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Looking through the mirror

Finding Hybridity in Al Jazeera English's Journalism
Metadiscourse

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ABSTRACT

The study of news agencies has been abandoned due to academia's inability to move beyond dichotomous understandings of media systems. Today, players like Al Jazeera English challenge binary comprehensions of media flows by neither fitting into the 'media imperialism' nor the 'media globalisation' debate. For this reason, this investigation merges the fields of cultural hybridity and journalism metadiscourse to create a more nuanced, less polarising method of analysis. This framework draws on the cultural hybrid elements of ironic subversion and performativity to supplement the journalistic metadiscourse elements of marginalisation and self-affirmation. The conceptual outline has been applied through a critical discourse analysis which analysed how Al Jazeera English represents, sustains, and creates hybridity within its narratives.

Findings from the critical discourse analysis reveal that metanarratives of hybridity in Al Jazeera English newswires are created through rhetorical strategies which interact with the West. These interactions performatively resist yet adopt Western forms of 'being'. The simultaneous acceptance and rejection of the West is a way to create identity in a (re)colonising media environment. The research suggests keyways in which future studies of this nature can effectively situate Al Jazeera English within academic literature. Overall, this study aims to provide an entry point towards merging two contrasting theories of media studies to avoid universalising assumptions of media systems and to explicate how power is created beyond the West.

INTRODUCTION

A cursory search on *Google Scholar* will confirm that since the early 2000s, the study of news agencies has largely been abandoned. Today, Rantanen (2021: 265) confirms this and writes, “the last studies of European national news agencies date from the 2000s”. Press associations represent media “organisations whose main raison d’être is to gather and sell news throughout the world for the benefit of retail media” (Boyd-Barrett, 1998: 19). Before cheap airline flights, fast 5G connection and instant messaging services, news agencies were the sole means through which societies in the Global North could learn about the Global South. In the 18th century, Britain’s *Reuters* or France’s *Havas* delimited geographical spheres of influence, so that news could be reported to and from their colonial capitals. Indeed, though the study of news agencies has stagnated, the debates between media imperialists and globalisation scholars of the early 1970s and 2000s concerned themselves with the power of news agencies.

The media imperialism thesis, which was born out of a response to the conglomeration of Western news, placed news agencies at the centre of media homogeneity claims (Boyd-Barrett, 1977; 1998). National broadcasters were seen to secure symbolic power through the circulation of symbols as journalists begin producing news at the newswire (Thompson, 1995). Historically, newswires were disseminated through satellite and sent to print offices. Today, newswires are considered ‘news products’ and are found on websites or distributed via email (Loomis, 2009: 147). Through this lens, power is not a fixed entity but lies in the hands of those who can construct reality rather than simply regurgitate it (Bourdieu, 1990). In this dissertation, power is seen as rooted within the colonial structures of capitalism which normalise associations of privilege to whiteness (Quijano, 2000; Freedman, 2014). Thus, the media imperialism debate advocates that broadcasters interact with societal blocs to legitimise, influence and propagate the self-interest of Western states.

In the context of news agencies, the nation-centred view has been contested by those who claim that the increased politics of visibility, brought afore by technological developments, has flattened ‘social processes’ (Therborn, 2000: 154). This perspective believes that media

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forms have not only increased our connectivity (Robertson, 2014) but altered the flow of news (Giddens, 1991; Silverstone, 2007). Globalisation theorists reject a top-down analysis and recognise that media texts can become appropriated by less powerful producers (Acharya, 2004: 42-45). Through this view, the state is no longer at the core of discussion but considered in terms of its scapes, which interact with centre-peripheries (Appadurai, 1990). Concerning international broadcasters, globalisation theorists often look to the concept of contraflow to describe their place and function. Most notably, Thussu (2007) and Sakr (2007: 199) recount that contraflow theory explains how geographies of production have created a new bridge between the South and West. Here, one learns that though news agencies have not become disembodied from the state, the concept of the national has decreased in relevance.

The incredible difference between the two paradigms and academia's subsequent scholarly shortage can be explained by the presence of players like *Al Jazeera* (denoted to AJ) and flagship channel *Al Jazeera English* (hereinafter referred to as AJE), which no longer look, feel or speak like press associations. Indeed, following a push from UNESCO to spread the development of national news in the 1960s, "setting up a national news agency became one of the essential things [...] of what it meant to be a nation" (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998: 10). The small peninsula of Qatar followed suit, and in 1996 AJ began broadcasting. In 2006 AJE commenced publishing on *AlJazeera.Net* which we now know as *AlJazeera.com*. The similarities between AJ and AJE are apparent, but the relationship between the two "is difficult to describe" (Kraidy, 2008: 24). Despite this struggle, AJE's aim is to bring a pan-Arab perspective to Western audiences, whereas AJ is exclusively catered to Arab-speaking audiences (Bewabi, 2016). AJE is made to appeal to Western consumers and like *Russia Today*, *Xinhua News Agency* and *Prensa Latina* challenges the globalisation and media imperialism debate it cannot be boxed into either thesis.

International broadcasters like AJE do not adhere to the values of objectivity which have long been attributed to agencies like *Associated Press* or *Reuters*. AJE thus exists at the intersection between globalisation and journalism but operates in a society that is "shaped by centuries of colonialism [...] against widening socio-economic gaps" (Rodny-Gumede, 2017: 169). The lack

of scholarly attention towards agencies is dangerous as media organisations have the power to generate distorted images of the 'other' (Akuta, 2001; Omer, 2009), influence readers' understandings of transnational policies (Barrera and Apezarena, 2013; Bartholome *et al.*, 2018) and impact the political economy of the media (Camaj, 2010; Boyd-Barrett, 2012). It is then the responsibility of young media scholars to account for and revitalise this critical, yet forgotten, area of media and journalism studies.

By going beyond the juxtapositions presented by the media imperialism and globalisation debate, this dissertation suggests comprehending international broadcasters through a more creative approach. Inspired by Rantanen's (2021) article, *Toward Hybridity? Nationality, Ownership and Governance of News Agencies in Europe*, this dissertation proposes a theoretical framework composed of cultural hybridity and journalism metadiscourse. Using the highly debated case study of AJE, the investigation intends to demonstrate how hybridity can provide a more nuanced theoretical understanding of media organisations. Journalism metadiscourse is theorised as enriching the framework as it holds elements of lexical analysis exclusive to the journalism industry. The dissertation's proposed conceptual outline will be used to confront conventions that media power beyond the West is either subdued or emancipatory. Instead, the inquiry contends that it can simultaneously be both and neither.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this chapter is to introduce rationales and key theories which will frame findings. The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach and uses the analytical lens of hybridity and journalism metadiscourse to produce a unique conceptual outline. By drawing on scholarship and highlighting literature gaps, the research demonstrates potential contributions to the field and introduces the dissertation's research question.

A hybrid turn

As presented in the introduction, literature concerning news agencies has failed to progress over the last twenty years. Despite this dire image, Rantanen's (2021) article puts forward a convincing argument for incorporating hybridity into the study of news agencies. Simply described, *hybridity* is a discourse practice. Bhabha (1994) defines hybridity as a 'third space' where communities interact with each other to create *identity*. Within hybridity, identity is not defined through essentialist terms but formed by the vehiculation of difference existing in the nexus "between social imaginary of both metropolis and modernity" (ibid: 6). Therefore, hybridity takes the stance that people, objects and communities are created in the in-between space of the colonised and the coloniser (Garcia-Cancilini, 1989). Though there exists a plethora of authors who have conceptualised hybridity as the result of globalisation (Martin-Barbero, 1993; Pieterse, 1994), hybridity is foremost the "theoretical metaconstruction of the social order" (Werbner, 1997: 13). This is because, hybridity "rejects simple dichotomies" leading readers to think beyond "either/or patterns of thought" as it is not concerned with expansionary processes generally tied to globalisation (Chadwick, 2013: 4-5).

Hybridity is not a method of analysis but a broad theoretical understanding of media. For instance, Miller (2012) uses the concept to question the dominance of Hollywood in the Nigerian film industry (known as Nollywood). Through the case study of Nollywood, the author concludes that the circulation of Western ideology varies, but media flows are informal. Opposite to this, Lee and colleagues (2020) use the notion to examine what factors promote cultural exchange between the 'Korean wave' and Muslim culture. Within their study, hybridity is used as a unit of analysis and sociopolitical factors are expended to explain the lack of intercultural *mélange*. Though the studies appear different, they demonstrate "that there are all sorts of hybridity, and each type does different cultural work in its particular context" (Sharrad, 2007: 101 cited in Pindi, 2017: 24). Indeed, analytical elements from hybrid theory are borrowed to understand how power is constructed, without dismissing the potential that media dominion can wholly be negotiated and resisted.

Organisational hybridity

Though a hybrid study can take many forms, to this dissertation's knowledge, there has only been one sustained use of hybridity in the context of news agencies. Differing from cultural or globalising applications of hybridity, Rantanen's (2021) hybridity is comprehended at three levels: the cultural, organisational and media systems levels. The latter accounts for the relationship between political regimes and news organisations (ibid: 268). Whereas the organisational notes how media organisations increasingly use multiple media logics to converge media forms (ibid: 267). Through the lens of media policy scholars, *governance* instead of *government* can explain the "hybridisation of modes of control" that allow the production "of a fragmented and multidimensional media order" (Levi-Faur, 2012: 1). Studies of this kind can extend to examining how digital activists use social media to interact with each other (Treré, 2018) or how structure is created in online crowds (Trott, 2018). This form and engagement of hybridity looks at the internal structures of press associations and their convergence with other forms of media.

