both critics and journalists, constantly needing to renegotiate their role in the media landscape and in the artistic field (Hellman and Jaakkola, 2011). Due to their hybrid identity, cultural journalists have to balance between journalistic values, such as ideals of objectivity and factualness, and aesthetic ethos, involving critical skills to produce judgments of taste.

Furthermore, this shift resulted in the coverage of broader topics, which are deemed to be more lifestyle-oriented, thus shaking this branch of journalism with new concerns regarding quality and professional ethics. Cultural journalism's objects of analysis switched from 'traditional high art forms (such as theater, classical music and literature) to popular ones like film, pop music, television fiction' (Verboord and Janssen, 2015: 838), which is often interpreted as a decrease in 'serious arts criticism' (Kersten and Janssen, 2016: 840). Along with a rising interest in popular culture, lifestyle topics led to the emergence of service journalism as a "consumer'-oriented model which views arts coverage as a service to time-strapped readers, who have to decide for themselves how to spend their leisure time' (Verboord and Janssen, 2015: 834).

Nonetheless, the literature shows that this broader spectrum of topics also introduced a phenomenon of re-politicization whereby the culture pages become key spaces of debate on various non-cultural issues (Jaakkola, 2014; Kristensen and From, 2015). This political emphasis manifests itself through the development of opinion pieces which assert the value of subjectivity and analytical skills (Hanitzsch et al., 2011). Leaving the more factual side of

information to traditional news reporting, cultural journalism exemplifies how 'the use of the language of subjectivity contributes to building up narratives designed to engender emotional resonance with the audience' (Wahl Jorgensen, 2013: 307). Cultural journalists 'assume control and work increasingly as authors rather than reporters' (Kunelius and Väliverronen, 2012: 224).

This project thus aims to identify the key narratives used by these 'authors' in producing political news through a cultural lens. It starts by defining the term cultural journalism, highlighting its nuances, and laying the foundations for further analysis. This dissertation then reviews the existing academic literature. Through key concepts such as hybridity, subjectivity, 'crisis' and liquid modernity, it critically engages with the current interrogations in the field. Building on the argument that cultural news has the potential to inform us on broader issues, beyond aesthetic concerns (Riegert et al., 2015), it uses Chouliaraki's concept of ecstatic news (2006) as a theoretical frame. Jaakkola (2014) recognizes the need to conduct country-specific investigations on the premise that 'the production of arts journalism is profoundly ethnocentric; despite globalization in the flows of information, very little inter-nationalization has been found in the artistic coverage of dailies' (p. 542). Therefore, this research project focuses specifically on the French media landscape. Using narrative discourse analysis, it offers a qualitative study of the discourses at play in the coverage of ecstatic news in French print cultural journalism. It uses the French music magazine *Les Inrockuptibles* as a case study, looking at how the publication covered 9/11 and the Charlie Hebdo attacks. This dissertation thus hopes to contribute to a field that remains relatively unexplored so far.

2 THEORY

2.1 Definition

Traditionally, arts journalists¹ have been perceived as experts whose role is to ‘identify shortcomings of artistic quality and to improve the quality standards of arts and the level of people about arts’ (Jaakkola et al., 2015: 813). Hellmann and Jaakkola (2011) refer to this as ‘arts exceptionalism’ (p. 786). Following this definition, arts journalists are to facilitate the public’s appreciation and understanding of the arts (Harries and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007). Their ‘professional identity is tied to their ability to pass judgment on cultural products, and their role in mediating the arts’ (Harries and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007: 622). Studies have shown that cultural journalists ‘tend to be more educated than other journalists and to own more cultural capital than other journalists’ (Jaakkola et al., 2015: 813). For this reason, the profession has been accused of elitism as cultural journalists used to act as cultural gatekeepers defining what is worthy of attention (Verboord and Janssen, 2015). Prior to the 1960s, cultural journalism focused mainly on ‘highbrow’ culture – such as theatre or opera for example –, at the expense of ‘lowbrow’ culture (Schmutz et al., 2010).

Nonetheless, the boundaries between ‘highbrow’ and ‘lowbrow’ culture have slowly faded, giving way to a new form of arts journalism that is concerned with popular culture (Bruhn Jensen and Larsen 2010; Janssen, Verboord, and Kuipers 2011; Kristensen 2010; Schmutz et al. 2010). Cultural journalists still play a key role in identifying culturally valuable objects, often applying ‘high-art principles and aesthetic criteria to popular culture’ (Kersten and Janssen, 2016). Additionally, Riegert et al. (2015) have demonstrated that cultural journalism also has the ability to give insight into the inner workings of society, beyond aesthetic production. In

¹ The terms ‘arts journalist’ and ‘cultural journalist’ are used interchangeably.

their study on the political dimensions of Swedish cultural journalism, the authors argue that the purpose of cultural journalism is:

To reflect contemporary life, and offer more in-depth perspectives than news reporting does; to broaden peoples' world-views by providing different, i.e. multicultural, perspectives on societal events, the arts and cultural life, showcasing enduring human questions and debates. (p. 779)

This definition highlights the polymorphous potential of cultural journalism. The rise of commercial imperatives has made defining the boundaries of cultural journalism even harder. The recent turn towards a 'consumer-oriented model' (Verboord and Jannssen, 2015: 834) suggests that arts journalists' role is no longer to offer judgments of value but to give guidance on various aspects of life. This branch of cultural journalism has been named 'service journalism' and defined as follows:

Service journalism provides the reader with guidance on matters of consumption and choices of softer aspects of life in an increasingly complex society and everyday life, and thus addresses the reader as an individual rather than a member of the public as a consumer rather than as a citizen. (Kristensen and From, 2012: 28)

This growing concern for consumerism reflects the uneasy status of the arts journalist, who is often accused of 'unhealthy interdependencies with the cultural industries or with the market' (Kristensen and From, 2015: 761).

2.2 Hybridity

Cultural journalists epitomize 'a clash between aesthetic and journalistic approaches and values' (Hellman and Jaakkola, 2011: 784). Their very identity relies on their hybrid role as aesthetic critic and reporter:

It appears that there is in cultural journalism an internal tension between two poles, one based on an aesthetic, evaluative, opinion-based and educational approach to the arts and the other on an informative, fact-based communication about the arts and standard news values. (Hellman and Jaakkola, 2011: 787).

Therefore, they occupy a special status in the newsroom. Forde (2003) calls them ‘journalists with a difference.’ Their ambiguous role – they are both a representative of the arts in the newsroom and a representative of the journalistic world in the artistic field (Hellman and Jaakkola, 2011) – poses difficulties as arts journalists constantly renegotiate journalistic ideals, ethos and values in their work. Deuze (2005), building on existing literature relating to journalism’s ideology (Golding and Elliott, 1979; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Merritt, 1995), identifies five elements core to the role of journalists: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics. The complex identity of the arts reporter is often at odds with these values. Scholars have argued that ‘were it to loosen its adherence to these foundational tenets, journalism would lose its distinctiveness from the other modes of cultural expression, argumentation, representation, and production’ (Zelizer, 2004: 104). In light of such argument, how can arts reporters maintain their fragile status as journalists given their intrinsic relationship with subjective judgments of taste?

2.3 Subjectivity

Jaakkola et al. (2015) argue that the relationship of arts journalists to objectivity is not as rigid compared to other journalists in general. Emotions and subjectivity are at the center of the cultural journalist’s work. In fact, scholars have argued that emotional or subjective reporting can be positive in journalism (Chong, 2019; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2012). Chong (2019) identifies three modes of subjectivity in arts reporting: bias, which ‘refers to prejudices or inferences based on individual assumptions rather than the ‘reality’ of a situation and is tied to norms of fairness and representation in journalism’ (p. 430), emotions, with the risk of sensationalism that this ‘highly personalized phenomena’ entails, and self-interest, as ‘commercial pressures and incentives may be competing with traditional journalistic values in how journalists conceptualize their responsibilities to the reading public’ (p. 430). Chong qualifies each of these concepts as both positive and detrimental to the work of arts journalists.

Additionally, Wahl-Jorgensen (2012) argues that objectivity and subjectivity must not be understood as opposites but as complementary in creating a more engaging form of reporting.

Building on Tuchman (1972), the author identifies a ‘strategic ritual of emotionality’ (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2013: 130), thus arguing that ‘there is an institutionalized and systematic practice of journalists narrating and infusing their reporting with emotion, which means that journalistic story-telling, despite its allegiance to the ideal of objectivity, is also profoundly emotional’ (p. 130). Nonetheless, these emotions are not the journalist’s:

Journalists rely on the outsourcing of emotional labor to non-journalists – the story protagonists and other sources, who are (a) authorized to express emotions in public, and (b) whose emotions journalists can authoritatively describe without implicating themselves. (p. 130)

This is especially true in cultural journalism, as critics tend to present emotional responses to an art object as ‘properties of the text’ rather than as their own personal emotional reactions (Chong, 2019).

2.4 The “Crisis” in Cultural Journalism

Recent decades have seen a diversification of topics attracting a broader reader base (Verboord and Janssen, 2015). These include lifestyle concerns, which offer guidance to consumers. This shift has been identified by certain scholars as a ‘crisis in cultural journalism,’ allegedly resulting in shorter pieces of lower quality journalism concerned with trivial subjects such as popular culture, lifestyle and entertainment. Jaakkola (2014) identifies five major theoretical frames at play in conceptualizing this crisis. The first one is *elitization*, which refers to the claim that ‘cultural production is accessible only to those with an adequate amount of symbolic capital’ because ‘cultural journalism is produced for, by and in accordance with the cultural elite, and is strongly affiliated with high art, which is seen as the core of the cultural public sphere’ (p. 546). The second discursive frame is *popularization*, which implies the vulgarization of culture. Thirdly, *commercialization* reflects ‘an amplification of consumerism that preempts any criticism and implies the reduction of criticism to a form of marketing’ (p. 547). The fourth frame is *journalistification*, which depicts an emphasis on factual reporting at the expense of aesthetic focus, with ‘the increasing influence of generalist, economically driven journalism on

the specialized branch of cultural journalism' (p. 548). Finally, *professional apathy* is perceived as a sign of the 'crisis' in cultural journalism. This concept refers to an overall disengagement on both the part of the journalist and that of the reader. Adding to that list, one can argue that new technologies have transformed the power dynamics between journalist and audience. With social media, people now have the possibility to participate and publish reviews online. Amateur critics gain their legitimacy through visibility and likes. This new form of 'reporting', facilitated by digital technologies, challenge 'both the aesthetic tradition and the more recent media-professional logic of cultural journalism' (Kristensen and From, 2015: 764).

