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Journalists Gaining Trust Through Silencing of the Self

The journalist legitimates her profession and constructs her self-image in terms of trust. On the one hand there must be a trusting relationship between the journalist and her sources. On the other hand, and this will be the focus of this paper, journalists rely on a trusting relationship with end-users: Not only must the journalist inform the end-user, but the end-user must trust the journalist's information. Citizens must acknowledge that journalistic products to some extent deliver a credible representation of the prevailing state of affairs in order to deliberate in a democracy. For this reason, whether or not journalists are actually delivering legitimate information to the best of their knowledge is essential to the health of democracy.

For many years trust has therefore been key in articulations of a journalistic profession that has been in some turmoil due to the decline of the local newspaper, the rise of the internet, podcasts, social media platforms, which have in turn given rise to the increasing partisanship of the *demos*. In an attempt to maintain their legitimacy, journalists have often turned their heads towards the ideal of *objectivity*, understood as detachment from subjective interests (Robinson 2019; Sambrook 2012; Schudson 2001; Schudson and Anderson 2019; Wien 2005).¹ This approach has faced challenges since the New Journalism of the 1960s, and especially in the new real-time world of the internet, as explicit declarations of a well-defined forms of subjectivity (under headings like “alternative media”, “confessional journalism”, “brand journalism”, etc. – Coward 2013; Mayerhöffer 2021; Serazio 2021) has emerged as a viable construct of the journalistic persona.

This paper reflects upon the ways in which both approaches (the objective and the explicitly subjective) presuppose a notion of subjectivity as centred in a well-defined, grounded self, a precondition that is not unproblematic. Basically, these two positions mainly differ about whether journalists, as mediators of the democratic public sphere, are allowed to let their personal interests affect democratic discussions that are supposed to be in the interest of society as a whole. Through a reading of Løgstrup, Derrida, and Deleuze I will argue that both positions are inadequate. Løgstrup and Derrida's analyses demonstrate that subjectivity is continuously negotiated in interaction with the uncontrollable, and as such make the subject not so much an already discovered, but rather a continually discovering narrator. Similarly, an objectivity that constructs itself in contrast to the traditional subject is undermined by the shift in the subject's position. This puts in question what it means to let subjectivity interfere with the journalistic product. I fuse these analyses with Deleuze's reflections upon truth, creativity and the possibility of a journalistic style that challenges the writer.

In philosophical discussions on trust a distinction between “predictive” and “affective” approaches has gained traction – i.e. a distinction between whether trust is based upon a prediction that there is reason to believe that the trusted will act according to the hopes of the trusting, or upon the assumption that the trusted will be motivated by the trusting hopes (Faulkner, 2014: 1977-8; Stern, 2017: 274-5). By focusing on the indefinable nature of the subject, we suggest that the common assumption that trusted *should* act according to the expectations of the trusting is challenged (this assumption can be found in, among others, Baier, 1986: 235-6 + 240; Gambetta, 1988: 217; Luhmann, 1988; Williams, 1988; McGeer & Pettit, 2017: 15; Hinchman 2017). Without dismissing the relevance of such considerations, in this article I will highlight another aspect of trust, namely the aspect of fragility and openness that stems from the fact that the relationship between the parties is not well-defined, and therefore it is not always clear what is the proper reaction of the trusted. Sometimes the trusted relationship calls upon *not* doing what the trusting agent wants or expects. Following on from this point, I will propose a third path for journalism, where the trusting

1 The kind of trust that is involved in this practice has been analysed in Coady, 2002.

relationship between journalists and their addressees might be established differently. In contrast to objective journalism which can never meet its own criteria, and to explicitly subjective journalism, which proceeds from a false certainty about the subject, we need a *hospitable* journalism. This is a perspective that acknowledges the subjective starting point of all narratives, but refuses the domination of one ego (either individual or collective) within the narrative. Hospitality consists here in inviting and enfranchising foreign positions, or the perspective of the stranger, whereby pre-given subjective starting points are challenged.