Media hybridity as defined by Rantanen (2021) has been used by academics who explore the mixing of new and old media forms. For example, van Dijck and Powell (2013) highlight how popularity, connectivity and datafication have become founding principles of social media logic. Through this lens, the 'third-space' is not cultural, but an arena where audiences can derive meaning from different medias and negotiate them through constitutive debate (Burns, 2018). This is supported by Chadwick (2013: 13) who defines hybridity as "an area that overlaps with governance and regulation: the study of organisations". Yet, this form of hybridity cannot account for how "power transforms itself and comes to coincide with operational languages, with the formal rules that organise and construe the flow of messages" (Melluci, 2015: 59). Indeed, though organisational hybridity can explain how media organisations interact, it cannot account for symbolic power exerted through re-enactment. Consequently, instead of focusing on the organisational and media systems levels of Rantanen's (2021) analysis, this research will adopt and expand the author's *cultural level*.

A (cultural) hybrid turn

Rantanen (2021: 226) views the cultural approach as futile when studied in isolation. Though there is obvious resonance to her claims as hybridity can be used to understand identity negotiation within diaspora (Kraidy, 1999, 2002b; Ang, 2003; Pervez, 2004), the analysis disagrees. The research believes that hybridity can account for interactions between media systems by rooting itself within nuanced understandings of power. Indeed, hybridity's emphasis on *identity* can explain how news media interact with the broader media landscape. According to Bardhan (2012) postcolonial identities are not only found in people, but in communities and objects. The postcolonial is defined as "the recognition that institutionalised knowledge is always subject to the forces of colonialism, nation, geopolitics and history" (Shome and Hedge, 2002: 251). This is relevant to AJE as the agency continues to inhabit the colonial "social structures [...] which affect almost everything we do" (Young, 2005: 13). Bardhan (2012: 152) further supports this by stating "a postcolonial move helps us productively [...] theorise culture [...] as a travelling [...] deterritorialising and mutating variable". Certainly, the Global South has been in conflict with the Global North as governments have attempted and succeeded to colonise culture (Lester, 2005), media (Cherkaoui, 2017) and land (Pappé, 2014). Thus identity, borrowed from a hybrid perspective can help decode the ways in which AJE creates space in the international environment.

By examining how AJE represents itself to Western audiences, one can learn how interstitial agency (Bhabha, 1992; 1994) is a source of self-empowerment and rejection. This critical view of hybridity moves us away from ideas of sameness (Kraidy, 2005) or contraflow (Thussu, 2005; Sakr, 2005) and towards understanding how media texts, instead of the 'body' "*function as the signifiers of the condensation of subjectivities*" [original emphasis] (Hall, 1996: 11). Identification in hybridity is defined as reflexive and a process which recognises "power is not only imposed externally but works [...] as the regulatory means by which subjects are formed" (Butler, 1993: 22). These subjects need not be people, but rather "material points at which codes of difference and distinction are inscribe upon the sociou" (Robins, 1996: 75). Through this lens, the analysis argues that because AJE is primarily composed of Western-

trained Arab journalists (Powers, 2012) but aims to be “freed from the dependence on Western media lens” (Al Jazeera, 2003 cited in Powers, 2009: 16), whilst operating in colonialising media systems, AJE is the ultimate hybrid product. Here, the cultural hybrid concept of *identification* can help unveil how being is sustained, propagated, and enacted.

Ironic subversion

Given this conceptualisation of cultural hybridity a question bears asking: that is, how can cultural hybridity be attached to the subject of news agencies? For the analysis, this can be achieved through the concept of ironic subversion. Ironic subversion presents the idea that historically ‘subaltern’ cultural movements integrate aspects and adapt aspects of a dominant cultural genre (Bhabha, 1994, 1996; Devarenne, 2010). Bhabha’s (1994) ironic subversion has been used to explore how indigenous cultures become (mis)represented in the media (Amoamo and Thompson, 2010) or how the Mexican American concept of *mestizaje* (racial mixture) helps form discourses for diasporas (Torres, 1998). Ironic subversion can analyse how news agencies have adopted elements from Western media to “disrupt the authority carried by the coloniser” (Serwornoo, 2019: 1361). For example, Peruško’s (2021: 38-40) study uses organisational hybridity to understand how Central and Eastern European agencies create new media logics to subvert Western dominance. Thus, ironic subversion is not only found in expressions of hybridity, but also in the media logics which seek to create space as a means of integration and resistance.

Performativity

The second element that links the two theoretical areas is the concept of performativity. Postcolonial hybrid products are said to interpolate “into a subject position and so endows the other with agency” (Drichel, 2008: 596). Simply explained, hybrid identities explicitly draw on their otherness to reclaim agency from the oppressive entity (Nowak, 2016; Tate, 2017). Interestingly, if the literature surrounding press associations is reviewed, many texts invertedly play on this concept. For example, Elwash and Howard (2020: 632) conclude that journalists in *Russia Today* strategically emphasised Brexit messages to enable exposure to the Leave

campaign to “cause chaos” and enunciate their otherness from other Western media forms. Thus, performativity in news agencies can be found at the intersection where their identity is expressed but dramatically preformed to reject dominion (Giardina, 2003; Hall, 1996). This is supported by Gilbert and Lo (1997: p.5) who observe Canadian Monodramas and conclude “the performer enacts multiple subjectivities which resonate against- and dialogise - others in the course of the performance”. Therefore, the concept of performativity can explore how AJE performs its identity and with what communicative aims, if at all.

To this point, the literature has defined hybridity as a *communicative practice*. The malleability of hybridity is a key critique of the theory as concepts multiple directions have made it ‘messy’ and ‘unclear’ (see Mitchell, 1997; Stockhammer, 2012). Hybridity is a highly debated term and “sustained treatments that theorise cultural hybridity as a communicative space or practice” like this research “remain rare” (Kraidy, 2002: 317). The key issue here is that hybridity’s postcolonial ties “speak for others” (Alcoff, 1991: 1) or domesticate the postcolonial subject (Mbembé, 2001: 104). Paradoxically, hybridity can fail to question geographical knowledge in a “re-colonising post-colonial world” (Noxolo. 2018: 317). Loomba (1998) gives evidence to these claims by stating that alterities such as the term contraflow and alternative media are co-optation by “Westernised postcolonial intellectuals [...] whose primary role is manufacture alterity” (cited in Iskandar, 2005: 253). In the case of AJE, the author further explains his frustration by stating, “if Arabs are subaltern, so is ‘their’ station” (ibid: 256).

By critically engaging with scholarship, the analysis finds that critiques are born from scholars who see hybridity as a ‘globalisation problematique’ rather than a discourse practice created by previously colonised peoples (or mediascape) (Marinetto, 2005). Indeed, if hybridity is instead viewed as a discursive process that borrows its elements from different epistemologies, it becomes untied to the subject of globalisation. This is supported by Prabhu (2012: 147) who argues that “theoretical methods of hybrid analyses come together, in this way, to provide a coherent model for hybridized reading”. Certainly, the theoretical parameters of hybridity are vast and thus one must harness their flexibility to better

theoretically reflect on AJEs position. Therefore, to account for hybridity's shortcomings, this dissertation creatively supports hybridity with the concept of journalism metadiscourse.

JOURNALISM METADISCOURSE

To understand how journalism metadiscourse can be used as an analytical tool, it is critical to define the term 'metadiscourse'. Most famously, metadiscourse has been defined as "text about text" (Hyland and Tse, 2004: 156) or "discourse about discourse" (Ädel and Maurannen, 2010: 1). In Hyland's (2018) most recent research, the term is defined as the "pragmatic phenomenon not limited to linguistic form" (Hyland. 2018: 25). Though metadiscourse studies do not explicitly draw on Foucauldian discourse, they are characteristically taut by it. Foucault (1981) defines discourse as the structural processes used to (re)secure dominant power relations. Analysed through a Foucauldian perspective, metadiscourse analyses "the relationship of language to other social processes and how language works within power relations" (Taylor. 2004: 436 cited in Kiersey, 2011: 34). Through Foucault's understandings of power, metadiscourse becomes inherently aligned with cultural hybridity as the theory is "interested in the ambiguous powers of exchange inherent in anomalous confluences of otherwise distinct categories" (Douglas, 1996 cited in Ackermann, 2012: 10). This is supported by Rose (1996: 129) who draws on Foucault to argue that hybridity unpicks "the ways in which 'the self' [...] functions as a regulatory ideal in so many contemporary aspects and forms of life". Indeed, to effectively understand the hybrid subject, one must look inwards how to understand *how* hybridity subject is created.

Journalism metadiscourse then concerns the way journalists speak about themselves (Thomas and Finneman, 2014). Journalism metadiscourse is seen to be existing with a paradigm (Jaakkola, 2014; Ogbemor, 2018; 2020) and deals with investigating how the paradigms values are upheld. Studies such as Hackett's (1984) and Berkowitz's (2000) use international broadcasters to understand how journalists 'repair' the paradigm in times of journalism crisis. Ogbemor (2020: 42) reflects on this and suggests that journalists can fix the paradigm by

“identifying the offending individual or organisation which violated journalistic norms”. Given this dissertation’s aims, the analysis can identify AJE in moments of paradigm repair to locate moments of expressed hybridity. This is akin to Hindman (2005) who uses the journalism metadiscourse to show how news channels accept violations of the paradigm by giving solutions to their offences. In some ways, this is comparable to Bhabha’s (1994) third space insofar that hybridity tied to identity and moments of paradigm repair call into question media identity (see Pervez, 2004: 154). Through this lens, journalism metadiscourse not only brings afore narratives of hybridity within texts, but also offers the opportunity to investigate them in terms of their assertion or negation of other media players.