Nonetheless, other scholars have demonstrated that the transformations of cultural journalism should not be experienced as a crisis. Kristensen (2010) argues that 'cultural journalism must today be interpreted as a continuum between culture, lifestyle and consumption – in short as 'journalism on culture'' (p. 1). Thus, this observed evolution is not the result of a crisis but symbolizes instead a shift towards a new form of cultural journalism that is concerned with broader themes. In the context of a fading dichotomy opposing high art versus low art, Verboord and Janssen's study (2015) shows that a stronger focus on popular culture does not mean that fewer space is dedicated to cultural journalism – sometimes at the expense of lifestyle journalism –, nor that its quality is decreasing. In fact, Heikkila et al. (2017) argue that the space dedicated to culture has increased through the introduction of specialized supplements. Furthermore, journalists employ "high art' reviewing techniques and a more intellectualizing discourse' (Schmutz et al., 2010: 502) to cover popular culture. This shows that the turn to popular objects does not reflect a poorer quality journalism but rather an elevation of popular culture (Kersten and Janssen, 2016; Schmutz et al., 2010).

Furthermore, this 'crisis' has led to a 're-politicization of cultural journalism, since important political issues of contemporary society originate from debates on the cultural pages on topics such as religion, race, and immigration' (Kristensen and From, 2015: 762). In this context, this dissertation studies 'how cultural practitioners make sense of events through the narratives they produce' (Riegert et al., 2015: 780), focusing on 'how events affect people's identities' (p.

780) and defending the relevance of cultural journalism compared to 'rapid news reporting of numbers of dead' (Riegert et al., 2015: 780). This dissertation builds on Riegert and al.'s argument (2015) that cultural journalism has 'the ability to say something about society beyond aesthetic production' as it is 'another way of engaging people in societal and ethical issues' (p. 780).

2.5 Liquid Modernity

This research project uses Jaakkola et al.'s (2015) theory of liquid modernity to conceptualize cultural journalism as a tool for making sense of events. Jaakkola et al. argue that the perceived crisis in cultural journalism is in fact a shift from high modernity towards liquid modernity. High modernity was concerned with 'objectivity, public service of citizens, consensus orientation, gatekeeping and universalistic ethos' (p. 817), whereas liquid modernity celebrates 'subjectivity, consumer-orientation, confrontation with power holders, agenda-setting and relativist ethics' (p. 817). For cultural journalism, this translates into a 'personification and eventification' (p. 819) of content, with an emphasis on 'emotional appeal, storytelling, debate and entertainment' (p. 819). Cultural journalism now focuses on 'events, persons and other issues that are 'newsworthy' rather than aesthetically valuable' (p. 819). Thus, liquid cultural journalism combines an interest in news beyond aesthetic criticism with highly subjective codes of expression. This dissertation strives to study the discourses at play in creating this new form of cultural journalism. Scholars have shown how analytic skills are now desired as a professional standard in journalism (Hanitzsch et al., 2011; Jaakkola et al., 2015). This new emphasis on analysis, in addition to skills such as description, evaluation, entertainment and instruction (Shrum, 1991) now define cultural journalistic practices. Moreover, *personification* implies that the journalist addresses individuals rather than masses, and *eventification* means that cultural journalists now focus on specific current events as they are happening. This deeply transforms arts journalism's relation to questions of time and space. Traditionally, cultural journalism's role is not to update the reader in real time on what is happening in the world, but to review aesthetic objects and practices. With the *eventification*

of cultural journalism, the relationship to time is deeply transformed, as cultural journalism enters the time-space of the 'now'. This dissertation explores what discourses are at play in the *eventification* and *personification* of cultural news, while interrogating the impact these have. What happens when a cultural publication covers a political event?

2.6 Conceptual Framework

To conduct such project, one needs first to define what kind of political event is of interest here: this dissertation looks at events that transcend traditional news boundaries and inevitably make their way into the cultural pages. Lilie Chouliaraki (2006) identifies three types of news involved in the mediation of suffering: adventure news, emergency news and ecstatic news. The latter refers to news that are so extraordinary that they overflow the traditional boundaries of news. They are characterized by their 'undecidability,' at the center of which 'lies a dialectic of openness and closure, a dialectic with space and time dimensions' (p. 158). This research thus focuses on the treatment of ecstatic news in cultural publications, as this type of news is likely to break into the cultural space: it is so groundbreaking that it cannot be contained into one news category like 'Sports' or 'Finance.'

This research starts with the hypothesis that cultural journalism revisits the time-space of news in singular ways. If mainstream journalism puts an emphasis on immediacy, cultural coverage, on the other hand, does not have the same time constraint as its traditional role is linked to criticism and analysis rather than factualness and instantaneity. In this context, ecstatic news is an especially interesting object of analysis because it mediates events to produce new notions of time and space that could seem at odds with the very nature of cultural journalism:

In terms of space, the event is mediated simultaneously as a local tragedy and as a global political fact. In terms of time, the event is mediated simultaneously as contingent, as news, and as making history. (Chouliaraki, 2006: 158)

Ecstatic news goes beyond the concept of Media Events (Dayan and Katz, 1992), which are 'interruptions of routine' that 'propose exceptional things to think about, to witness, and to

do' (p. 5). Dayan and Katz (1992) write that 'regular broadcasting is suspended and preempted as we are guided by a series of special announcements and preludes that transform daily life into something special and, upon the conclusion of the event, are guided back again' (p. 5) Unlike media events, ecstatic news is not circumscribed in time. It does not have a start nor an end, as can have the broadcast of Princess Diana's wedding, which is an example of Media Event given by the authors. Ecstatic news is overwhelming and pervasive.

Chouliaraki (2006) studies images of suffering and puts live-reporting and broadcast at the center of her argument. This dissertation shifts her model onto print, which in itself also has a different temporality. It therefore investigates the treatment of ecstatic news in print cultural journalism, focusing qualitatively on the discursive frames involved in meaning-making. It also builds on Jaakkola et al.'s (2015) concept of liquid modernity to see how liquid modern ethos are at play in the cultural coverage of ecstatic news.

2.7 Rationale

The literature points to a lack of research about cultural journalism (Forde, 2001; Harries and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007; Jaakkola, 2014; Jones, 2002). Kersten and Janssen (2016), in their quantitative content analysis of the evolution of film coverage between 1955 and 2005, argue that:

As research shows how cultural journalists alternate between more aesthetic and journalistic approaches (Van Venrooij and Schmutz 2010; Kersten and Bielby 2012), future studies are required to typify qualitatively the discourse employed in discussing matters of culture across the board, thereby giving much-needed insight into the inner workings of cultural journalism today. (p. 853)

Their argument underlines specifically the need for qualitative research to study the discourses at play in cultural coverage. Furthermore, cultural journalism is extremely country-specific. Studies have noted great differences between Anglo-American arts journalism, which separates commentary and reporting, and central European cultural journalism, which is

inspired by feuilletonism (Jaakkola, 2014). Janssen et al.'s (2008) cross-national study of cultural coverage also reveals that:

Reviewers and other cultural experts tend to be preoccupied with the valuation and ranking of the work of indigenous artists because it is primarily at the national level that their judgments "count" in processes of artistic valorization and canon formation. Newspaper coverage of arts and culture is therefore likely to have a local bias. (p. 735)

As cultural journalism strongly varies depending on its country of origin, it thus appears that research in the field should focus on 'national studies of domestic specificities' (Kristensen and From, 2015: 764). If there is a large cannon of Nordic literature concerned with cultural journalism in the Scandinavian countries, there is not, to my knowledge, as much literature on cultural journalism in France.

This research project thus strives to provide a qualitative analysis focused on the French cultural media landscape. In light of *journalistification* and *eventification* processes, this dissertation focuses on the discourses used when news invades the cultural space. It asks specifically: **What discursive frames are used to cover ecstatic news in French Cultural press?** In answering this research question, the dissertation examines the role of cultural journalism, asking if it can – and should – inform and update. It is concerned with the relevance of cultural reporting, and its renegotiation of the concept of 'Media event' (Dayan and Katz, 1992). It investigates what makes a political event cultural and how this form of reporting questions the fragile identity of the arts journalists as a political news reporter. This project intends to contribute to the small literature on cultural journalism by building on Riegert et al.'s (2015) argument that cultural journalism can make sense of the world in useful and informational ways.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sampling

As the literature on the crisis in cultural journalism points to an elevation of popular culture (Kersten and Janssen, 2016), I chose to focus on a publication with an editorial line that would match this trend. I decided to study specifically the French Rock music magazine *Les Inrockuptibles*. My choice was motivated by the status of this publication as a specialized review, meaning that the articles I would be studying would not be included in the culture section of a general newspaper. Since the magazine is exclusively cultural, it makes the irruption of ecstatic political news even more striking and gives it a reinforced sense of ‘out-of-placeness.’ Furthermore, *Les Inrockuptibles* fits perfectly the argument on the re-politicization of cultural news. The magazine was created in 1986 and was initially purely focused on music trends, albums and artists. The format was very simple, with the cover being a simple list of artists (Appendix 2).

In April 1995, at the dawn of the French Presidential elections, the magazine published, as a cover story, a long interview with the former left-wing French Prime Minister Michel Rocard (Appendix 3). This polemic choice² marked the magazine’s official entrance in the political sphere. Since that day, *Les Inrockuptibles*, which is a key player in France’s cultural media landscape, mixes political news with arts criticism, claiming its left-wing views alongside its love for indie music, literature and cinema. If the magazine has often been accused of elitism because of its literary tone and intellectual approach (Simon, 2009), researchers have advocated for the relevance of studying ‘newspapers that target the governing, intellectual,

² This choice was the result of a vote that divided the newsroom between those who believed in the need to preserve a purely cultural focus and those who saw this as an opportunity to broaden the magazine’s editorial approach.

See: <https://www.lesinrocks.com/2013/02/03/actualite/actualite/avril-1995-le-jour-ou-nous-avons-vote-rocard/>

and cultural elite because they determine whether and how other media and the wider community discuss subjects. They thus fulfill a key role in the process of cultural valorization' (Janssen et al., 2008: 725).

Lilie Chouliaraki illustrates the concept of ecstatic news by using the 9/11 terrorist attacks as a prime example. I thus chose to look at the way *Les Inrockuptibles* covered this event. I also wanted to look at a local ecstatic event, paying close attention to the coverage of a French historic-political moment. I wanted it to be sufficiently distant in time from 9/11 so as to be able to notice patterns of change between the various discourses used in depicting ecstatic news throughout the evolution of cultural news practice. Thus, the Charlie Hebdo attacks seemed appropriate as this event occurred in 2015, thus fourteen years after 9/11. This event played into Chouliaraki's logics of undecidability and had many layers of intertextual meaning. Both events were read as attacks against symbols and sparked strong responses across the West, far beyond national borders. For both events, I looked at the first and last issues that came out on the subject. I focused on cover stories exclusively and left out all images from my analysis. The 9/11 attacks were first covered in the 305th issue of the magazine, released on September 18, 2001 and was last featured on the cover of the 306th issue from September 25, 2001. Charlie Hebdo made the headline in the 998th issue, dated January 14, 2015 and it was last covered in the 1002nd issue released on February 11, 2015.