I. Trust as based upon objectivity or explicit subjectivity

It is beyond the scope of this article to give an exhaustive account of theoretical perspectives on the journalistic enterprise. We will limit our starting point to the theme that runs through explanations of journalism in contrast to other genres of communication: its concern with objectivity (Deuze 2005; Hornmoen and Steensen 2021, 33-44; Kaplan 2002; Sambrook 2012; Schudson 2001; Schudson and Anderson 2019; Skovsgaard & Dalen 2016). An approach that is inspired by Walter Lippmann's emphasis on the objective ideal as a means to qualify the public opinion. E.g.:

The better the institutions, the more all interests concerned are formally represented, the more issues are disentangled, the more objective criteria are introduced, the more perfectly an affair can be presented as news. (Lippmann 1922, 363)

As our minds become more deeply aware of their own subjectivism, we find a zest in objective method that is not otherwise there. (Lippmann 1922, 409-10)

Lippmann was writing at the time of the formation, out of the sensational tabloid press of the day, of the establishment news institution. However, even these institutions were unable to establish an agreement about how to relate to norms of objectivity. The question remains whether such norms are obtainable, and even what the qualifier "objective" means that gives us such "zest" (Jønch-Clausen and Lyngbye 2007; Wien 2005). But there is an idea that journalists, as opposed to alternative communicative professions like public relations professionals, SoMe influencers, bloggers, etc., are obliged to bring out issues that are not defined by particular individual or institutional, interests. Issues, on this view, float free of particular institutions and, in their importance to the lives of those who may not comprehensively understand them, require and are ideally given an "objective" treatment, however fallible our ability to accomplish this might be.

This ideal is not universally acknowledged. However, it has been linked with the democratic ideal of an enlightened citizenry, which can govern itself because it knows the issues confronting the government. Against this, historically, is the commercial activity of players who focus more upon *satisfying demands* and sensationalizing news, and consider the enlightenment of citizens as reflected purely in the marketplace. Hallin and Mancini have furthermore demonstrated that the ideal of objectivity is mainly prevalent in specific parts of the world (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

In recent years the critique of objectivity has also gained ground among theorists who understand it as a ploy for hidden particular interests. This was the philosophical trend of the 1980's and onwards (e.g. Foucault 1971, 16; 1977; 1990; 1997, 9-11; Rorty 1979, 333-42; 1995; Bourdieu 1994), where the notion of neutrality, some place in the discursive field perfectly balanced between different interests, was dismissed. This critical trend has gained traction within the journalistic field, and this has led to the emergence of media that increasingly expresses an *explicit bias*, justifying it as a necessary corrective to the hidden biases of mainstream media (examples are Al Jazeera, Breitbart,

Democracy Now, Fox News, Russia Today² – McDowell-Naylor, Cushion, and Thomas 2021; Mayerhöffer 2021; Serazio 2021).

The trust that is projected on media by end-users can lead, contrary to Lippman's notion of consensus, to dissensus. It has been shown that the new partisan types of media are trusted due to an experienced authenticity, build upon an experience of transparency when it comes to the normative starting point – rather than a colder, underlying professional journalistic practice of uncovering what the centrist media considers to be objectively pressing issues (Lewis 2020; Moran 2021a; 2021b, 11). Consumers trust the new types of media because they believe “that the journalist in question is a transparent person with whom the audience maintains shared interests and ideological beliefs” (Moran 2021a).

It thus makes sense to investigate trust as a function that differentiates between the two kinds of journalistic production. Trust in journalism was discussed in a section of *Journalism Vol. 20:1*. All of the articles were in agreement that there was some kind of crisis of trust in journalism. (e.g. Fenton 2019³). As was the case in the philosophical tradition discussed above, most of the discussions in this section assume (in various ways) that the crisis of trust is linked to the fact that users have a clear idea of how media should act, and that this expectation is then disappointed.

This assumption is also inherent in Katherine Fink's contribution, as she suggests giving more space to voices of “strangers”. The reason why we will pursue her suggestion in this article is, however, that the value of this telos is highly inarticulate – and thus open in character. She suggests that in order for journalists to deserve the trust of citizens, they should seek out what we could call “the unknown other”:

My suggestion for building trust is modest, low-tech, and unoriginal: journalists should have more conversations with strangers. That is, once a week, every journalist should meet someone new. [...] Journalists should choose people who have never been sources or are likely to become sources due to their jobs, expertise, or social prominence. (Fink 2019, 41)

In the following sections we will argue that this suggestion, and its underlying understanding of trust aligns with themes in the works of Derrida and Løgstrup, in which it is argued that trust is essentially a function of hospitality, i.e. an attitude of openness to the Other, the unfamiliar, the stranger. By being open towards the strangeness of the stranger, journalists can themselves become hospitable to an otherness that in the end make them more trustworthy. This is a fraught attitude – if the Other is reduced to a stereotype of externally imposed characterisations, the possibility of the really unforeseen is foreclosed. This wounds the “new” in the news, the leeway given to the unexpected and undeserved. If journalists are overly confident about who their target audience is, their communicative scope will be adapted to and captured by this view, and thus it will produce a narrative of the stereotyped Other – and this stereotypisation will reflect back upon the recipient's perception of the journalists. This is democratically unsuitable, because it narrows the horizon of public exchanges, but it can also become commercially unsuitable insofar as the media become too predictable, whereby the incentive to follow it is reduced. One approach to counter this mechanism is to give the Stranger an authentic discursive place – with which journalists can engage in real dialogue – and hereby also enlighten the end-users of the media.