Self affirmation

As identified by the literature, the first way that news agencies assert the paradigms values is through self-affirmation. Self-affirmation describes “how journalistic self-criticism protects existing paradigms rather than confronts entrenched deficiencies and contradictions” (Bennett *et al.*, 1985 cited in Carlson and Lewis, 2015: 4). Therefore, self-affirmation ‘repairs’ as it *affirms* to the reader that the news organisation is able to uphold journalistic standards (Reese, 1997). In Berkowitz’s (2000: 126) study on Princess Diana’s death, the author confirms that self-affirmation had a double function of “re-affirming professional ideology in both the mind of society and in the minds of journalists who belong to and believe in that professional culture”. Self-affirmation can be found in lexical strategies used to tactically repair the paradigm such as done by *The Guardian* during the Levenson Inquiry (Ogbebor, 2018). By investigating self-affirmation, the analysis can perceive how AJE situates itself within hybrid media systems. This subtle form of understanding is critical as it prevents assumptions that “alterity, as employed by Al Jazeera, resembles the marketing strategy for a corporate brand” (Iskander, 2005: 255) without making overarching claims that AJE has ‘created’ the Arab public sphere (Figenschou, 2014).

Marginalisation

Unlike self-affirmation, the paradigmatic strategy of marginalisation deals with understanding what rhetorical devices are employed to shift blame. Through this means, the paradigm self-repairs by excluding others to “help maintain a social group’s solidarity” (Zelizer, 2004: 17). Elsewhere, marginalisation has been tied to the theory of ‘image restoration’ and explains how “in the event of an undesirable action, a group may evade responsibility, offer corrective solutions to reduce the offensiveness of an event” (Benoit, 1995: 74-82). For example, during Berger’s (2008) research into journalism in post-Apartheid South Africa, the author found that the paradigmatic strategy of scapegoating was used to restore the paradigms credibility and assert the newspapers commitment to the public. Importantly, marginalisation can be tied to Mattelart’s (1979: 232) idea of ‘discriminatory independence’ where medias and people are seen to ‘other’ the West to maintain cultural agency. Therefore, the notion of marginalisation can be used to understand what type of hybrid resistance AJE enacts and how this influences a reader’s broader understanding of the news media ecology.

Finding hybridity in AJE

To firmly situate these analytical elements within the context of AJE, the literature reflects on studies pertinent to the press association. Though AJE has been a significant area of interest, the cultural approach to AJE tends to focus on communities and question if ‘new media’ are democratising the Middle East. Miles (2010), Lynch’s (2006), and Seib’s (2005) books focus on dissecting AJE from a sociopolitical perspective. Similarly, Zayani’s (2005) collection of essays spotlights the concept of the public sphere to map the channels’ role in the region. Cultural studies of AJE concern themselves with questions of democracy, diplomacy, and representations of Qatari power. Though such studies are critical, academics like Kraidy and Al-Ghazzi (2013), as well as Hammond (2017) have long identified that the space of popular music and television are more valuable to understanding political debates. For example, though Figenschou (2011) unpacks the mediation of suffering within AJE and concludes “that the institutional authorisation of ‘the voiceless’ is part of its “editorial distinctiveness and branding strategy in the global media market” (*ibid*, p.249), the reader is left

wondering why AJE needs to create ‘editorial distinctiveness’. The analysis contributes to this strand of scholarship by asking what entices AJE’s participation in ‘maverick’ forms of reporting.

Unlike the cultural analysis trend, the empirical trend focuses on comparative studies of Arab broadcasters and international media outlets. Comparative studies of *Al Arabiya*, AJE and European media constitute the bulk of this trend (*see* Loomis, 2009; Fornaciari, 2012; Haigh & Bruce, 2017; Ajaou & Elmasry, 2020). For instance, Al Ibrahim and Shi (2020) employ a content analysis to investigate how terrorism is framed in *Russia Today* and *Sky News Arabia*. AJE is used as a barometer to test the extent to which the news agencies “use [...] the human-interest frame in their coverage to ISIS human rights violations” (ibid: 225). This use of AJE reflects a growing body of scholarship which adopts the contraflow thesis to compare AJE’s coverage to news outlets (Thussu, 2007; El-Naway and Powers, 2009; Damanhoury & Saleh, 2017). Indeed, AJE is generally compared to other broadcasters instead of considered independently. Though research is ripe with quantitative methods of exploration, Abdulmajid (2019: 44) writes, “future research may focus on other aspects of media discourse in the Middle East and elsewhere by means of different analytical method”. Thus, this dissertation contributes to this field of academia by focusing solely on AJE and shifting the methodological focus to broaden the parameters of inquiry.

Due to the scope of this research, the investigation has briefly touched upon how this research can strengthen academia both empirically and methodologically. The analysis concludes that though studies on AJE are plentiful, they lack focus on the subject of intervention. Within the cultural analysis trend, one learns that due to the unique environment AJE exists in, it is not particularly useful for measuring and sociopolitical arrangements in the Arab world. Within the quantitative trend, the research learns that AJE is analysed in comparison to other broadcasters, consequently lacking the analytical depth needed. The need for more in-depth engagement is not a form of boundary fetishism but a call for more unique methods of intervention. Consequently, this dissertation’s final contribution is that it attempts to kick-start intervention by analysing AJE through a hybrid metadiscoursal lens.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This literature review has introduced the subject of news agencies and identified the keyways in which the topic has been discussed. The investigation introduced and recognised major tensions academic areas causing stagnations in the development of news agency research theory. Therefore, the research now turns to describing its conceptual framework to further clarify the aims of this research.

By drawing upon Rantanen's (2021) cultural level of analysis, the research uses cultural hybridity as a critical lens of analysis (Garcia-Cancellini, 1989; Werbner, 1997; Kraidy, 2002) which can create nuanced understandings of media power. The exploration chooses to expand Rantanen's (2021) cultural level of analysis, instead of the *organisational* and *media systems* level, as the latter focuses on processes of hybridity rather than its outcomes. This approach is supported by Kraidy's (2002) and Bardhan's (2012) scholarship, which situate media products as existing within the structures of postcolonial society. This has been further embedded by tying the hybrid concepts of *ironic subversion* (Bhabha, 1994) and *performativity* (Drichel, 2008; Nowak, 2016; Tate, 2017) to the study.

Once the literature justified its decision to engage with hybridity, the report moved to explaining its choice of case study. By describing its intent to unpack the content of AJE news wires, the research suggested that cultural hybridity presented several limitations (Marinetto, 2005; Kuortti and Nyman, 2007; Kraidy, 2005). Consequently, to avoid universalising assumptions, the analysis introduced the subject of metadiscourse. As highlighted by Ogbebor (2018; 2020) and Jaakkola's (2014) unique conceptualisations of journalism metadiscourse, the method can account for insecurities presented by hybridity looking *inwards* to media identity and place. The paper borrows from journalism metadiscourse and merges elements of hybridity with the notions of *marginalisation* (Hackett, 1984) and *affirmation* (Reese, 1997). Given the interdisciplinary and nature of this dissertation, the research has provided a graphic to further organise theory in Appendix A.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the literature review, this paper has developed a research question which will guide findings and conclusions. The investigation seeks to test the value of metadiscourse hybridity by using the case study of AJE through asking:

RQ: How are narratives of hybridity created in Al Jazeera English's metadiscourse during times of paradigm repair?

By asking how narratives of hybridity are created in AJE's metadiscourse during times of paradigm repair, this dissertation aims to expand Rantanen's (2021) cultural level of analysis. By elaborating on the cultural level, the research contends that cultural hybridity is a productive element of research that adds an additional perspective. Overall, by bringing to attention these arguments, the study not only hopes to revitalise this area of media studies but aims to show how power need not be conceptualised unidirectionally.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is dedicated to justifying the research methodology, considering the methods limitations, outlining research design, and addressing the ethical considerations of this project. To conclude, this section will end with a discussion of the researcher's positionality.

Critical discourse analysis

By tying journalism metadiscourse to Foucault's (1981) definition of discourse, the analysis notes that discourse is not a simple speech act, but a constructed practice that perpetuates predefined structures. Such structures do not exist in limbo, but construct understandings of the world by containing dialogue within images and language (Foucault, 1982: 210). Therefore, to uncover how narratives of hybridity are created in AJE's metadiscourse, this paper undertakes a critical discourse analysis (hereinafter referred to as CDA). The analysis

chooses CDA given “the role of discourse in the re(production) and challenge of dominance” (van Dijk, 2001: 300). The key word here is ‘challenge’ as in contrast to thematic analysis or content analysis, “CDA recognises both individual agency and social factors as being part of the “production of language [...] within a particular type of practice” (Hanrahan, 2003: 10). The epistemological link between the conceptual framework and CDA is that the method recognises that ways of ‘acting and being’ are rooted within exchanges of text and writer (Fairclough, 1989; 2003). This effectively ties CDA to not only the research aims, but its conceptual hybrid metadiscoursal framework.

The emphasis CDA affords to the structuration of meaning is central to understanding how AJE self-represents. Moreover, the method's ontological founding in social realism suggests that CDA can be emancipatory. According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2010) CDA analyses how power is negotiated within texts with the aim of bringing change to social practices. This is pertinent to the aims of this dissertation, given I seek to merge two paradigms of inquiry. Additionally, the method's goal of social change allows for a critique of counter-hegemonic theories. This is founded on the belief that CDA can bring afore more nuanced understandings of media power. This is supported by Janks (1997) and Loomba (2005) who engage with Fairclough's (1989; 1992) work to show how power is not monolithic but constantly imbuing relations within society. Unlike other forms of discourse analysis, CDA's malleable approach offers a critical perspective on discursive representations by bringing afore prevailing nuances (*see Lazar, 2007*). This makes the method suitable to understand metanarratives of hybridity.