3.2 Limitations

One should bear in mind that *Les Inrockuptibles* is read only by a certain audience. As a specialized publication, it addresses a public who has prior knowledge in the cultural areas it covers. It is meant for an intellectual reader base who already has 'expertise in the area presented' (Fürsich, 2012: 22), and who has the economic capital to purchase the magazine³. One can thus infer that it may not be very representative of the mainstream French cultural

³ The magazine costs 4.20 € and 5.20 € for special issues.

press consumed by everyday citizens. *Les Inrockuptibles* are nonetheless a milestone in the French cultural landscape, and their history as a politicized cultural publication makes them an interesting object of analysis. In the context of a larger study, one should analyze articles from various publications in order to get a better sense of the French cultural media landscape's response to ecstatic news. Further qualitative research should also include a visual analysis of accompanying images as the increased presence of illustrated articles has been identified by the literature as another sign of the cultural journalism crisis (Heikkilä et al., 2017). Finally, it would be interesting to study a broader range of ecstatic events to fully grasp how the coverage has evolved over time.

3.3 Methodology

To answer the need for qualitative research, this project employs narrative discourse analysis to study the various discursive frames used to cover ecstatic news in French cultural journalism. This dissertation explores the consequences of such discourses on the reader's conceptualization of social reality. Gill (1996) claims that 'much discourse is involved in establishing one version of the world in the face of competing versions' because 'all discourse is organized to make itself persuasive' (p. 143). This dissertation argues that, in the context of the shift towards liquid modern ethos (Jaakkola et al., 2015), the claim to subjective storytelling as a means of making sense of the world holds especially true. This is striking in the case of ecstatic news, as reporters use empathy to create a sense of identification and relatability that goes beyond geographic borders (Chouliaraki, 2006).

Relating to the 9/11 tragedy, Jade Linaard, who worked at *Les Inrockuptibles* then, explains that the main purpose when the magazine covered this piece of ecstatic news was:

To be both part of the news and to stand as an 'anti-work' of what the Nouvel Obs, L'Express or other newspapers would do. The goal was to enter the news by publishing debates and ideas, and to prioritize the interventions of intellectuals. (Simon, 2009, p. 49)

Thus, this dissertation uses narrative analysis instead of critical discourse analysis because its purpose is not to study ‘critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse)’ (Wodak & Meyer, 2008: 10), but to investigate which alternative narratives are employed by *Les Inrockuptibles* to frame ecstatic events. I use the term alternative here in reference to Lingaard’s claim that *Les Inrockuptibles* functions as an ‘anti-work,’ with an editorial line at the opposite of mainstream publications. Narrative analysis can be defined as follows:

[In structural narrative analysis, the] emphasis shifts to the telling, the way a story is told. Although thematic content does not slip away, focus is equally on form – how a teller by selecting particular narrative devices makes a story persuasive. (Riessman, 2005, p. 2)

But what exactly is considered a story? Su (2012) used narrative analysis to study the coverage of the 921 Earthquake in Taiwan. Her rationale was that a ‘journalist is to act as ‘storyteller’, utilizing storytelling techniques to transform abstract, fragmented, and inexplicable information into familiar, recognizable, and digestible patterns and stories’ (p. 286). This echoes Chouliaraki’s use of Dayan and Katz’s (1992) concept of ‘shamanizing’. When applied to ecstatic news, the shamanizing process ‘works by providing a narrative pattern within which the transformative event begins to make sense’ (Chouliaraki, 2006: 177). What narrative pattern does a cultural publication like *Les Inrockuptibles* provide to make sense of undecidable events such as 9/11 and Charlie Hebdo? How does it vary from that of non-cultural mainstream press? Additionally, cultural journalists, because of their hybrid status as both interpreters and reporters, are especially interesting for narrative analysis as they have a closer relationship to storytelling and subjectivity (Jaakkola et al., 2015). Nonetheless, narrative analysis may fail to identify how the texts are ‘sites of struggle’ that ‘show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance’ (Wodak and Meyer, 2008: 10).

3.4 Frameworks of Analysis

I excluded images and footnotes to focus solely on the main text. Following Su's rationale, I used 'narrative analysis to identify broad socio-cultural meanings and specific repetitive themes and structures' (p. 286). Chouliaraki's conceptualization of ecstatic news guided my analysis. I paid close attention to structure, language and themes employed to convey the undecidability of ecstatic events. I focused on linguistic patterns used to qualify space and time. My initial hypothesis was that this undecidability would influence which narratives are emphasized by arts journalists. Su (2012) argues that 'past events help define the nature of a current issue, identify its hidden causes, and develop solutions' (p. 287). Thus, I collected all words and clauses that convey space or time and examined how they discursively inscribe ecstatic events within a broader cultural history. This echoed Chouliaraki's concept of 'ideological realism,' which can be defined as follows:

To invest with meaning an event still awaiting interpretation, to construe a new thinkable by drawing on existing discourses of history and politics. This type of realism is not interested in the reality of objective truth (the update), nor in the reality of the emotions (the direct link), but in the reality of discursive argument and rationalization. Thus, ideological realism is the only form of realism that poses questions about the historical causes of the event and its longer-term consequences for the established world order. (p. 172)

Building on this concept, I paid close attention to symbolic discourses and intertextual references, as both Charlie Hebdo and the 9/11 attacks were assigned high symbolic value and often compared to 'similar' situations. In light of this, I noted repetitions, binary oppositions and associations. I also looked for universalizing discourses and pronouns to assess whether the journalists pushed for identification in their mediation of suffering.

Keeping in mind the hybrid status of the arts reporter, I studied the interplay between subjectivity and factualness. Pronouns and tone guided my effort to distinguish between news and opinion pieces. The number of pages dedicated to the event in each issue of *Les Inrockuptibles* ranged from 13 pages for the last issue on the Twin Towers to 19 pages for the

last issue on Charlie Hebdo. Each cover story was broken into subsections gathering various forms of shorter articles. According to Verboord and Janssen's typology (2015), there are four types of cultural articles: the background article – which includes interviews –, the review article, the news article and the opinion article. I started by classifying each article according to this typology. I then looked at journalistic versus aesthetic discourses at play, investigating whether these matched liquid modern ethos of subjectivity and story-telling. I also looked at the way these discourses allow for an outsourcing of emotion, especially in the case of interviews where the emotional reaction shifts from the journalist to the interviewee. Additionally, since both the Charlie Hebdo shooting and 9/11 are terrorist attacks, I looked for the lexical field of terror. I studied the terms used by journalists to refer to the events. I paid close attention to who was speaking and how discursive frames creates systems of inclusion or exclusion.

At a broader structural level, I looked at the way articles were ordered within the magazine to produce certain narratives. At the micro-level, I used Heikkila and Gronow's model (2017) to analyze the construction and progression of each article, thus identifying descriptive elements, entertainment elements, instruction elements, analytical elements and evaluative element. I explored how these various elements are organized within the text and how they interact to produce meaning or build an argument. I was also interested in the structural organization of discourse and thus looked for indicators of progression or disruption.

3.5 Ethics and Reflexivity

This project did not encounter any ethical issues. An Ethics Form was filled in accordance with the London School of Economics' guidelines prior to conducting this research. The studied documents were accessed in the Research Library of the Bibliothèque Nationale François Mitterand.

A methodology pilot was realized for the course *MC4M1: Methods of Research in Media and Communications*, using texts from a different French Cultural review entitled *Les Cahiers du*

Cinema. Over the course of this short project, I noticed how my previous academic training in literature influenced the way I approached the texts. I have been taught to infer and interpret meanings based on linguistic patterns, literary devices, vocabularies, lexical fields, etc. I tended to reproduce this pattern, forgetting that discourse analysis ‘does not give us any new information about the individual morphemic meanings that are being communicated in the discourse under investigation’ (Harris, 1952: 1), but instead focuses on ‘the way specific actions are accomplished, or the devices and procedures through which factual versions are constructed’ (Potter, 1996: 7). For this dissertation, I tried to avoid any subjective conclusions, thus focusing solely on the material at hand, and studying how meaning is constructed instead of interpreting which meaning is constructed.

I chose this research area because I believe that cultural journalism is highly relevant as it gives us useful tools to understand society beyond aesthetic production. However, I made sure that this dissertation would not simply confirm pre-existing assumptions about the potential of cultural journalism. My research does not aim to assert the relevance of cultural journalism in an effort to fight traditional news hierarchy that place political news as the gold standard (Kristensen and From, 2012; Rieffel, 2006). Instead, it is a genuine investigation into the mechanisms at play in covering non-cultural events. It hopes to offer insight into the broader implications of what happens when news goes beyond its traditional boundaries.

4 RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Structural Elements

At the structural level, this research found that the sample could be subdivided into two categories: reaction and reflection. Indeed, for each event, *Les Inrockuptibles* proceeded in a similar fashion. The first issue they released was a collection of testimonials by artists and intellectuals on the event. These issues were written following a ‘reactive’ model as they relayed various personalities’ reactions to the tragedies. On the contrary, the last issue

followed a 'reflective' model, by which intellectuals, specialists and journalists were invited to think more broadly about the consequences or significance of the event through different cultural and sociopolitical lenses. Moreover, using Verboord and Janssen's typology (2015), this research noted the vast majority of opinion pieces using first-person. The sample also includes several interviews with artists or specialists, and a few factual pieces by journalists or experts using third-person narration and an instructional tone.

Shrum (1991) identifies five key elements that characterize the work of arts reviewers: 'descriptive elements,' which 'provide information about the cultural object, the performers, the setting, and so forth' (p. 352), 'analytic elements,' which 'provide an interpretive context for understanding, whether through the propagation of traditional equations, metaphors, and symbolic meanings in the work or through the critic's own proposals for the construction of aesthetic significance' (p. 352), 'entertainment elements' such as 'humor, wit, and displays of erudition or outrage' (p. 352), instructive elements 'in the form of statements prescribing styles, emphases, or alternatives for cultural producers' (p. 352) and 'evaluative elements' which are 'positive or negative judgments' (p. 352). These are present throughout the sample. On the first page of issue #305, introducing the various testimonies collected by the magazine, one can read that 'artists, writers, musicians, directors, essayists, tell, comment and analyze' (Appendix 4) the event. The three verbs employed here reflect the components of art reviewing as conceptualized by Shrum. 'To tell' implies the use of descriptive elements, 'to comment' refers to the evaluative and entertainment functions of the journalist and 'to analyze' is clearly linked to the use of analytic elements. These few lines thus set the tone for the overall editorial approach of the magazine which, despite the political and ecstatic nature of the news it covers, still follows aesthetic reviewing codes in its analysis of said events.