2 This list certainly contain quite diverse media institutions, some of which have at times been highly controversial as accurate representations of actual journalistic practice. In the current paper I am mainly interested in the issue of trust – not whether or not their argument against traditional notions of objectivity is merely a cover for distribution of propaganda or fake news.

3 Since then there has been a slight, and seemingly only temporary, improvement in connection with the Covid19-pandemic (Newman et al. 2022, 15-18).

In a joint reading of Løgstrup and Derrida, I suggest that the notion of trust should be clarified, and that the distinction between objective and explicitly subjective positions demonstrates a narrow understanding of mechanisms of trust. In order to understand the complexity of trust, one has to understand that trust includes, among other things, an element of surrendering oneself to the uncontrollable and unknown.

II. Trust as an openness towards the uncontrollable and unknown

In this section I will show how Løgstrup and Derrida take trust to be affectively and ethically basic to the creation of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. On this account trust is not understood as an consensus making or seeking mechanisms that creates firm and clearly defined relationships between firmly defined individuals. Løgstrup and Derrida observe that trust is limited, affectively and ethically, if we approach each other as agents sunk in a rigid autonomy and coming together like billiard balls, with hard exteriors. On the contrary, they see agents as, potentially, created in various unexpected ways in everyday exchanges. It is this potential that the journalistic encounter should be based on.

From this position it will be argued that it is neither a viable journalistic ideal to strive towards objectivity understood as a polar opposite of subjectivity, nor is subjectivity to be identified with the development of some pre-programmed ego, from which starting point the journalistic product is developed and signed, because this entails a reduction of the ways in which the unknown is allowed to be of significance, basically ignoring the social and ethical fact of hospitality.

I will suggest that a *hospitable* account of journalism is a more realistic response to the crisis in trust. The critique of the objective narration is well placed, in that it fails to account for itself, a failure that its audience can't fail to notice. The ideal of a detached account of objectivity is at best naïve, at worst deceptive – or seductive. I will not go further into this critique here, but rather focus upon how many of the arguments raised against the ideal of objectivity – the loss of nuance, the fictional certainty – could be turned against the idea of a fixed subjectivity as well. This is what I will show through the writings of Løgstrup and Derrida.

Before I get into the argument, the reader may well ask about my pairing of Løgstrup and Derrida. Even though they share a common inspiration in the Heideggerian oeuvre, it is also well known that Løgstrup was quite reticent about Derrida's work (Løgstrup 1995a, 153-71; briefly repeated in Løgstrup 1995b, 116). Løgstrup's criticism, however, is based primarily on Derrida's work from the late 1960s. I will draw primarily on Derrida after 1995. Even with this caveat, however, it would be a great misunderstanding to claim an untroubled continuity between the two positions. Whereas Løgstrup's analyses of social relations focus primarily on how to overcome differences, much of Derrida's analysis of the same can be characterised as highlighting the tensions within cultural and social norms that enable social relations – tensions of an aporetic nature that threaten to separate what is brought together.

In what follows, I will not attempt to reconcile the two positions on the macro level, but simply extract two themes of their analyses of the social relation – namely, indefinability and the challenge/threat of the Other. Both aspects are at play in Løgstrup and Derrida's oeuvres, but Løgstrup's notion of openness is more unambiguously connected with reflections on trust (which is the concern of this paper), and Derrida's analysis of the dangerous and challenging makes stronger claims than Løgstrup's view would tolerate.

The Danish theologian K.E. Løgstrup is well-known for his analyses of how trust is a spontaneous essential in any social relationship. Løgstrup argues that trust is the spontaneous starting point in any

encounter – distrust, on the other hand, is a derived phenomenon, a product of past experiences, that constitute the grounds or reasons for distrust (Løgstrup 2020, 9). Løgstrup claims that

It would be hostile to life to behave otherwise. We simply could not live; our life would wither away and become stunted, if we were in advance to meet each other in distrust... (Løgstrup 2020, 9)

In Løgstrup this mainly remains a postulate – or perhaps, to be more precise: a motive of phenomenological analysis whose *raison d'être* is to reveal something that is known to all of us, but needs to be highlighted for us to notice (Pahuus 2005, 117-8).