Limitations

Though CDA is relevant to this study, this section briefly touches upon its shortcomings. In terms of this dissertation, the most significant critique is that despite CDA's critical lens, “discourse is not viewed as contextual, relational, or bound up in the experiences of everyday life” (Abrahamsen, 2003: 198). Recognition of this is vital as it is similar to the critiques attributed to hybridity (Power *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, to account for the method's insecurities, I adopt an affective understanding of CDA. This *affective* understanding of CDA rejects the

belief that research is neutral and recognises that my role as researcher affects the way discourse is contextualised. Though Fairclough's model of CDA does not consider itself affective, I argue that it inherently is. Like Wetherell (2013: 20), I acknowledge that CDA "is inextricably linked with meaning-making and with the semiotic (broadly defined) and the discursive". This link between affect and CDA is supported by Peng (2020: 5) who debates that affect is "understood to be an approach that primarily analyses the pre-discursive". For the analysis, the two theories merge at the belief that "one's actions of discourse are intended to affect *others*" [added emphasis] (**ibid**). As my aim is to investigate metanarratives of hybridity and avoid universalising assumptions, I attempt to account for determinism sometimes embedded in CDA by consistently reflecting on my cognition of the context by viewing CDA as affective.

Research design

As highlighted by the literature review, metadiscourse is best analysed in moments of paradigm repair. Thus, the research is designed via a CDA which analyses hybridity during moments of paradigm repair. The research uses Jaakkola's (2014) dimensions of a crisis to effectively situate the sample population within the theoretical framework. Here, I understand that texts need to be selected in terms of their Temporal, Spatial, Social and Ethical dimensions.

Temporal - The temporal dimension treats a crisis "as either a single occurrence or an ongoing process marked with continuities" (**ibid**: 8). This is supported by Olsson (2014: 113) who suggests that media organisations are most reflexive moments before and after the crisis. Here, I select texts from the period of September 2007 when Wikileaks cables suggested that Wadah Khanfar modified AJE's coverage of the Iraq war. This is because the event was a turning point suggesting "a speculation of forthcoming developments" (Jakkola, 2014: 6) as Wadah Khanfar resigned after the alleged scandal.

Social and Spatial - Within Jakkola's (2014: 9) study, the social and spatial dimensions are considered jointly and approached as moments "when media had to confirm its own identity

and mission". The social and spatial praxis describes how "journalism derives its authority from its presumed ability to provide a truthful representation of the social world" (Broersma, 2013: 31). For the socio-spatial dimension, I select texts from 2020 regarding Mahmoud Hussein's (former AJE journalist) unjust imprisonment in Egypt. This is due to prior readings which have identified that Hussein's imprisonment triggered "a vocal international response" (Qian, 2020: 485).

Ethical - The final dimension of Jakkola's (2014: 10) typology is the ethical paradigm, this aspect considers how "ethical conduct distinguishes journalism and journalistic professionalism from all other forms of mass communication". For example, Botma and Wasserman (2008) use the ethical dimension to revise how art journalism is a means of understanding the moral barometers of post-Apartheid South African communities. Given these considerations, I select texts from the period of 2021 when AJ offices were targeted in Gaza and when members of the Gulf-Cooperation Council issued a blockade against the network. This is due to literature which has identified the *ethical* significance of the unjust bombing and blockade (*see* International Federation of Journalists, 2021).

To recapitulate, these instances of potential paradigm repair formed specific time periods which to draw texts from: February 2007- November 2007 for the temporal, March 2020 – December 2020 for the social and spatial, and lastly January 2021- October 2021 for the ethical.

Sampling

Once the study identified its periods of concern, a pilot study was employed to determine what texts were available during the chosen periods of analysis. Here, I used purposive sampling to "information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources" (Palinkas *et al.*, 2012: 534). The criterion approach (Breeze, 2011) was already implemented by nature of applying Jakkola's (2014) typology of crises and supported by a purposive selection based on length. News wires were retrieved via the AJE website and key words were used to identify wires. For example, to select texts regarding Mahmoud Hussein's imprisonment, I used the keywords 'Egypt' 'Mahmoud Hussein' 'Prison' 'Journalist' 'Release' 'Capture'. Though

purposive sampling can sometimes “be highly prone to researcher bias” (Sharma, 2017: 751-752), I use my affective understanding of CDA to acknowledge that bias may be embedded into my study. This bias can be accounted for during the discussion and considered throughout the dissertation. Consequently, out of 56 texts from the pilot study, I narrowed my selection down to four texts. The ‘theoretical saturation’ approach relies on my intuition as an academic to decide the length and number of studies to analyse (Guest *et al.*, 2006: 60). For purposes of my research, four texts could yield meaningful results and test the value of merging paradigms to identify if hybridity can be found in AJE products.

It is important to note, that though all samples selected are AJE newswires, one news product selected is a speech but presented as news on the website (*see* AJE: 2007). However, the research consciously chooses to incorporate the newswire as the speech was later repurposed by Western agencies to speak of Khanfar’s resignation in 2011 (*see* Black, 2011; Bosker, 2011). Given AJE the organisationally hybrid nature of AJE wires, the analysis will discuss this limitation in chapter 7. Links to all the selected articles can be found in Appendix B.

Analytical framework

According to Fairclough’s (1989; 1992; 2003; 2007) applications of CDA, I will analyse the textual, discursive, and societal dimensions of AJE news wires. I develop a specific analytical framework in reference to metadiscoursal hybridity found in Appendix C.

Textual - The textual dimension is focused on uncovering how meaning is created at the micro-level. This may include focusing on the use nouns, adjectives and adverbs that carry connotated meaning. Such also includes choice of word placement, verbs and attributes of ‘belonging’ (Fairclough, 1992). More pertinently, the textual dimension examines vocabulary used by AJE to portray itself whilst considering “power *behind* discourse as well as *in* discourse” [original emphasis] (Fairclough, 2017: 3). For this reason, the textual level will observe how *marginalisation* and performativity are employed and with what communicative aims, if any at all.

Discursive - The discursive level is concerned with a meta-analysis of narrative, as it unearths how text is constructed and deconstructed, including the ways in which the text interacts with other forms of discourses (Fairclough, 1992; 2010). Indeed, in Fairclough's (2007: 5) recent revision, the author views consider how, "discourse may have constructive effects on social reality, to show *how it can do so*" [original emphasis]. Here, I give particular attention to the strategy of *self-affirmation*, given this analytical element specifically deals with investigating modes of authority. For this dimension, I consider the forms of argumentation and referential strategies retributed to text.

Societal - The societal level understands how the texts fits into wider social contexts (Fairclough, 1992; 2010). This dimension uncovers references and processes related to broader social practices and discourses such as the current news media ecology, freedom of speech and AJE's relation to Western society more broadly. In this case, more attention will be given to the notion of *ironic subversion* as I look to understand how AJE meta-discursively places itself within the contemporary mediascape. Examples of the studies analysed and my application of CDA are attached to Appendix D.

Reflexivity and ethics

My supervisor at the London School of Economics and Political science reviewed this project and approved the methodological approach. Due to the publicly available nature of AJE news wires, no specific ethical concerns were raised. Nevertheless, given my conceptualisation of an affective CDA, I conclude by this chapter by reflecting how my positionality has implicated "the research process, shaping research design, access to participants, data collection, and data interpretation" (Soedirgo and Glass, 2020: 527).

First, I recognise that my interest, passion and experience with this topic may have affected the research. As a journalism trained student, I have always had a personal affinity to the subject of news agencies. Here, I felt intuitively drawn to the literature and like Levy (2016) during her fieldwork in an eco-village, I felt my emotions sometimes entrapping the project. This form of engagement can be thought as a "process, approach or method" as I found it

hard to critique AJE (Blakely, 2007: 35). The overwhelming emotions and internal conflict I experienced during the dissertation writing became “part of the *product*” [original emphasis] (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992: 37). This not only affected my relationship to the subject, but to the news organisation. Therefore, throughout reading this research, it is necessary to consider that my emotions and idealisations of journalism may have permeated into the studies design and research focus. The connection I have to the theory is not to be underestimated and must be accounted for when reading this research.

The second and most important consideration lies in my privilege as a heterosexual, cis-gendered, middle class and white woman, inherently limits my perspective of AJE and Arab media. The fact that I have never been to the Middle Eastern region means that my experience is limited. In fact, upon further embedding myself within the study, I became uncomfortable with using the generalising term ‘Middle East’ and Arab. I asked myself who was the Middle East, ‘middle’ for and how was it possible to group 436.08 million inhabitants under the term ‘Arab’? (Statista, 2021). Similar to when Shome (2009) questioned whom ‘globalisation’ was going ‘global’ for in the literature review. Therefore, I take caution in noting that when I refer to ‘Arab’ I relate this to shared language, whilst recognising the myriad of distinctive national dialects (Mellor, 2008: 26). Indeed, my insecurity was further exacerbated as I ideologically sided with AJE’s content. For this reason, it is critical to note that my transgression that AJE is hybrid may be short-sighted and needs to be taken into the reader’s consideration.

Being aware that my research is emotionally driven, and that my whiteness can potentially (re)secure dominant power relations, I am cognisant of the fact that I can potentially mislabel, misinterpret, or misunderstand my findings (Devault, 1999). Upon reflecting on their own research, Flax (1992: p426) suggests that ‘successful research’ involves taking “responsibility [...] to firmly situate ourselves within contingent and imperfect contexts” whilst acknowledging our “differential privileges of race and gender”. By the suggestions of Devault (1999) and Levy (2016) I am acutely aware of my position of privilege which has enabled me to leave my European city and study in the United Kingdom. However, by rejecting the “positivist myths of objectivity, value neutrality and emotional detachment” (Blakely, 2007:

63) I gain the comfort of knowing this research is unavoidably imperfect. Through achieving this level of security with myself and my values as anti-classist, anti-racist and feminist person, I go into this study being aware and welcome all criticism and revisions that may derive from it.

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the CDA across the textual, discursive, and societal dimensions of AJE's metadiscourse. The results are organised and discussed by areas of focus deriving the literature review. The research question will be considered throughout and summarised in the discussion pointing to new areas of potential academic expansion.