4.2 Ecstatic Time

Chouliaraki (2006) argues that ecstatic news is characterized by its 'undecidability' (p. 158). This is partly expressed through the way ecstatic time is hard to define. Ecstatic news is not clearly delimited in time. Chouliaraki writes that 'in terms of time, the event is mediated

simultaneously as contingent, as news, and as making history' (p. 158). Beyond the multiple narrative frames used by the media, Chouliaraki points to the role of live-broadcasting in covering ecstatic news through the 'constant flow of images and verbal narratives with various degrees of affective power' (p. 158). Live-reporting brings the ecstatic event in a time of continuity where its beginning and end become unclear. Live relies on instantaneity and presents reporters with the challenging task of making sense of an event while it is unfolding. In contrast, print creates further layers in the construction of news because it adds the time of writing between the event and its coverage. Nonetheless, the concept of ecstatic news is applicable to cultural print journalism because the time of the event and the time of reporting merge in surprising ways. The discourses at play in *Les Inrockuptibles* situate ecstatic events beyond fixed temporal boundaries. This is transcribed on the page in various ways.

First, the magazine translates the undecidability of 9/11 and Charlie Hebdo by inscribing these event in a broader cultural history of violence, thus claiming the importance of the past in understanding the present. Edy (1999) argues that journalists make use of the past in three ways: 'commemorations, historical analogies, and historical context' (p. 74). The sample reveals that these three logics are at play in the cultural coverage of 9/11 and Charlie Hebdo. Comparisons to other past events like the murder of President Kennedy (305, p. 7), the Vietnam war (305, p. 10), or the 'Israeli Palestinian conflict' (305, p. 15) highlight patterns of violence in history and provide a frame of analysis for 9/11. This echoes Edy's concept of historical analogy, which he defines as an 'attempt to make the past relevant to the present by using a past event as a tool to analyze and predict the outcome of a current situation' (p. 77). Moreover, time markers are present throughout the various texts and draw a timeline leading up to the events. Specific dates – 'Since the 80s' (305, p. 4), 'in Spring 2009' (998, p. 14), '2006' (1002, p.17) – and expressions of duration – 'For 20 years' (305, p. 13), 'for over a century and half' (1002, p. 26) show the continuity between past and present, thus applying Edy's concept of 'historical contexts' which 'differ from historical analogies in that they trace the portions of the past that appear relevant in leading up to present circumstances' (p. 80). Moreover, the time of memory is linked to the time of the past. Zelizer (2008) argues that 'journalists often

look to memory when the public needs help in recovering from the trauma surrounding death' (p. 85). In issue #998, *Les Inrockuptibles* invited artists and intellectuals to share their thoughts and memories. The opening statement by Michel Houellebecq starts with the sentence 'we have gathered here today' (p. 7) thus presenting this issue as a memorial service that pays tribute to the victims of the January attacks. The term 'tribute' (p. 10) appears a few pages later, followed by a multitude of anecdotes related to Charlie Hebdo and its deceased contributors. The lexical field of memory is present throughout the issue and is highly personalized: 'a minute of silence in memory of the victims' (p. 10), 'I remember' (p. 15), 'childhood memory' (p. 15), 'I must not forget' (p. 22). Through the use of memory, *Les Inrockuptibles* create a sense of collectivity through commemoration. The repetition of the term 'History' (305, p. 10/18) emphasizes the cyclic nature of time. These various markers create what Chouliaraki (2006) calls 'anachronism:' they 'produce, on present events, a past reference and thus link the two in the eternal flow of history' (p. 174).

Furthermore, *Les Inrockuptibles* convey the idea of undefined time through the discursive frames linking 9/11 and Charlie Hebdo to an anticipated future. If each event is presented as the inevitable consequence of a broader sociocultural history, the sample also repeatedly uses future tense. This is especially striking in issue #1002 entitled 'A Month Later, who is still Charlie?' in reference to the 'I am Charlie' solidarity movement born after the event. This issue includes a collection of articles concerned with the fate of the publication: what will happen to Charlie Hebdo? How will the magazine survive without half its team? The future 'will take time' (1002, p. 20) but is necessary as 'one needs to move forward' (1002, p. 21). This future is about hope but it is also about dreadful consequences. An article by Rokhya Diallo published in issue #998 uses future tense to express concerns about the growing islamophobia and the fate of Muslims in France following the attacks. The author repeatedly uses the term 'I foresee' (p. 16) to anticipate and emphasize the likely violent retaliation that Muslims will face in this hostile political climate. She thus links the event to its future consequences, showing how the January events are not limited to the actual time of the attacks. Similarly, issue #306 links the future to risk and fear. In the last sub-article, the economist Yann Moulier-Boutang uses the

terms 'risk' (306, p. 15-6) three times, 'danger' (p. 16) twice, 'peril' (p. 16) once and 'I fear' (p. 15-16) four times to characterize the potential consequences of 9/11. This reflects the concern that this event will go beyond the time of the 'Now' in uncontrollable ways.

Additionally, this research found that current time is less represented. Unlike live-broadcasting, print does not emphasize instantaneity. The ecstatic nature of the event is not located in a continuous flow of images and information but rather in the way *Les Inrockuptibles* put in perspective the ongoing historic timeline that these events are absorbed into. The time of the Now only appears through three discursive frames. Firstly, the many anecdotes contained in issue #305 recount what their author was doing when they found out about 9/11. The present is not that of the event itself, but rather it is the present of the experience. Instead of describing the event as it unfolded, *Les Inrockuptibles* describe how the event was experienced in real time. The time of the Now thus exists through personal anecdotes. Secondly, current time is expressed through actions in the present tense: 'Europe is uniting' (306, p. 15), 'Latin America is trying to organize' (306, p. 15). The Now is again not the time of the event itself – it is not the time of the planes crashing in the twin towers –, it is the time of globalized action. In response to the events, the world is acting and making political decisions. Finally, the time of the Now is linked to the idea of continuity. The 1002nd issue asks 'Who is still Charlie?'. Similarly, various articles mention the question of Charlie Hebdo's 'survival' (1002, p. 14), and ponder on the difficulty of 'staying Charlie' (1002, p. 14), thus asking how the Charlie Hebdo event can remain part of the present. This difficulty is linked to the theme of continuity and disruption, that is a central discursive frame throughout the sample. The ecstatic event is both inscribed in a historic flow of events and stands out as inherently disruptive. On the one hand, Luz and Riss, two illustrators working for Charlie Hebdo and interviewed successively in issue #998 and #1002, reassert the will to 'keep doing' (998, p. 18) the same work to make sure that things 'will not change' (1002, p. 19). On the other, *Les Inrockuptibles* present 9/11 as the 'shattering entrance into a new era' (Appendix 4). In print, the contentious temporality of ecstatic news thus lies at the heart of a discursive dialectic between continuity and rupture.

4.3 Ecstatic Space

Ecstatic news is also characterized by its reorganization of space, as ‘the event is mediated simultaneously as a local tragedy and as a global political fact’ (Chouliaraki, 2006: 158). This tendency is also present in *Les Inrockuptibles*’ representation of ecstatic events. This is first exemplified by the coverage of 9/11, which is a foreign event, in the pages of a French magazine. This creates a sense of transnationality that is reinforced by the opening statement of issue #305: ‘Some were in New York, at the heart of the tragedy, others elsewhere in America, others again on this side of the Atlantic, in front of their TV screen’ (Appendix 4). This sentence is particularly interesting because it locates the event beyond strict geographical borders. 9/11 is not just happening at the World Trade Centre, it also takes place across the West. This creates an ‘effect of anatopism’ (Chouliaraki, 2006: 174), which leads to an ‘equivalence among disparate locales, thus producing a new configuration of possible connections among them’ (p. 174). This is best exemplified by the way *Les Inrockuptibles* compare the viewpoints of intellectuals from ‘America’ (306, p. 2), ‘Luxembourg’ (306, p. 2), ‘Europe’ (306, p. 2), ‘the Middle East,’ and finally ‘the entire planet’ (306, p. 2). They draw parallels between countries as well as significant distinctions in core ideologies between the US and France (1002, p. 25).

Finally, this research found that many articles from the sample start with geographic indications on where the author was when they heard the news for the first time: ‘I was at home’ (p. 16/17), ‘I was in Japan’ (Appendix 6), ‘I was at the airport in New York’ (305, p. 6). Various interviews start with the question ‘Where were you during the attack?’ (305, p. 6) or ‘in which circumstances did you learn about the attack?’ (305, p. 8). Trying to pinpoint one’s location acts as an effort to better grasp the situation by situating it more concretely, thus fighting its undecidability. In the case of Charlie Hebdo, the relation to space is different as the event is taking place at home. Recounting his reaction to the attacks in the 998th issue, Eric Reinhardt, who was in Japan during the killings, writes:

Then I suffered from being so far from Paris, never had I felt this strongly in my lifetime that my country was France, and that I was French, and that I belonged there, there and nowhere else, in these terrible moments of suffering. (Appendix 6)

This extract is significant because the author reacts to the ecstatic event by reinforcing his spatial anchoring and geographical sense of belonging. Faced with the undecidability of an overwhelming situation, he finds reassurance through the clear reassertion of his symbolic position in space.

4.4 The Question of Meaning

Chouliaraki (2006) argues that the ecstatic event creates ‘shock and disbelief’ (p. 158). In the two ‘reactive’ issues, the discourse of surprise and shock is central: ‘shock’ (305, p. 6), ‘shocked’ (305, p. 3), ‘in a state of shock’ (998, p. 13), ‘I can’t believe it’ (305, p. 7), ‘I am astonished’ (998, p. 16-7), etc. One also notices the prominent use of hyperbolic terms to characterize the extraordinary character of the event: ‘the strangest part’ (305, p. 6), ‘spectacular’ (305, p.13/19), ‘unbelievable’ (305, p. 13/18). In issue #305’s closing article, Arnaud Viviant invites the reader to rethink the role of the journalist as a ‘passeur de l’incroyable’ (p. 19). For Viviant, the journalist attempts to make sense of the event as he passes it on. This echoes Chouliaraki’s argument that ecstatic news ‘is that which seeks to resolve the radical undecidability of the event it reports during the act of reporting itself’ (p. 158). In fact, *Les Inrockuptibles* pursue this framework by pondering throughout the sample on the adequacy of discourse. Which discourse is appropriate to cover these events? How can one describe nameless horror without falling into sensationalism? These are guiding questions that structure the magazine’s reflection. In an interview for issue #305, Elia Suleiman relates the difficulty of finding the ‘right vocabulary’ (p. 9) without falling into an over-intellectualization of the event and accepting the ‘powerlessness of language’ (p. 9). This narrative shows how the magazine is self-critical of the ‘shamanizing work’ (Chouliaraki, 2006: 177) at play in the media.

⁴ This means ‘the one who transmits the unbelievable.’

Throughout the studied texts, one notices effects of accumulations and repetitions (998, p. 17; 1002, p. 9). Patrick Bouvet, in issue #305, writes that 'journalists repeat always the same things, words come back constantly' (p. 13). Lists of words try to fill discourse, but they are only a failed attempt at hiding the general disbelief and incomprehension of journalists and readers alike.

This general loss of bearings gives way to the narrative frame of reality versus fiction. Throughout the sample, the discourse of fiction replacing reality is prominent. Many intertextual references compare 9/11 to 'Hollywood blockbusters' (305, p. 8) such as 'Fight Club, Die Hard' (305, p. 16) or 'Independence Day' (305, p. 5), drawing parallels between Bush and the 'President in *Mars Attacks!*' (305, p. 5). The events are a 'spectacle' (305, p. 17), a 'bad action movie, a bad gangsta-rap song' (998, p. 8). Journalists refer to cultural objects such as 'the poem *The Second Becoming* by William Butler Yeats' (998, p. 13) or Cohen's song 'Closing Time' (305, p. 14) to help make sense of the events. Being a cultural publication, *Les Inrockuptibles* use aesthetic codes and judgments of tastes while also mobilizing their assumed audience's cultural knowledge in an effort to make the events intelligible for the reader. They are still a 'weekly paper on music, cinema, and books' as they self-identify on their cover, and they struggle to distinguish between fiction and reality, between their role as reporter of the arts and reporter of the facts.

The discursive frame of symbolic meaning is also repeatedly used throughout the sample. 9/11 and Charlie Hebdo are both presented as symbols. 9/11 is a 'symbolic attack' (305, p. 10) against the concepts of 'capitalism and military power' (305, p. 11). In the collective imagination, the Twin Towers were 'emblematic' (305, p. 12; 306, p. 8), they were an 'icon' (305, p. 5), a 'symbol' (305, p. 11/16/19; 306, p. 8/15), something 'sacred, mythical' (306, p. 8), 'a Western fantasy' (306, p. 8). In an interview published in issue #998, Luz, a cartoonist working for Charlie Hebdo, explains how the journal is 'fantasized' (p. 18) to be a 'symbol' (p.18; 1002, p. 14) of freedom. However, he rejects the 'symbolic burden' (p. 18) assigned to the magazine and to its survivors who 'are only cartoonists' (1002, p. 19). Ury Eisenzweig, in issue #306,

argues that terrorism follows a 'logic of nonsense' (Appendix 5). He constructs his argument following the rules of reasoning, using third person clauses such as 'the fact is' and conjunctive adverbs such as 'however,' 'nonetheless,' and 'therefore', concluding that the discourses surrounding 9/11 reflect 'the desperate search for logic, the will to assign meaning to an action whose scariest feature is that it has no signification' (Appendix 5). Eisenzweig ironically defines the flow of images on TV as 'the perfect image of terrorism, provided that a fixed up – and yet necessary – quote comes with it: You saw nothing at the World Trade Center' (Appendix 5). This last sentence appears again as a self-reflexive criticism of the Shamanizing process (Dayan and Katz, 1992) involved in ecstatic news image-making; the brutally honest tone of Eisenzweig fails to 'harness the rawness of the event and domesticate its 'otherness'' (Chouliaraki, 2006: 159).

The lexical field of uncertainty, present throughout the sample, highlights the difficulty of mastering the undecidability of ecstatic news. Terms like 'maybe' (1002, p. 20) 'hypothesis' (306, p. 9) 'doubt' (306, p. 11) 'I suppose' (306 p. 11), 'I don't know' (306, p. 14), 'we wonder' (1002, p. 20) 'we didn't really know' (1002, p. 21), translate the inability for the cultural journalist to perform his hybrid role of either stating the facts in a clear and defined way or constructing a confident judgment based on a thorough analysis. One notes that this uncertainty is also expressed in the difficulty to characterize and name the events. If earlier issues concerned with 9/11 use the word terrorism repeatedly – including once as the simple title of an article, printed in large letters at the top of the page (306, p. 12) –, the Charlie Hebdo issues, published fourteen years later, prefer the terms 'killings' (998, p. 13, 1002, p. 14), 'attacks' (998, p. 14; 1002, p. 9/12/ 15), or 'what happened on January 7 and 9' (1002, p. 25) to characterize the event. This reflects perhaps the development of a taboo surrounding the use of the word terrorism (Beckett, 2016). The lexical field of horror is present throughout the sample, but the concepts of shock, 'torpor' (305, p. 6) and 'spectacular' (305, p. 9), central to the depiction of 9/11, are clearly mitigated in the latter issues on Charlie Hebdo. This can be interpreted as a growing response to the 'widespread concern that the news media is reporting terror events in a way that can spread fear and confusion' (Beckett, 2016, p. 9). *Les Inrockuptibles*

repeatedly rejects sensationalism and invites the reader 'to think' (998, p. 13) and 'to analyze' (998, p. 13), thus positioning the reader at the same level as the journalist in an intellectual reflection. The journalist is no longer following high modernist ethos. He does not perceive his role as that of a gatekeeper in charge of unilaterally educating the reader anymore (Jaakkola et al., 2015), he is solely a facilitator for reflection, valuing analytic skills as a professional ideal (Hanitzsch et al., 2011). The sample reveals a multiplicity of open-ended questions without definitive answers, inviting the reader to engage in a reflection on the responsibility of the West in the current political climate.

4.5 Identification

Chouliaraki (2006) defines 'the relationship between Western spectator and sufferer' as a '*reflexive identification*, whereby the spectator engages with the misfortune of the sufferer continuously, intensely and on multiple occasions. It is this relationship of identification that subsequently enables the emergence of a *universal* moral stance' (p. 159). This process occurs through the emphasis on 'what we all share' (p. 165) as a way to make the spectator 'engage with the sufferer not as a cultural 'other' but a 'universal' being endowed with a humanity like 'ours' and reflect on their suffering as, ultimately, part of our common fate as human beings' (p. 165). This research found that identification is at play in three key ways throughout the sample. Firstly, *Les Inrockuptibles* uses the lexical field of solidarity. Bowie's testimony, in issue #305 best exemplifies this through the use of 'Like each of you,' 'like you,' 'our world,' 'together,' 'all of us' (p. 6). Similarly, Edmund White repeatedly uses 'everyone' (p. 11), thus punctuating his text with reminders of unity. Expressions such as 'the solidarity of the French, the Germans, the British' (p. 11) or 'the Americans and the rest of the world are more united than ever' (p. 7) show how the sense of togetherness spreads exclusively across the West. The use of pronouns is key in defining networks of solidarity, but also systems of exclusion: 'us', 'our,' 'you and me' are opposed to 'the others' (p. 14).

In the case of Charlie Hebdo, the sense of solidarity is tainted with the ideology of 'National Unity,' put forth by the government right after the attacks. This notion is nonetheless criticized

throughout the various articles denouncing the rise of islamophobia and reminding the reader that ‘the feeling of universal solidarity is not enough’ (998, p. 13). In an effort to highlight the fractures within the National Unity, *Les Inrockuptibles* features articles by Muslim journalists, artists and intellectuals in an inclusive effort to fight mainstream narratives silencing ‘the Other.’ Secondly, the sense of solidarity is created through the various direct addresses of journalists to the reader, breaking the fourth wall and claiming solidarity and equality with the audience. Finally, the comparisons to other instances of suffering either in the West – The Great fire in London, Germany after the war, Paris during World War I (306, p. 15) – or in the rest of the world – the Golf War, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (306, p. 13) – attempts to create a sense of suffering that is transnationally relatable.

The identification process is, however, also counterbalanced by the emphasis on national specificities. The 1002nd issue puts the discourse on secularism in France at the heart of its coverage of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, thus linking the local event to a local contentious debate. France’s conception of secularism is different from many other countries, thus one can reasonably infer that the discursive frames at play there are strongly country-specific. Moreover, the 998th issue features articles by almost exclusively French journalists, artists and intellectuals, some well-known by French readers. The narratives make references to French culture, landmarks, politics and history. Despentès compares the decline of Charlie Hebdo to that of the Left in France (p. 9). Reinhardt explains how he heard about the killings through the iPhone Apps of ‘Libé’ and Le Monde (Appendix 6), thus assuming that the reader will know that ‘Libé’ stands for Libération, a major French Left-wing newspaper. Rokhaya Diallo mentions ‘On refait le monde’ a French radio show (p. 16). This way, the identification with the French reader is reinforced but the idea of transnational relatability is weakened.

4.6 Subjectivity versus Factualness

In the context of the crisis in cultural journalism and the contentious role of arts reporters as journalists and critics, this dissertation explored the discursive frames constructing a sense of subjectivity or pushing for an objective tone rooted in facts. Chouliaraki (2006) argues that

empathy is key in the process of reflexive identification. Introducing the concept of 'the involved spectator' (p. 179), the author writes:

In this disposition the spectator is overwhelmed by empathy. Inhabiting the space–time of instantaneous proximity, he or she gets close to the American sufferers, feels for their misfortunes and shares their destiny. The Americans are human beings just like 'us'; our feelings and fate are common. The weakness of this emotional humanism lies, predictably, in over-emphasizing feeling at the expense of rationality (p. 179).

A close reading of the sample reveals that the lexical field of feelings, emotions and perceptions is omnipresent in the 'reactive' issues. Issue #305 is a collection of highly subjective testimonies about the tragedy. Most contributors chose a first-person language to relay how 9/11 made them feel. Bruce Benderson, on page 5, writes 'I still struggle to express what I feel.' The verb 'feel' and its derivatives are repeated five times throughout the short text, while the term 'impression' appears four times. However, this overemphasis on emotionality is absent from the two more 'reflective' issues. These make use of subjectivity according to liquid modern ethos (Jaakkola et al., 2015) which celebrate analytical skills as a professional ideal (Hanitzsch et al., 2011).

The narrative analysis of issue #1002 reveals that three types of articles are present. Firstly, the issue contains three news pieces as defined by Verboord and Janssen's typology (2015). These are written in third person using a neutral tone. The author's voice is entirely absent from the text, giving way to a collection of facts, quotes by other individuals treated as data, and reminders of history, which all serve a seemingly unbiased informational purpose. The articles are presented as investigations and include various markers of logical progression such as 'It is true that' (p. 12) or 'thus' (p. 14), to signal the development of the author's analysis. The issue also includes two interviews, one with Charlie Hebdo cartoonist Riss, the other with an expert on questions of discrimination. Riss's interview is highly focused on his perception of the Charlie Hebdo attacks and what he envisions for the future of the newspaper, while the second interviewee makes use of a rational, impersonal tone and supports his answers with facts and numerical data. Finally, the issue includes a short humoristic piece about the

government's information brochure on how to spot potentially radicalized individuals. In the case of issue #306, narrative analysis reveals that the magazine contains two opinion pieces. The first one is about the uselessness of trying to find meaning in terrorist attacks; it is constructed through a third-person argumentative lens. The second one uses humor and irony to raise awareness on a grave situation. The article follows a seemingly rational progression: the author suggests an idea, highlights its limitation, offers an alternative, highlights its limitations again, until this logically demonstrates his argument. Finally, the issue includes three interviews with researchers and experts.