Creating the third space – ironic subversion

Within the samples, the first narrative of hybridity present in AJE's metadiscourse is its interaction with Western news agencies. In this case, interaction had a dual function; it confirmed AJE's place in the media ecosystems and affirmed its ideological values. For example, in one sample, AJE's political stance was supported by quoting journalists in Western institutions ““just give me 15 minutes” an AP journalist pleaded over the phone” (AJE, 2021a). Confirmation was also achieved by giving syntactical weight to claims made by AJE through referencing leaders from Western organisations “The CEO of AP also told Al Jazeera [...]” (AJE, 2021a). Similarly, AJE's metaphysical 'place' was affirmed by citing Western organisations such as the:

“One Free Press Coalition List [...] the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) [...]” and the “2020 report by the Committee to Project Journalism” (AJE, 2021b: 11-13).

In these samples, it is clear to see Chadwick's (2013) and Rantanen's (2021) applications of hybridity come to life as texts draw from a multitude of media sources to strengthen their

claims. The transmediality (Chadwick, 2013: 69) of citing other media players points to a landscape “characterised by immense flux, competition and power”. Indeed, this plays into Rantanen’s (2021: 268) concept of interdependence within the *media systems level* as the boundaries between media players themselves become “blurred”. Yet, what an organisational approach cannot reveal is that in the context of AJE, this form of affirmation is subversive. Bhabha (1994: 42-46) argues that hybrid products use ironic subversion to integrate aspects of dominant cultural genres to resist Western influence. By ironically using Western modes of speech and simultaneously looking for confirmation from Western organisations, AJE enacts a form of ‘discursive remembering’ (Bhabha, 1992) that puts itself at par, or above, its Western counterparts.

For example, AJE uses transitive rhetoric, described as “how speakers encode in language their mental picture of reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them” (Simpson, 1993: 88) to ironically subvert Western influence:

the media community, are entrusted with the mission of bearing witness to history
[...] it is also our responsibility to [...] re-examine our methods of dealing with this
reality and reporting its events (AJE, 2007: 5-7).

By drawing on the Western turn of phrase ‘bearing witness to history’, typically used by politicians such as Ellen Willis and Bernie Glossman, AJE suggests that Western medias have been inaccurate in their representations of events. If compared to instances when AJE uses Western figures to give political substance to its claim, we see a form of *social mobility* enacted. AJE can pass with ease from one way of ‘being’ to another whilst adopting subversive strategies to cast aside “their subordinate social identity” (Hogg and Abrams, 1998: 27). This is a form of ironic subversion as AJE articulates a “baffling likeness and banal divergence” to its Western counterparts (Bhabha, 1996: 54).

Similarly, the practice of ironic subversion can also be found in AJE’s consistent reference to the fourth estate. The Fourth estate is born out of Western tradition and scholars such as

Thomas Carlyle have used it to explain journalism's role in Western democracy (Jones, 2000: 308). Thus, when AJE states:

We often hear that journalism is the fourth estate" transitively placed next to the sentence "then the type of power it represents is a soft power, often coerced by other powers (AJE, 2007: 8).

Or

"We believe in the fundamental truth that freedom of journalism is the very basic building block to uphold the values of democracy" (AJE, 2021b: 10)

The syntactical interaction between the two statements paints AJE as "double voiced and double accented" (Bakhtin, 1981: 360). It could be argued that AJE's dispassionate comments are directed to other Arab regional players. Yet, the use of stereotypically Western phrases indicates a more profound attempt to 'reclaim' the media flow of the coloniser. Certainly, this *mimicry* is "(un)conscious" (Sernwoo, 2019: 1361) but produces a binary self in which languages, peoples and cultures are seen to be existing on the parameters of two (or more) ways of being (Ghasemi, Sasani and Nemati, 2017: 27). This notion is made most evident through rhetorical strategies that repurpose Western terminology. For example, sample AJE states:

one of our urgent priorities is to seek methods to outgrow the superficiality of the 'media of immediacy' (AJE, 2007: 16).

This is then later contrasted with:

we need a 'media of depth', capable of catering for man's craving for liberty (ibid: 17).

Here, the reader can see the Western problemata of churnalism (denoted to immediacy) be replaced and adapted with the term “media of depth”. In doing so, AJE ironically subverts and creates an “interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha, 1994: 5). Indeed, by switching between using Western media to confirm and give weight to AJE’s claims but rejecting the routine practices of Western journalism, AJE produces a “new politically resonant” definition of itself (Holinshead, 1998: 125). Through this lens, during times of paradigm repair, metanarratives of hybridity are formed by creating an exclusively pan-Arab third space, which adopts and recontextualises Western media.

Power beyond the West – Self Affirmation

The secondary way in which AJE creates metanarratives of hybridity is through personification. This is achieved through self-affirmation strategies which express the “multiplicity and fluidity of identification which can be modified in different ways according to different situations” (Burke, 2009: 42-45). This is most evident through hyperboles, metaphors, and metonyms which are used to attribute and give attention to processes of power (Fairclough, 1989). A major finding is that the hyperbole, which is “an example of excessive exaggeration made for rhetorical effect” (Richardson, 2007: 66) was used to ‘claim power’ by personifying AJE. For example,

Al Jazeera has condemned (AJ, 2020: .1),

At Al Jazeera, we stand in solidarity (ibid: 9).

Al Jazeera calls on all journalists (ibid: 12).

This mode of self-affirmation is nuanced, yet the analysis sees the hyperbole and metaphor work together to build a colourful image of AJE’s impact. The investigation can infer, based on findings, that in AJE’s metadiscourse hybridity is dialectical. It is dialectical as “the subaltern is not a social category but a statement of power” (O’Hanlon, 1988: 207). In terms of

paradigm repair, power derived from AJE's personification is used to ensure that principles of media professionals were in place (see Berkowitz, 2000). Here, "rather than confront state power head on" AJE personifies and questions the arrest of Hussein in a manner which recalls the "articulation of global flows in local spaces, creating subnational adaptations from the inside out" (Reese, 1997: 350). This is because AJE references the wider media ecosystem, calling to transnational action.

AJE's personification is supported by metonymies which are a "form of substitution in which something that is associated with X is substituted for X" (Jasinski, 2001: 551 cited in Brown, 2003: 165). From a CDA perspective, the significance of metonymy lies not in their presence but in the ways which they are used (Fairclough, 2002). In the sample, the use of metonyms curates the image that *Al Jazeera Media Network* (as a whole) is an entity with the power to affect the political system. This is most evident in the sample when news wire writes:

The shutting down of Al Jazeera Media Network (AJE 2021b: 1).

How this relationship will move on (AJE 2021b: 11).

Interestingly, despite AJE being the flagship channel of AJ, none of the samples differentiate the two. Perhaps, this can be interpreted as a "precondition for effective social influence" (Hog and Abrams, 1998: 171). In the context of self-affirmation, it is clear to see that AJ can 'condemn', 'call' and stand 'in solidarity'. This personification can be seen as a means of hybridity as "there is a temptation to stress elements of self-mastery [...] in many regimes of subjectification" (Rose, 1996: 137).

The above findings indicate that when the paradigm is brought into question, AJE personifies itself to make claims on its potential impact on political systems (Ogbebro, 2019). This is not to overpower the paradigm, but to demonstrate that whilst "all news agencies have had the opportunity" (AJE, 2007: 26) to "function as significant political actors in the international sphere" (Powers, 2012: 16) only AJE has done so. Such use of rhetoric, questions the existing social order as sociolinguistic authority is used to empathetically herald a post-colonial

syncretism which replaces old hierarchies with new ones (Bhabha, 1994; Kraidy, 2002; Shome, 2009). This concludes that self-affirmation provides a way to understand how 'alterity' as created by AJE is not necessarily a strategic form of marketing (*see* Iskandar, 2005), but rather a way to assert individuality in an increasingly stringent media landscape.

The 'new' other – Marginalisation

To further build the arguments above, the analysis now identifies how self-affirmation is supported by marginalisation through othering Western media via 'us vs them' rhetorical strategies. Ultimately, this indicates that in the samples selected, alterity as created by AJE, is a means of resistance rather than assimilation. 'Us vs Them' narratives describe how groups are 'othered' "based on the conscious or unconscious assumption that a certain identified group poses a threat" (Powell, 2017: 5). The process of othering was evident through referentiality which was used to "represent/construct social actors (participants)" as well polarise "an in-group and an out-group" (Hart, 2010: 49). AJ staff and readers were referred to as 'us' whereas external entities were denoted as 'them'.

This use of self-referentialisation was most evident in Wadah Khanfar's opening address, where the author made comparisons between 'good' and 'bad' media:

When they uncritically believe what comes out of politicians' mouths; when they find no harm in propagating further clichés about other nations and peoples without investing enough in-depth analysis [...] this is how the media loses its credibility and why viewers have started searching for balanced and independent alternatives (AJE, 2007: 30).

In these sentences, 'they' refers to other media players, whereas the 'balanced and independent' alternative is AJE. In the selected quote, the use of referential strategies calls to the element of marginalisation as other media actors are not only seen as disappointing but as unable to adequately carry out their journalism duties. This use of language is further evidenced by a following paragraph where AJ writes:

“On the contrary, when media put the human being at the centre of editorial policy defending the right of the public to know and their freedom of expression, when they consider the social, cultural, and historical dynamics of societies [...] only then will the media have the necessary assets to create bridges of understanding” (ibid: 31).

If the analysis compares the interactions between these two sentences, it is clear to see that AJE considers they have already achieved the ‘necessary assets’ to defend their readers. This is compounded by the first half of the news, where AJ clearly identified what the agency had experienced during the last decade. For example:

We have witnessed during the last decade how politicians have succeeded in exploiting journalists (ibid: 5)

We had the occasion to witness the destruction of bombed targets (ibid: 13)

We need a moment of deep contemplation and reflection (ibid: 24).