The dichotomy between factualness and subjectivity throughout issues #306 and #1002 reflects the uneasy status of the arts reporter. Certain articles embrace a form of subjectivity that is linked to an outsourcing of emotions. This outsourcing occurs through the use of humoristic, satiric or familiar tone, or through the inclusion of quotes or answers by individuals other than the journalist. Riss's interview is led by questions asking for emotional or highly-personalized responses, directly addressing the interviewee through the use of 'you.' Similarly, the insertion of quotes and testimony by Jewish individuals in an article on the increased appeal of Israel for the French Jewish community, highlights the thoughts, feelings and fear of the interviewees (1002, p. 22-3). However, all other interviews in both studied issues were conducted with specialists and ask impersonal questions calling for fact-based answers. This shows how the arts reporter is both embracing subjectivity while also maintaining high modern ethos that have 'still not been entirely outdated by the times of liquid modernity' (Jaakkola et al., 2015, p. 824).

4.7 Media and Culture

Finally, another key finding was that a self-reflexive discourse on the role of the media in covering ecstatic news was present throughout the sample. As a cultural publication aiming to be an 'anti-work' of mainstream news, *Les Inrockuptibles* included an ongoing critical reflection on the way these events were covered in the media. In the context of 9/11, Media outlets such as 'CNN' (305, p. 4) were accused of 'over-mediatizing the event' (305, p. 6). The

event becomes a part of the mediated space, when photos of the tragedy are published in the papers (p. 7), or when individuals ‘turn on the TV’ (p. 9) and witness the ‘massive flow of images,’ ‘stuck in front of the small screen’ (p. 9). Three discursive frames relating to the media are at play. First the media are described as a source of information. People turn to their screen to learn about and witness the extent of the tragedy. Second, *Les Inrockuptibles* offers a criticism on the way the events are covered, pointing to the overwhelming flow of images and the sensationalist and ‘manipulative’ power (p. 14) of the media. Third the articles highlight the role of communication technologies in reaching out to loved ones to make sure they are safe (p. 8) and spreading the news (p. 6/8). Similar discursive frames are at play in the coverage of Charlie Hebdo, when ‘BFMTV’ (1998, p. 11) becomes a source of information and ‘Radios, social media, and TV channels’ engage in ‘a continuous flow of more and more horrible content’ (1998, p. 16). Nonetheless, in the ‘reactive’ issue of Charlie Hebdo, the collected testimonies are not so much about the individual’s feelings when the event happened. They focus on the writer’s thoughts and affective memories linked to Charlie Hebdo as a newspaper. Therefore, authors do not write about how they found out about the event; information and communication technologies are not conceptualized in terms of their role in the process of immediately informing others and reaching out to relatives. It is nonetheless interesting to note how the particular status of cultural journalism allows for a critical self-reflection on the involvement of the media in shaping ecstatic events.

4.8 Limitations and Implication for Future Research

This research focused solely on *Les Inrockuptibles* because it is a specialized review, which makes the irruption of political news on the front cover even more surprising and interesting. Nonetheless, this small project is not enough to draw general conclusions about the discourses at play in the broader French cultural media landscape. Further research should strive to explore qualitatively the discourses employed in the cultural coverage of political news in other papers, including mainstream publications that surely reach a wider audience and are

thus more representative of the kind of cultural journalism that the French population consumes.

The question of time is also deeply interesting as cultural journalism does not play into the traditional logic of ‘breaking news.’ Therefore, further research should be concerned with the question ‘How does such temporality transform the way socio-political news are approached in the cultural pages?’ Moreover, in the context of a broader project, it would be interesting to conduct a comparative analysis of the coverage of a given event by mainstream newspapers such as *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro* in opposition to cultural publications in order to identify the key variations, additions or lacks of arts journalism. Finally, this dissertation is solely concerned with the coverage of ecstatic news, but it would be interesting to see if and how other forms of news, as typified by Chouliaraki (2006)⁵, make their way into the cultural pages.

5 CONCLUSION

This dissertation applied Chouliaraki’s concept of ecstatic news to print journalism by conducting a narrative discourse analysis of French cultural magazine *Les Inrockuptibles*. Building on the literature regarding the crisis of cultural journalism, which points to the ambiguous role of arts journalists as both critics and reporters, this project strived to explore the discourses at play in the treatment of specific sociopolitical events in French cultural press. It relied on the idea that liquid modern cultural journalism ‘accommodates both aesthetic-artistic issues and non-artistic issues’ (Jaakkola, 2014: 82).

At the structural level, the sample revealed two discursive strategies in the construction of ecstatic news: reactive journalism and reflective journalism. This dissertation started by demonstrating that *Les Inrockuptibles* applies aesthetic reviewing codes to analyze events. It then showed how cultural reporting situates ecstatic events beyond traditional time

⁵ Adventure news and Emergency news

boundaries. The articles' narrative frames inscribed each event into a broader socio-cultural history of violence, while also linking 9/11 and Charlie Hebdo to potential future consequences. This dissertation argued that, in print journalism, ecstatic time is expressed through the lens of a tension opposing discourses of continuity and disruption. This notion of ecstatic time is different from broadcast's which transcribes the event's undecidability through a constant flow of image representing the time of the Now endlessly.

Looking at space, this project showed that *Les Inrockuptibles* frames each event as taking place beyond established geographical boundaries, thus creating a sense of transnational empathy. Space is perceived as both a potential landmark and a source of undecidability. The difficulty to define ecstatic events in time and space leads to the emergence of narrative discourses about the merging of fiction and reality, which were accompanied by a reflection on the symbolic meaning of each event. Worried about finding the right discourse, various contributors denounced the tendency to over-intellectualize, thus offering a self-criticism on the Shamanizing process at work when trying to assign meaning to ecstatic events (Chouliaraki, 2006). The lexical field of doubt, added to a variety of open-ended questions, translated on the page the inherent undecidability of ecstatic news.

This dissertation also found that Chouliaraki's concept of 'reflexive identification' (p. 159) was useful to understand *Les Inrockuptibles'* narrative strategies. Journalists and contributors used the lexical field of solidarity and directly addressed the reader, thus breaking away from the hierarchal top-down communication process of high-modern journalism which perceives the audience as a passive recipient of the journalist's knowledge. Liquid modern values were largely reflected throughout the sample, even though high modern ideals still persist. Liquid modernity celebrates 'subjectivity, consumer-orientation, confrontation with power-holders, agenda-setting and relativist ethics' (Jaakkola et al., 2015: 817); the studied texts revealed an increase emphasis on subjective analysis, along with highly emotional testimonies and a clear will to hold the West also accountable for the current political climate.

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Finally, this project argued that cultural journalism offers a platform for critical self-reflection on the role of the media in covering ecstatic news, while also embracing the role of culture as a great tool to make sense of non-cultural events. If its purpose is not to update in real time, or to capture the raw essence of an event as it is unfolding, cultural journalism nonetheless provides a useful space for reflection, thus engaging differently in the process of meaning-making.

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APPENDIX 1: Sampled Texts

Issue #305

- NY, 11 Septembre 2001. (2001, September 18). *Les Inrockuptibles*. 4-19.

Issue #306

- Après le 11 Septembre, Réveil Brutal (2001, September 25). *Les Inrockuptibles*. 3-16.

Issue #998

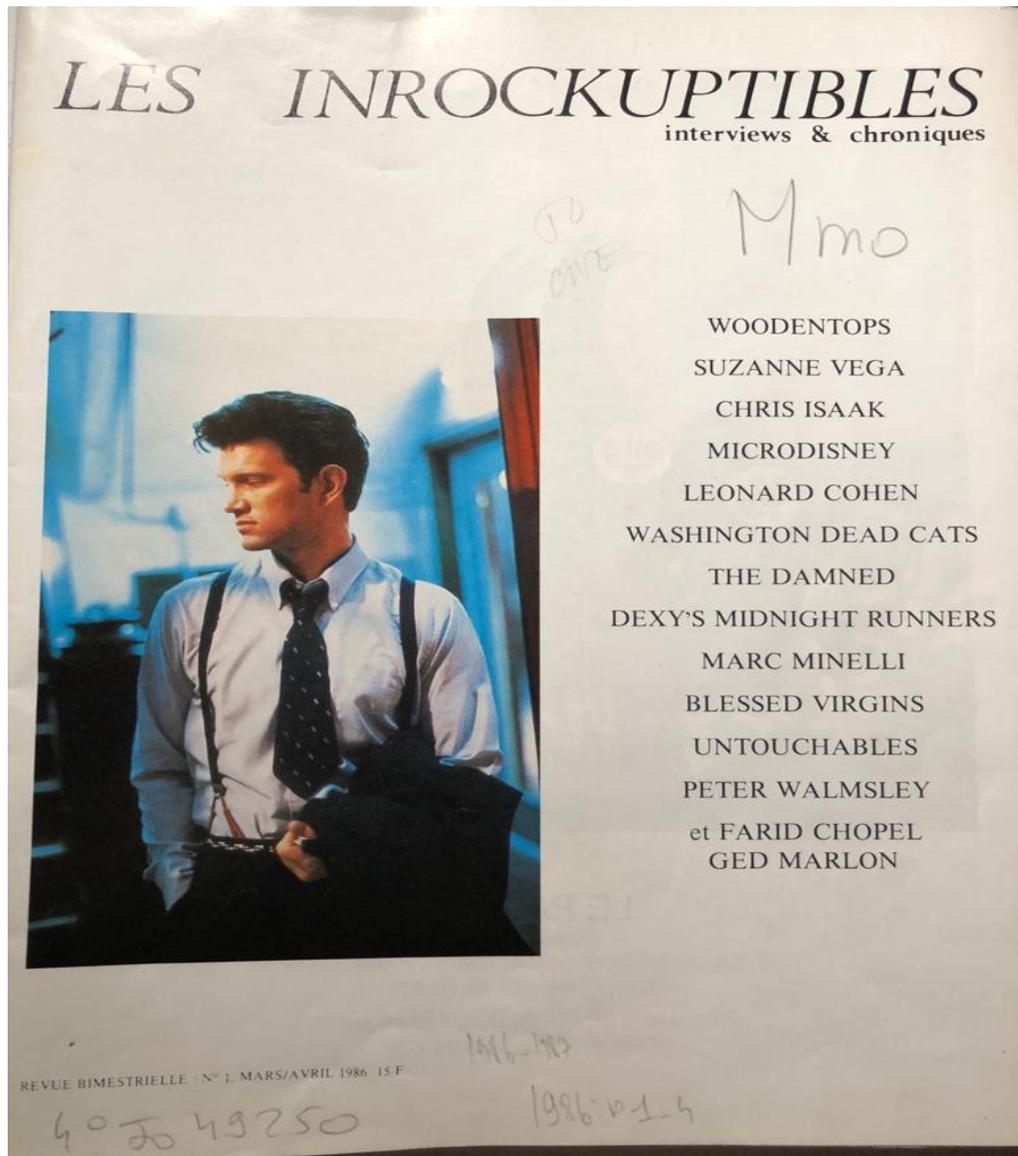
- Je suis Charlie (2015, January 14). *Les Inrockuptibles*. 6-25.