Though the use of ‘us versus them’ rhetorics are subdued in the second cluster of sentences, referentialisation becomes evident when taking into context the rest of the text. As a result, referential strategies “project meaning and social values on to the referent, they also establish coherence relations with the way that other social actors are referred to and represented” (Richardson, 2007: 50). This calls back to Mattelart’s (1979) idea of discriminatory impudence as AJE resists Western hegemony by ostracising the other and putting emphasis on their negative aspects. This points towards areas for further scholarly development as the ‘self’ is conceptualised being created if it is in “contrast with another” (Hogg and Abrams, 1988: 14). Consequently, difference in AJEs metadiscourse is marked by the news agencies belief that it can offer an additional critical perspective.

To further explain this concept, the analysis evidence AJE's nuanced use of 'the other'. Across all samples, referral is made to "the media" (AJ, 2007: 28), "medias" (AJE, 2020: 5) and even "media people" (AJE, 2021b: 16).

The term 'media' is broad, and it is unclear whom AJ includes within this umbrella term. Thus, what makes AJ's marginalisation effective, is through the way the news agency defines itself in comparison to the unknown media source. In this case, AJ *predicates* that it is 'alternative', this is a way of "linguistically assigning qualities [...] and social phenomenon" (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 54). By leaving the term 'media' unclear, alterity is created by assuming that every other media form, aside from AJ, is not interested in the wellbeing of the larger public.

Within its nuanced use of the other, the CDA found striking similarities between predication strategies. First, all predicated articles were definitive (i.e., the media). Bell (1991) defines this as determinator deletion, this is a syntactical style commonly associated to remove agency from objects or institutions. Second, 'the media' is always referenced as an object of possessive construction (i.e., media people). To some degree, this is a removal of 'agency' as "discourses construct [...] subject positions through [...] modalities of enunciation" (Hall, 1996: 10). This greatly differs from the syntactical styles unearthed in Ogbebor (2018, 2020) and Berkowitz's (2000) studies, where marginalisation occurred through possessive (re)construction (i.e. adjectives placed next to the media). Given these considerations, the analysis can infer that in AJE's metadiscourse hybridity is created through 'us vs them' referential strategies and through predications which leave the term 'media' nuanced.

Performing difference – preformativity

Insofar, the analysis has argued that within the samples, power in AJE's metadiscourse is trans local, agentic and defined by the marginalisation of an unknown, potentially Western media. However, when one combines these elements, what becomes relevant is the proponent of performativity. Performativity in AJE's metadiscourse seeks to 'create place' by reaffirming AJE's adherence to professional standards or ethics. In AJE's metadiscourse, repair of the

paradigm is principally enacted by repeating - in different ways- the news agencies commitment to ethics. This is performative as in one sample AJE writes:

On top of it all, there is what is known since the war on Iraq as “embedded journalism” a new form of journalism that confounds the shooting of the camera with the shooting of the gun- hence they start sharing the same perspective, proceeding from the same vantage point. (AJ, 2007: 27)

The analysis sees performative ethics being brought into discussion by three means. At the textual level, the wire uses prepositions to shift blame for the demise in journalism (*they start sharing*). Second, at the discursive level, metaphors are employed to promote a sense of urgency and tragedy (*shooting of the camera with the shooting of the gun*). Lastly, at the societal level, reference to the ‘*war on Iraq*’ not only brings into question the practices of journalism during wartime but draws attention to hybrid media flows within the Arab region. This is because Western news agencies generally refer to the *war on Iraq* as the *Iraqi War* or *War in Iraq* (see Dunmire, 2012). Here, AJE draws on its otherness by being ‘aware of the colonial gaze’ (Grace, 1997: 437 cited in Shome, 2009: 670). Drichel (2008) uses Bhabha (1994: 599) to show how necessity for such performative re-enactment is due to the “colonial construction of ontological otherness [...] reasserts the movement of *différance*”. At all three levels, rhetorical devices avow AJE’s difference to ‘other’ forms of media by underscoring their commitment to ethics. This form of expression is repeated several times throughout the sample.

For instance, in another article AJE writes:

At Al Jazeera, we stand in solidarity with all our colleagues in the media. We believe that no journalist should be intimidated, persecuted or imprisoned for carrying out their duty [...] we believe in the fundamental truth that freedom of journalism is the very basic building block to uphold values of democracy and human rights (AJ, 2020: 20)

Though this sentence follows a similar rhetoric schema to the above, ethics is used to confirm the value of journalism within society. Even if the analysis does not ideologically disagree with the fundamental values of truth, human rights, and democracy, it notices that power in AJE's metadiscourse is propagated by AJE's ability to act differently and more ethically. Here, the analysis can draw on Drichel's (2008: 598) thesis on performativity to demonstrate how "otherness of the colonised can be turned into subjectivity by othering the coloniser is the framing of this reversal by performative act". Indeed, the concept of freedom is repeated several times throughout the samples:

"their solidarity through all available means and demand their immediate freedom" (AJE, 2020: 10)

"We guarantee freedom of expression" (AJE, 2021b: 7)

"dangerous setback concerning the freedom of journalism" (AJE, 2007: 11)

In the selected quotes AJE's display of 'freedom' is considered performative because it draws on its otherness through grandiosity. This flamboyant use of language is noted at the textual level, when analysing hyperboles such as 'immediate' and 'dangerous setback' which paint the picture of a maverick media network. This form of alterity creation can be linked back cultural hybridity as "identification is a process of identifying with and through another object" (Rutherford, 1990: 211 cited in Brown, 2013: 9). In some ways, AJE's emphasis on freedom, liberty and equality is not purely a form of branding (Iskander, 2015), but a way to reform and refresh "identity signifiers" (Joseph-Sailsbury, 2018: 12). Such signifiers meta-discursively place AJE as opposite to Western media as they are presented as adhering to the paradigm's pillars. As Kraidy (2002) argues, hybrid resilience is enacted through a range of tools. Here the nail is professional standards, and the hammer is AJE's self-constructed and protective alterity.

DISCUSSION

Inspired by Rantanen (2021), the research used a novel theoretical approach to examine *how are narratives of hybridity created in Al Jazeera English's metadiscourse during times of paradigm repair?* The analysis answers this question by stating that hybridity in AJE's metadiscourse is created through simultaneously resisting and accepting Western practices, media and rituals. In the sample, this was first achieved by ironically subverting Western influence through the adoption and rejection of Western influence. This strategically created a 'third space' where AJE was able to legitimise itself by referencing established press associations but create distance from them by adopting Western phrases. Using Bhabha's (1992; 1994) Hall (1996) and Torres's (1998) ideologisations of identity, the analysis found that narratives of hybridity in AJE were enacted by using transitive language. Similarly, self-affirmation was employed to exhibit resistance against foreign forms of knowledge production. This was accomplished through metonyms which contributed to constructing AJE's unique identity.

In AJE news products, resistance was self-affirmed as a means of claiming authority over a previously Western-dominated landscape. To support self-affirmation, the element of marginalisation was used to 'other' Western media and assert AJE's difference to other global players. This conclusion was attained by looking at referential strategies which clearly placed AJE and its readers as 'us' and external unknown media entities as 'them'. These paradigmatic strategies ultimately contributed to enacting Drichel's (2008) performativity, which specifically engaged with the concepts of press freedom and media liberty to mark authenticity. Given these results, the research suggests that to a certain extent, not only can a cultural hybrid perspective be applied to the study of news agencies, but it can account for some discourses of power by observing their modes of social, cultural and political interactions.

By answering the research question, the analysis found that discourses of hybridity in AJE rooted in metanarratives of power that performatively resist Western journalism. This is achieved by creating a widespread perception of authority over the Arab region through

ironic subversion. Influence is 'subverted' to situate AJ in the 'third space' between Western and non-Western forms of journalism. Here, the investigation conceptualises AJE news wires as postcolonial products given they actively resist Western influence (Bhabha, 1994; Chasemi *et al.*, 2017). Indeed, by resisting the colonising force, the research learns that hybridity in news agencies is both a "sign of empowerment and a symptom of dominance" (Kraidy, 2005: 9). At the heart of this conceptualisation is that linear logic found in theories of 'alterity' cannot uncover the numerous forces across media ecologies that affect and create contemporary media. However, the research suggests that the concept of mimicry (Bhabha, 1994) may better be suited to explain this phenomenon. This is because mimicry deals with decoding the processes of ironic subversion at the macro-level (Sernwoo, 2019). Therefore, though the report found that AJE practices ironic subversion as a means of integration and resistance, further attention should be given to the concept of mimicry.

Differently, in response to AJE's purposeful construction of 'otherness', the analysis found that to a large extent, self-affirmation was used to construct AJE as agentic enough to exert media and political influence. This directly responds to the dissertation's critique of 'contraflow' theory which inadequately conceptualises power beyond the West. Through this lens, the research answers Shome's (2009) points that just because a media source is non-Western does not mean it cannot participate in similar homogenising processes as its Western counterparts. Here, the dissertation learns that metadiscoursal hybridity is a productive way to conceptualise news agencies without reducing them to harmful stereotypes. Nevertheless, a clear distinction between what is *intentional* and *organic* hybridity (Bakhtin, 1984) is needed. It was unclear whether AJ participated in organic hybrid discourse to purposefully fuse diverse cultural elements effects (ibid: 360) or intentional hybridity to "set different points of views against each other in a conflictual structure" (ibid: 361). By deciphering whether hybridity is 'powerfully interruptive' or 'commonplace and persuasive' (Webner, 1997: 1), academia may further look towards theorising the simultaneous coexistence of cultural change, resistance as well as dominance.