Issue #1002

- Un Mois Après; Qui est Encore Charlie? (2015, February 11). *Les Inrockuptibles*. 8-26.

APPENDIX 2: Les Inrockuptibles #1

The first issue of *Les Inrockuptibles*, released in March 1986.

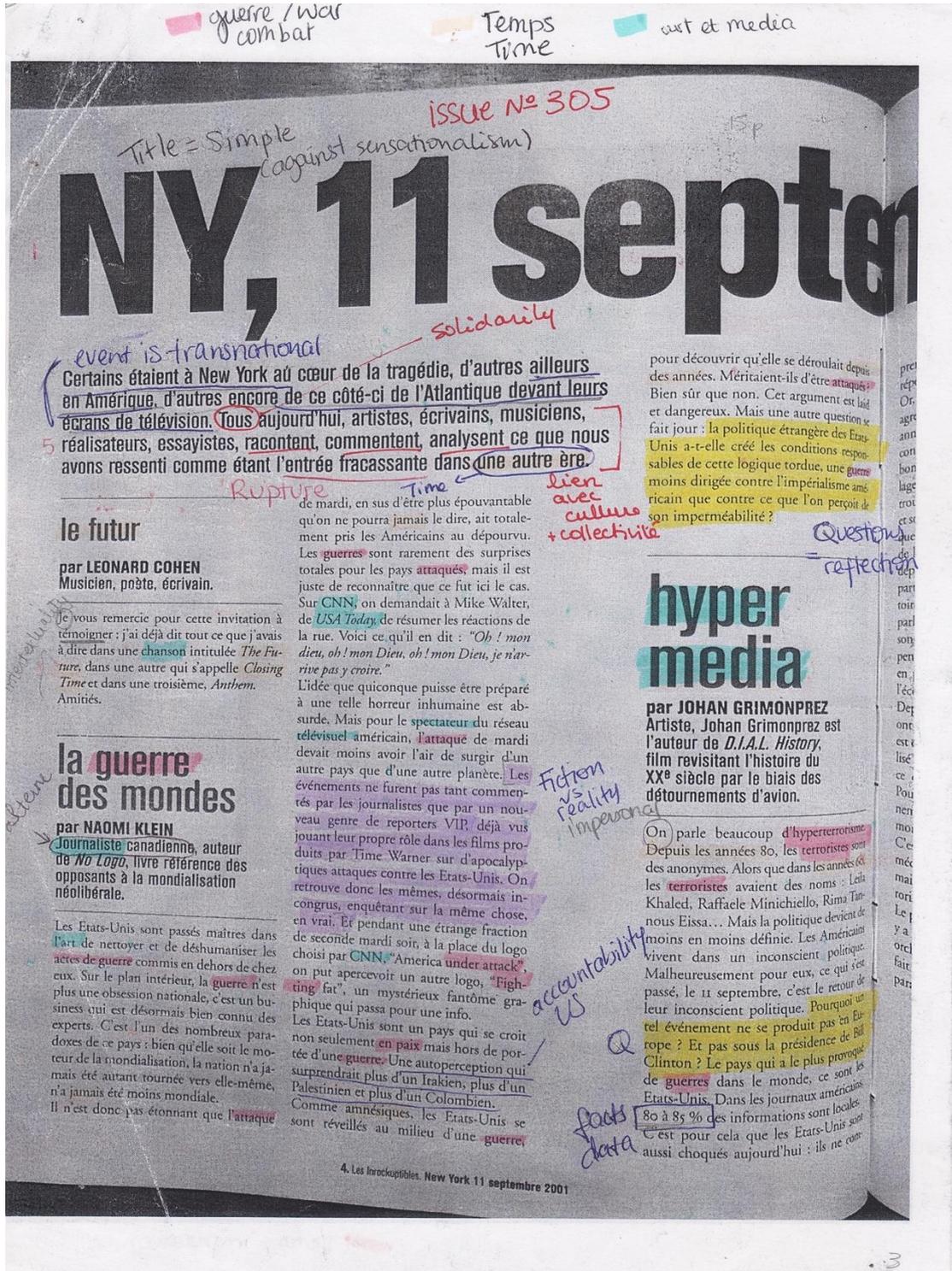


APPENDIX 3: Les Inrockuptibles #98

The first political cover, "Rocard Will Not Be President". May 1995.



APPENDIX 4: Annotated Sample Article #1 - Excerpt from issue #305



APPENDIX 5: Annotated of Sample Article #2 - Excerpt from issue #306

historical facts
 tout d'une fois impersonnelle
 subjectivité
 construction analytique
 symbols

la nuit américaine

Il est beaucoup question de symboles à propos des événements du 11 septembre. Les perspectives varient, bien entendu. Ainsi, dans le cas de New York, les deux tours du World Trade Center sont perçues comme emblématiques de la réussite économique du capitalisme américain – ou au contraire, de son arrogance politique, du mode de vie occidental, caractérisé par la liberté – ou par la décadence. Il n'est pas jusqu'à New York, elle-même présentée à cette occasion comme un condensé de la Ville moderne, qui ne se voie rétroactivement incarnée dans le complexe architectural que l'absence soudaine fige désormais dans une allégorie quasi sacrée, mythique. Symboles de part en part, donc, que les Twin Towers, comme paraît corrélativement symbolique l'agression sanguinaire dont elles ont été victimes, attaque contre l'idée même de la cité, peut-être de la civilisation occidentale tout entière, en tout cas de l'Amérique, pour les uns parce qu'elle personnifie la liberté, la réussite, la vitalité, le Bien, pour les autres, au contraire parce qu'elle représente ce qui, dans le tiers-monde, exploite, asservit, massacre, etc. Depuis bientôt deux semaines, la prolifération des commentaires et interprétations est sans précédent dans les médias américains. Mais qu'ils se croisent ou qu'ils se chevauchent, qu'ils se confortent ou se contredisent, ils s'entendent tout sur la nature symbolique de l'événement.

Pourtant, qui dit symbole dit lisibilité. Une lisibilité qui relève non pas du texte, mais du signal isolé, de l'icône, de l'image. De la transparence. Alors que, si l'on y réfléchit, il n'y a rien de moins évident, de plus opaque, de plus résistant à l'interprétation que la destruction du World Trade Center.

A vrai dire, le thème de l'opacité n'est pas totalement absent des commentaires. Il touche toutefois à la seule identité des auteurs de l'attentat. Plus précisément, il n'apparaît que dans la perspective toute pragmatique de la poursuite programmée et du châtiment à infliger. C'est l'ennemi qui est opaque parce qu'insaisissable, parce qu'il se cache, se déguise, se déplace. Il y a Ben Laden, bien sûr, dont les nom et visage apparemment à peine deux ou trois heures après que les tours se furent écroulés (rapidité d'autant plus remarquable que deux heures avant les attentats les

saït, fut cette cohabitation dans l'appartement victorien de Baker Street, avec en son centre le fameux fauteuil où, au cours de l'"armchair detective", allait procéder à l'identification de tant de criminels mystérieux. L'histoire est peut-être à écrire, de ce fantasme occidental d'un Afghanistan où l'absence de tout lieu fixe – de tout fauteuil – serait aux antipodes de l'idéal narratif moderne, romanesque mais aussi juridique, qu'est l'identification nette et définitive – et, donc, l'arrestation, du verbe "arrêter" – de tout auteur d'une transgression.

En tout état de cause, le fait est que Ben Laden lui-même, turban, cohortes et millions à l'appui, ne fournit pas une véritable réponse à la question initiale, celle du sens des attentats du 11 septembre. La guerre ? La rhétorique est actuellement populaire mais l'idée ne tient pas. Il y a d'une part la question, qui n'est pas que juridique, du statut d'un Ben Laden ou de son organisation hypothétique comme parties prenantes dans une véritable guerre avec un Etat, quel qu'il soit. Mais il y a surtout le fait que ni la destruction des deux tours ni même l'attentat contre le Pentagone ne s'inscrivent dans quelque perspective militaire que ce soit. D'ailleurs, c'est surtout à propos des actions à venir de la part des Etats-Unis eux-mêmes qu'apparaît dans les journaux et dans la bouche des politiciens la référence à la guerre – et même alors, il est généralement précisé qu'il s'agit d'une guerre "nouvelle", "d'un autre type", etc. L'Amérique est présentée comme att-

Depuis le 11 septembre, tous les commentateurs pointent le caractère symbolique des attentats. A bien y réfléchir, pourtant, le sens échappe : rien n'est plus résistant à l'interprétation que la destruction du World Trade Center. Cet acte s'inscrit dans la longue histoire de la logique du non-sens, c'est-à-dire du terrorisme. Par Uri Eisenweig