Despite this lack of clarity, the research's most critical finding was that AJE news wires performatively marked differences. This suggests that narratives of hybridity are identified by what is included and through what is *excluded*. By being exaggerated in its representations of ethics and its commitment to media freedom, AJ is "able to remain a focus in postcolonial debates without once again becoming reduced to a stereotype, 'the other' needs to appear as a *partial* assumption of a stereotype: both be and not be a stereotype" [original emphasis] (Drichel, 2008: 597). AJE's news, which is often in "stark contrast to the sanitised images in Western news" (Figenschou, 2012: 50), avoids falling into the Arab stereotype of "alien, exotic and barbaric" by reasserting its commitment to the paradigm of ethics (Wingfield and Karaman, 1995: 3). This paradigm specifically engaged with the concepts of press freedom not only to mark authenticity but also to resist colonising media forces from branding them as such. This is because the themes of objectivity and press freedom are often associated with the themes of 'truth and goodness' and 'virtuous behaviour' (Sanders, 2003: 71). In this final case, narratives of hybridity in times of paradigm repair were used to signify difference and protect the news agency from (re) colonialising discourse.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Though the research presented productive and insightful aspects, it equally presented areas of improvement. The first and most critical area suggestion is that future researchers give greater acknowledgement to the local media system which the news agency resides in. This is particularly pertinent to organisations which pertain to unique socio-cultural environments (Dimitrova *et al.*, 2007). For example, in the case of AJE, future researchers may look to the works of Mellor (2005), Pintak (2008) or Bazzi (2009) to note if any further hybrid elements could be drawn from texts, specific to the media system of the Global South. This is crucial as it further contributes to the frameworks aim of refraining from universalising assumptions. In a larger project this may take the form of a decolonised, rather than postcolonial,

understanding of hybridity. A decolonialised perspective may preference scholarship from the South and give quintessentially Arab insights.

If this research is to be repeated on a larger scale, I also suggest several improvements to the methodological framework. First, future researchers should seek to analyse AJE through an audio-visual discourse analysis (AVDA) rather than CDA. Online video has become AJE's main form of communication as it publishes its news on broadcast, social media posts and interactive videos on AJE+ (Roberston, 2014). As mentioned beforehand, though all texts were treated as news wires, many contained clips, social media posts and broadcast materials from the channel (*see* Appendix D). Such poses an issue as CDA leaves out visual lenses which can uncover "representational meaning, iconographical symbolism and iconological symbolism" (Van Leeuwen, 2001: 100). Analysing the metadiscourse of broadcasts could have brought afore more in-depth and critical understandings of the ways in which AJE enacts or creates hybrid narratives (Bell and Milic, 2002; Reavey and Johnson, 2008). For this reason, the research suggests future studies seek to apply this framework through an ADVA, investigating all material and its interactions.

Secondly, the analysis felt that Jaakkola's (2014) dimensions of a crisis were restrictive to the types of news products the analysis could choose from. For example, in the sub-chapter *Performing Difference* the research suggests that AJE's repetition of journalism freedom was a means of marking authenticity and difference. However, when comparing the studies and the content used, it almost appears natural that texts selected would concern the topics of press freedom. This is because the spatial, temporal, social and ethical of Jaakkola's dimensions requested a text of this nature. Consequently, a larger research project may choose to analyse a singular moment of paradigm repair and analyse a multitude of content from that moment. In this way, future researchers could more aptly "extend our conceptual tools and therefore to be able to see more, more clearly, and more accurately" (Reiter, 2017: 136).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research began as a project to expand a paradigm of inquiry, which merged elements from both the media imperialism and globalisation debate to help revitalise an area of media studies. Upon conducting research, the dissertation revealed much more than it originally intended to. Regarding the conceptual framework, the investigation found that metadiscourse is an area of analysis which requires further investigation and that cultural hybridity's foggy conceptual circumferences offer an opportunity to mend, play and bend with the theory allowing it to become relevant to the subject studied. Methodologically, I took a stance of CDA that was affective and saw metadiscourse be implemented as both a theory and a mode of analysis. Theoretically, the findings from the CDA revealed that what is needed is a continued treatment of news agencies as hybrid products, to avoid boxing non-Western medias into the counter-hegemonic thesis. AJE provided an example of this, as its texts were ripe with metanarratives of hybridity which sought to create place and identity in an increasingly stringent media and (re) colonising media environment.

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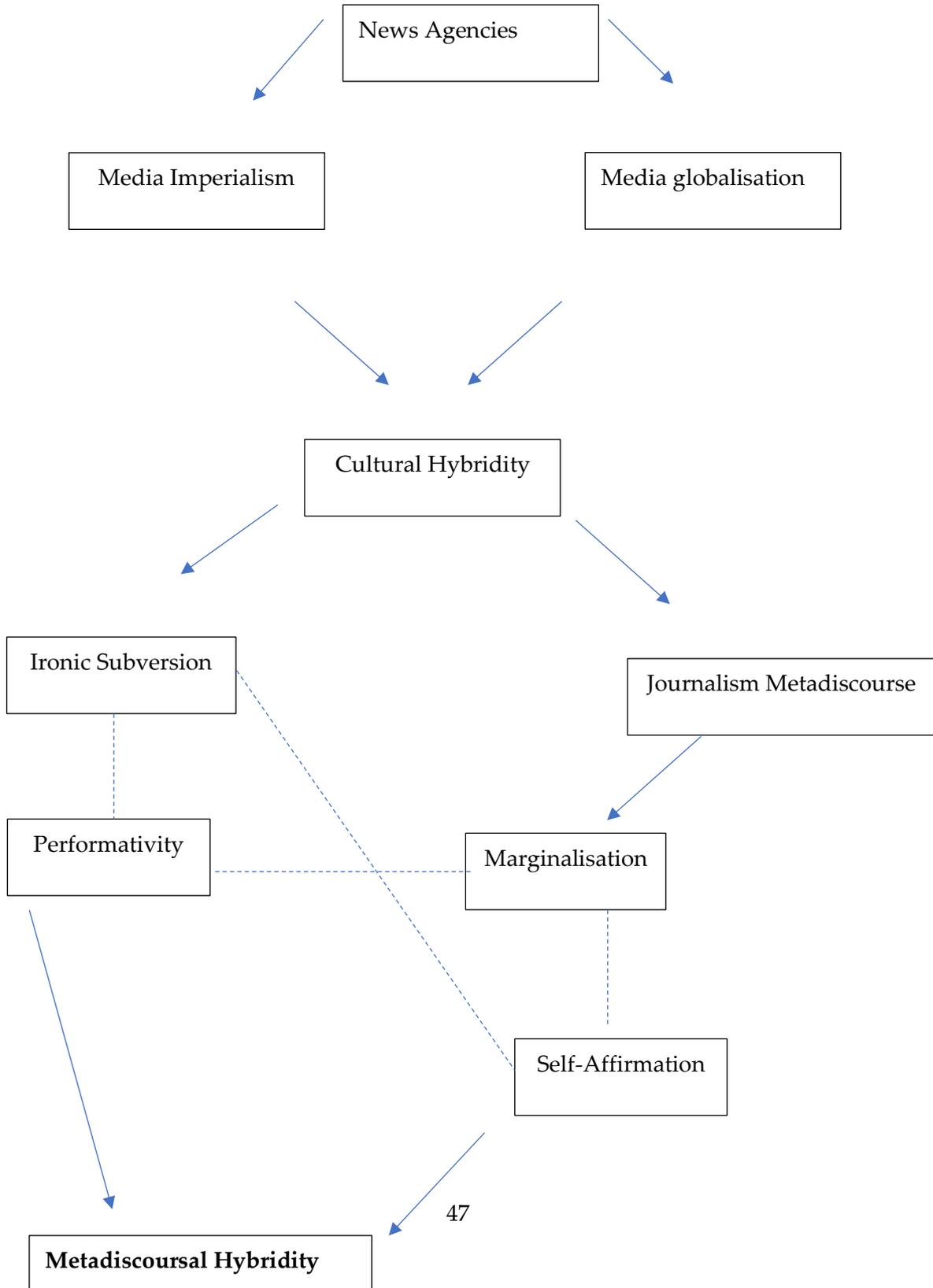
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APPENDICES

Appendix (A) CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK- METADISCURSAL HYBRIDITY



(B) Links and article citations

SAMPLE A: Aljazeera.com. (2007) Opening Address: Wadah Khanfar. 25 April: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2007/4/25/opening-address-wadah-khanfar> [Last Consulted 1 June 2021].

SAMPLE C: Aljazeera.com. (2020) Al Jazeera's Mahmoud Hussein: Four years in an Egyptian jail. 23 November: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/23/al-jazeeras-mahmoud-hussein-four-years-in-an-egyptian-jail> [Last Consulted 1 June 2021].

SAMPLE A: Aljazeera.com. (2021a). Give us 10 minutes': How Israel bombed a Gaza media tower. 15 May: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/15/give-us-10-minutes-how-israel-bombed-gaza-media-tower> [Last Consulted 1 June 2021].

SAMPLE D: Aljazeera.com. (2021b) Qatar FM: Shutting down Al Jazeera not discussed in GCC talks. 7 January: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/7/qatar-says-shutting-down-of-al-jazeera-not-raised-in-talks> [Last Consulted 1 June 2021].