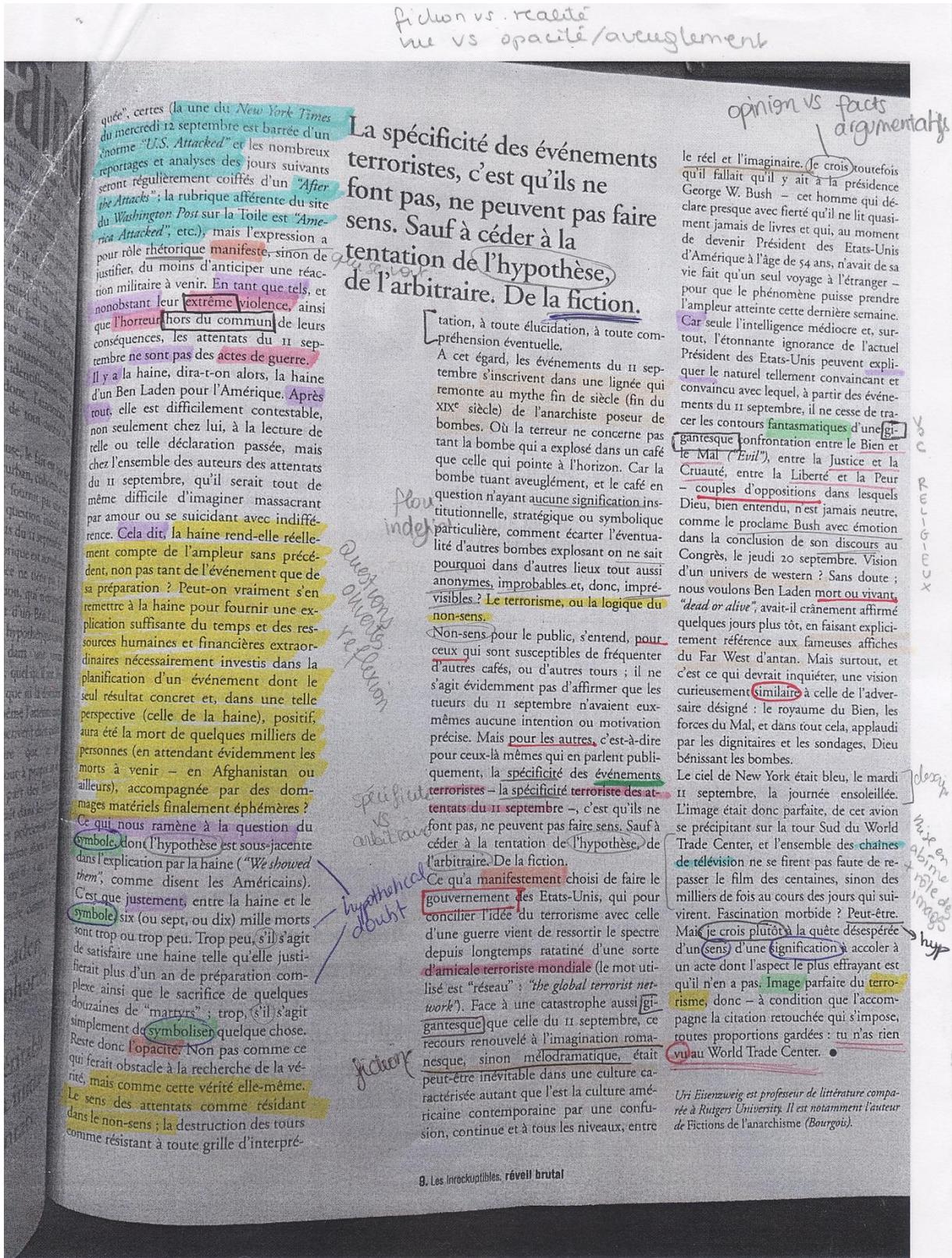
plus complexes, les plus méticuleusement et longuement préparés de l'histoire du terrorisme, les services de renseignement de la nation la plus puissante et la plus riche de l'histoire moderne n'avaient apparemment pas le moindre soupçon quant à leur imminence). Mais Ben Laden – si c'est bien lui –, c'est forcément l'Afghanistan, cet espace fantasmagique, mi-montagneux, mi-désertique où il peut paraître logique que l'on erre plus qu'on n'habite. Ainsi, rare photo de ce pays parue dans la presse américaine d'après la catastrophe, celle de la page 18 du *New York Times* du 13 septembre nous montre des habitations en ruines. L'intention était sans doute de souligner ainsi la pauvreté des lieux : l'article accompagnant la photo est d'ailleurs le premier à émettre l'excellente réflexion, depuis citée par d'autres, quant à l'inutilité de bombarder l'Afghanistan pour le "ramener à l'âge de pierre" ("to bomb [Afghanistan] back to the Stone Age", formule prise par la presse guerrière lorsqu'il s'agit de pays du tiers-monde) – puisqu'il y est déjà. Cela dit, dans un tel univers, comment identifier, situer qui que ce soit ?

Notons en passant que cette image de l'Afghanistan n'est pas nouvelle, du moins dans la tradition anglo-saxonne. Déjà en 1897, dans *Etude en rouge*, c'est de retour, blessé, de la seconde guerre anglo-afghane que le docteur Watson, à la recherche d'un logement, fit la connaissance de Sherlock Holmes, en proie à des soucis similaires. Le résultat, comme on

hypothesis
 ironie
 prudence
 rare
 dualité
 illustrer le propos
 in-text citation
 contradiction
 // fiction
 // fact

Le fait est que Ben Laden lui-même, turban, cohortes et millions à l'appui, ne fournit pas une véritable réponse à la question initiale, celle du sens des attentats du 11 septembre.

© Les Inrockuptibles, réveil brutal



APPENDIX 6: Annotated Sample Article #3 - Excerpt from issue #998

Alfred

horror
location
Media + Technology
solidarity

Eric Reinhardt
"dépasser la haine ordinaire et le régime de division continue"

where

J'étais au Japon, sur l'île de Naoshima, quand l'horreur est survenue, inconcevable. J'en ai pris connaissance sur mon iPhone, dans ma chambre d'hôtel, en consultant les applications de Libé et du Monde, anéanti.

J'ai alors souffert d'être si loin de Paris, jamais je n'avais senti à ce point dans mon existence que mon pays était la France et que j'étais français, et que là-bas était ma place, là-bas et nulle part ailleurs, en ces moments de terrible souffrance. Je n'ai pas été le seul à éprouver cette sensation si j'en juge par l'ampleur du mouvement qui s'est spontanément formé pour témoigner l'attachement qui est le nôtre, viscéral, identitaire au principe de liberté d'expression, et à une certaine forme d'irrévérence, d'esprit d'insoumission, d'humour et d'ironie débridée, salvatrice.

A Osaka, vendredi après-midi, reclus dans ma chambre d'hôtel, branché sur BFMTV, j'ai appris que des rassemblements avaient lieu chaque jour place de la République pour rendre hommage aux victimes de Charlie Hebdo, et qu'une inédite et bouleversante union nationale était en train de prendre corps.

Dans l'avion qui samedi me ramenait d'Osaka, soudain j'ai aperçu, sur la page d'un magazine feuilleté par un passager, le visage de Marine Le Pen : et ce visage je l'ai soudain trouvé terriblement vieilli et dépassé, comme annulé par le drame qui venait de nous frapper, un peu comme si j'étais tombé sur un très vieux journal et qu'entre-temps Marine Le Pen avait péri, politiquement péri, devenue obsolète, inutile, anachronique, terriblement inadéquate, évidemment dangereuse et destructrice, à la vue de tous désormais.

Je me suis dit que le pays était en train de se donner à lui-même, spontanément, comme s'il avait trouvé en lui des ressources insoupçonnées et qui le libéraient d'une amertume, de ses complexes et de ses peurs irrationnelles, une sublime leçon de hauteur et de responsabilité. Je me suis dit que ce drame avait permis à notre peuple une fulgurante prise de conscience et que soudain, fort de cette cohésion, nous avions tous compris, tous bords confondus, qu'il fallait s'unir autour d'un principe impérieux : dépasser la haine ordinaire et le régime de division continue qui régissent la vie de notre pays depuis plusieurs années.

Les discours du Front national sur l'immigration, la stigmatisation obsessionnelle des musulmans sont les dernières choses que l'on doit propager si l'on aime un tant soit peu son pays. Nous formons un tout, les musulmans sont avec nous et il faut qu'ils le sachent, qu'ils le sentent, qu'ils ne soient pas abandonnés aux extrémistes qui n'attendent que l'aggravation de ce clivage alimenté par Marine Le Pen, Eric Zemmour et consorts.

C'est une lumière inouïe qui vient de se répandre sur notre territoire et dans les âmes de nos concitoyens, espérons seulement que cette lumière ne soit pas celle d'un flash mais d'une nouvelle connaissance, de nouvelles espérances, d'un amour de soi enrichi et renouvelé, d'une nouvelle façon d'envisager l'avenir et notre identité, d'envisager ce qu'est être français. Il m'a semblé qu'on avait réappris à s'aimer, depuis mercredi dernier, et qu'on aurait envie désormais d'y goûter sans retenue, de repartir différemment en laissant de côté tous ceux qui endommagent notre pays, lui inoculent le poison de la haine et de la division.

C'est peut-être un doux rêve que celui que j'ai fait, dans la nuit de samedi à samedi, franchissant plusieurs fuseaux horaires au-dessus des nuages, mais peut-être pas après tout. N'était-ce pas un rêve collectif partagé par des millions d'autres personnes au même moment? L'après-midi que j'ai passé dimanche dans les parages de la place de la République ne l'a pas démenti en tout cas. ■

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recommandations
feelings + impressions

idealiste
ou nom du patrie fisme
ancrage géog
énumération
idealisme

solation physique
collectivity in thought

APPENDIX 7: Translation of Sample Article #3

Eric Reinhardt

“To go beyond the sense of ordinary hatred and the regime of perpetual division”

I was in Japan, on Naoshima Island, when the horror happened, it was unconceivable. I learned about it on my iPhone, devastated, in my hotel room, by checking *Le Monde* and *Libé*'s mobile apps.

Then, I suffered from being so far away from Paris. Never had I ever felt this much in my life that my country was France, and that I was French, and that there I belonged, there and nowhere else, during these tragic moments of terrible suffering. I was not the only one to feel like this, as shows the extent of the movement that was spontaneously created to voice our visceral identity attachment to the principle of freedom of expression, and to a certain form of mischievousness, a spirit of insubordination, humor and unbridled lifesaving irony.

In Osaka, on Friday afternoon, locked in my hotel room, in front of BFMTV, I heard that large gatherings were taking place every day at Place de la République, to pay tribute to the victims of Charlie Hebdo, and that a unique and moving national unity was taking shape.

Saturday, on the plane that was take me home from Osaka, I suddenly caught a glimpse of a magazine read by a passenger that had Marine Le Pen's face on the front cover: and that face, I suddenly found it terribly old and outdated, as if it had been cancelled out by the tragedy that had just hit us, a little bit like if I had stumbled upon a very old newspaper, and that in the meantime Marine Le Pen had perished, politically perished, she had become obsolete, useless, anachronistic, terribly inadequate, obviously dangerous and destructive, in the eyes of everyone now.

I thought to myself: the country is giving itself spontaneously, as if it found in its core unexpected resources and that it was freed from bitterness, from its complexes and its irrational fears. A magnificent lesson of humility and responsibility. I told myself that this tragedy had been a rapid wake-up call for our people and that suddenly, strengthened by our cohesion, we had all understood, from all sides of the political spectrum, that we needed to unite around a sovereign principal: go beyond the sense of ordinary hatred and the regime of perpetual division that has ruled the life of our country for many years. The Front National's speeches on immigration and the obsessive stigmatization of Muslim people are the last thing we should be spreading if we like our country the slightest bit. We form a whole, Muslims are with us and they need to know this, to feel this, they cannot be left to the extremists who are

only waiting for the social divisions to accentuate, fueled by Marine Le Pen, Eric Zemmour and the likes.

It is an unprecedented light that has shined over our country and in the souls of our fellow citizens, let us just hope that this light is not a flash but rather a new knowledge, new hopes, a renewed and improved sense of self-love, a new way of considering the future and our identity, of conceptualizing what it means to be French. It seems to me that we learned how to love each other again, since last Wednesday, and that we would now want to taste it without holding back, to start over differently by leaving aside everyone who harms our country by infusing it with the poison of hatred and division.

It was perhaps only a sweet dream that I made in the night from Saturday to Saturday, passing through different time zones above the clouds, or perhaps it is not after all. Was it not a collective dream, shared by millions of other people at the same time? The afternoon I spent on Sunday near La Place de La République certainly did not deny it.