(C) Elaborated analytical framework

Dimension	Framework
Textual	<p>The words that are used to pertain to AJE, its organisation 'the media' and attributed sources</p> <p>Nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs that carry connoted meaning</p> <p>Choice of descriptive terms, word placement choice; inclusion of exclusion of indexical words.</p> <p>Referential strategies → choice to group and or name organizing entities (i.e. government officials)</p> <p>Verbs and attributes of belonging</p> <p>Active and/or Passive Verbs</p> <p>Us and them; including nominalisation</p> <p>Predication</p> <p>Lack of definitive articles, objective and/or possessive constructions</p>
Discursive	<p>Genre, intertextuality, and interdiscursivity</p> <p>Conceptualizing the audience</p>

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Zoe maria Pace

	<p>Audience as consumer or Audience as commodity or other.</p> <p>Professional practices; ethics objectivity and organizational practices</p> <p>News agency agenda and/or values: Stylistic variations in self attributes</p> <p>Intertextuality: Quotations and/or reported speech in relation to rest of text.</p>
Societal	<p>News agencies and the global world, unequal information flows</p> <p>References to broader media flows and/or other media organization</p> <p>Journalism metadiscourse actions</p> <p>References to broader political actions- political processes et al</p> <p>Reference to popular Western associations such as Reuters/ Associated Press/Agence France Presse</p>

(D) Example sample analysed

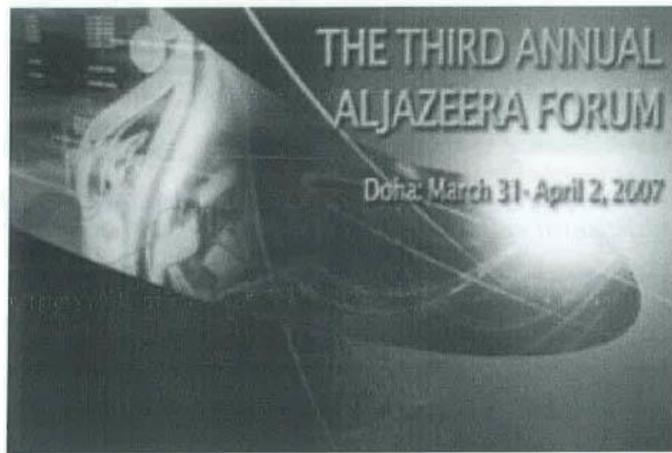
10

Opening Address: Wadah Khanfar

The Director General of the Al Jazeera Network welcomes guests to the third Al Jazeera Forum in Doha.

IR → IRONIC SUB
 MA → MARGINALISATION
 P → PREFORMALITY
 SA → SELF-AFFIRMATION

SCIENTAL
 DISCURSIVE
 TEXTUAL



originally speech
 but heged as
 News wire

The opening address by Wadah Khanfar, Director General of the Al Jazeera Network:

POSSESSIVE
 SA
 MA

Our region, the Middle East, has become home to some of the most significant hotspots and conflicts in the world.

reference to Middle East rather than global South IS(?)

reference to conflicts
 impact of
 M.E.

The complexity of the situation is a result of international and regional politics compounded by the social and cultural dynamics of societies in the region.



Image of Khanfar

To unravel this complexity, we have to "stop and stare" - we need a moment of deep contemplation and reflection.

Quotations = suspicion
 Generally western terminology IR

Since we, the media community, are entrusted with the mission of bearing witness to history, it is incumbent upon us to understand the reality we are

Generally Western terminology used by individuals such as Elen Willis / Bernie Glossman IR

responsibility
 representation
 Journalism's mission more specifically → BBC trained journo.

Looking through the mirror

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SA The opinion of the other opinion.

supposed to deal with, to fathom its idiosyncrasies, to explain the **hidden dimensions** behind the news and to decode its symbols.

It is also part of our **responsibility** to **rethink our trajectories**, and to re-examine our methods of dealing with this **reality** and of reporting its events.

We often hear that **journalism is the fourth estate**. If we concede that this is true, then the type of power it represents is a **soft power**, often coerced by other powers that don't refrain from infringing upon **its space** and **repeatedly trying** to use it to serve their **political and economic interests**.

It's obvious for us here that one of the **consequences of September 11th** is the serious emerging **challenges** that face the media in their attempt to cover **conflicts and wars**, especially those relating to the **Middle-East**, the **War against terrorism**, and the **relation between Islam and the West**.

There is also the growing worldwide debate concerning the **ethics of journalism**, the **partiality of journalists** and the extent of their commitment to, or **disengagement from**, the **political agendas** of their countries and **governments**.

The last few years have witnessed a dangerous setback concerning the **freedom of journalism** in many countries across the world.

A number of laws were passed to **target free speech** – hundreds of journalists lost their lives while others were abducted and abused.

This is why, on my behalf and on behalf of my colleagues all over the world, I ask for the immediate release of all imprisoned and abducted **journalists and media people**, Sami Al-Haj, Tayseer Alouni, **BBC's correspondent in Gaza**, Alan Johnston, and many others.

In addition to these challenges, there are **some dangerous ones** that face our profession from the **inside**.

We are, dear colleagues, badly in need of a frank and sincere overhaul of the current state of affairs of our profession. If not then we risk losing the **credibility of journalism** and the genuine significance of **free words**.

One of our **urgent priorities** is to seek methods to outgrow the **superficiality** of the **"media of immediacy"** that is characterized by aspects of carelessness, an inclination to reductionism, **forgone conclusions**, unfair **biases**, and an incessant quest for insignificant out-of-context information.

We need a **"media of depth"**, capable of catering for man's craving for liberty, endowed with the ability and the skill to consider the **collective mind**

collective mind of AJE Journalists.

Looking through the mirror

Zoe maria Pace

12

of peoples and regions, and to interpret the news in a wider cultural, sociological and historical context of the events and experiences being dealt with.

Direct reference to events.

This requires a physical presence in zones of conflict and an ability to dive below the surface of news into the roots of social and cultural identities.

We have to learn to go beyond the abstract types of analyses and high-brow attitudes that lead to nothing but forgone conclusions.

MAA

↳ sentence structure denotes that only AJ can do this

The role of media does not at all consist in collecting information to reaffirm preconceived notions. Hence, we need to go beyond merely reporting information divorced from its social, cultural, and human context.

No doubt, modern technology has provided us with extraordinary means of live coverage. It is now possible to render events as they happen.

Direct Address

Yet, however sophisticated the means, forms and shapes of modern technology, and the overwhelming flood of details and of information ensuing from them, they can be detrimental to our critical mind, our capacity of analysis, our skills of understanding, and our wisdom and common-sense.

↳ SA despite technological developments they have stayed true to values

→ here, the use of metonymy makes it seem as though AJ is the one @ the meso-level of analysis.

MA

Indeed, most media institutions have become prone to set more value on the form than on the content. Accordingly, our mediascape is filled with more and more glistening images that betray a growing disinterest in the news and its analysis.

P

↳ broader referen @ to the media creating and situating space IR

In dealing with the coverage of the Middle East, we cannot escape dealing with the dialectics of media and politics.

↳ reference again made to current inadequacies

Despite the number of inquisitive media people probing into the daily decisions, attitudes, and deeds of governments, only a few of them concentrate on the big picture of power and influence.

↳ "only a few"

While hunting for more news and information, they become progressively dependant on official sources, and hence—consciously or unconsciously—they become subservient to specific political agendas.

↳ in specific reference to the unideally, scandal where AJ was subservient to the US.

We have witnessed during the last decade how politicians have succeeded in exploiting journalists in the implementation of their own agendas.

↳ deflection is further made by shifting blame

This is how an emerging media culture consisting of "deliberate leakage" of information has flourished.

↳ use of quotations within text indicate dubious leakage → language western phenomenon IR

Ever since then, images have invaded the screens as weapons of P disinformation and disorientation.

→ Metaphors//Allegory

On top of it all, there is what is known since the war on Iraq as "embedded journalism", a new form of journalism that confounds the shooting of the camera with the shooting of the gun – hence they start sharing the same perspective, proceeding from the same vantage point.

↑ exclusive to ASA

* western terms used to then critique current state of Journalism composed/ dominated by western media

war on Iraq instead of Iraq war

With the era of embedded journalism, the other side has no arena to give voice to their own reality. Thus the audience has an incomplete picture getting only a one-sided reading.

Grammatical structure emphasises this.

→ In specific reference to Arab Spring/ news agency coverage

All news agencies have had the opportunity to show images of warplanes as they take off from warships and the flick of buttons as bombs are dropped with the same feeling as watching a video-game.

→ Imagery

↓ compared to A&E/As they haven't been able to do so

Yet, seldom have we had the occasion to witness the destruction of bombed targets or to hear the crying of the human beings impacted by those bombs.

P → Imagery

The onset of detailed news has yielded short memories, both for journalists and viewers. Today, it has become easy for politicians to recant their words or disengage from their commitments without running the risk of being held accountable.

↳ themes of accountability and responsibility

★ SA One wonders if it is not a mere exaggerated compliment to say that the media constitute the fourth estate. → repetition by re-referencing the 4th estate critique/theme IR

In this day and age isn't it perhaps more accurate to say that media institutions have become heavily dependent on political and economic powers? → rhetorical questions

When the media are anxious for their own safety; when they uncritically believe what comes out of politicians' mouths; when they find no harm in propagating further clichés about other nations and peoples without investing in enough in-depth analysis; when they focus on meetings, conferences and gatherings that float on the surface; when they ignore the social, cultural and historical interactions taking place underneath; when they are biased towards the centre and neglectful of the periphery; when they celebrate influential political stars and create distance between them and people; then they become a dissociated elite.

★ Pattern in text they / them MA

This is how the media loses its credibility, and why viewers have started searching for more balanced and independent alternatives.

Looking through the mirror

Zoe maria Pace

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if taken into consideration with the other paragraph, the lexical structure subsumes that A has done so and achieved this, potentially highlighting why this was probably used as a news wire.
On the contrary, when media put the human being at the centre of the editorial policy defending the right of the public to know and their freedom of expression; when they consider the social, cultural, and historical dynamics of societies; when they dive below the surface of headlines opening themselves to human diversity; only then can they be qualified to testify to history; only then will the media have the necessary assets to create bridges of understanding and dialogue.

→ JOURNALISTS OF AGE
But there is a recognition by more and more journalists of the dilemmas which currently face our profession and there have always been journalists who have dedicated their lives to free and fair media that deal with man as a dignified creature and not as an abstract news substance.

→ Exaggerated language / descriptive
Our forum provides us with a great opportunity to discuss these issues and to launch a serious dialogue about the fundamental role of our profession.

Dear guests, I thank you and welcome you to our Forum.

Note: used as news wire → discuss in limitations + suggestions

[END TEXT]

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