A reading of Derrida's analysis of the hospitable host/guest relationship can however shed some extra light on why Løgstrup's claim is reasonable. Derrida did not often reflect upon trust, but one of the few mentions reveals a striking similarity with Løgstrup's account:

The Other who expresses himself is entrusted to me (and there is no debt with regard to the Other – for what is due cannot be paid; one will never be even). (Derrida 1999, 7)

The quote is from *Adieu to Emmanuel Lévinas* in which one of the elements is the analysis of social relations grounded in the hospitable relationship between host and guest. Derrida argues that the social relationship should be conceived of in terms of hospitality. For Derrida the social relation starts with hospitality, when subjects silence themselves:

One will understand nothing about hospitality if one does not understand what “interrupting oneself” might mean, the interruption of the self by the self as other. (Derrida 1999, 52)

In hospitable relationships we invite others to be relevant to us. For Derrida the point here is that true hospitality must make room for the other to remain other, and not to be forced to become like ourselves. Generosity is subverted if the point is to remove the otherness of the other, and such hospitality reveals itself as really domination. The other is then no longer other (no longer guest), but instead has become a part of oneself. Thus, the social relationship is no longer a relationship with an other, you have not interrupted yourself to meet something foreign, you have forced the other to become part of yourself, you have forced the other to affirm yourself.

In order to understand Derrida's analysis, it is important to understand that power in the host/guest relationship is not as one might expect. In the radical hospitable relationship, where the host does not restrict the guest, the host takes the risk of being dominated by the guest. (Habermas, Derrida, and Borradori 2003, 128-129; Westmoreland 2008, 7). At the same time, the host/guest relationship goes both ways. Just as I have to invite the other, to be able to let the other concern me, the other also has to invite me, to be able to relate to me as other (Derrida 1999, 41-2).

The radically non-transactional character of this thought is emphasized when Derrida continues to state that the self is *constituted* in this hospitable relationship with the other as other:

the welcoming *hôte* who considers himself the owner of the place, is in truth a *hôte* received in his own home. He receives the hospitality that he offers *in* his own home; he receives it *from* his own home – which, in the end, does not belong to him. The *hôte* as host is a guest. [...] The one who invites is invited by the one whom he invites. (Derrida 1999, 41-2 – italics in the original)

In the quote, Derrida wants to show that by silencing oneself (interrupting oneself) and making space for the other's presence, the host also receives herself *as* host. By inviting the stranger, the host receives an understanding of her own limits – through the awareness that the possibility of inviting the Stranger as a guest fully involves a self-fashioning unknown. The more space the host gives to the guest, the more the host experiences her own limits. The less space the host gives to the guest, the less generosity, the narrower the host's understanding of herself and her possibility to genuinely experience the other will be.

When bringing these analyses into the journalistic field, two further aspects of trust need to be brought forward: On the one hand (a), the relationship is defined by being essentially *open*. In Løgstrup's analyses he talks about an ethical demand that rises out of the fact that we are handed to each other in trusting relationships, and this ethical demand is essentially *silent*:

The demand which is implicit in any meeting between human beings never becomes vocal but is and remains silent. (Løgstrup 2020, 20)

For our present purposes, Løgstrup's analysis can be translated into a claim that the relation of trust that defines our mutual relationship is essentially undefined (inarticulate). The demand does not contain any explicit norms about how to handle what is given to you, except for taking care of it, and give the other an opportunity to make their world as spacious⁴ as possible (Løgstrup 2020, 24). This is in line with Derrida's analyses of the hospitable relationship between the host and the guest that was presented above: Insofar as we seek to predefine or narrow the other in the social relationship, we narrow ourselves. Løgstrup thus repeatedly emphasises that the ethical demand cannot be translated into specific and articulate social norms (Løgstrup 2020, ch. II.5-6 + V; 2007, ch. 3+4). In Derrida's writings this worry is mirrored in his reluctance to conflate analyses of hospitality with norms of tolerance (Derrida 1999, 72; Habermas, Derrida, and Borradori 2003, 124-30): All these social norms have in common that they reduce (fixate) the social reality and the agencies within it.

The second feature (b) that will be brought over to the journalistic field is the insight that hospitality is dangerous:

Pure and unconditional hospitality [...] opens or is in advance open to someone who is neither expected nor invited, to whomever arrives as an absolutely foreign visitor, as a new arrival, nonidentifiable and unforeseeable, in short, wholly other. [...] The visit might actually be very dangerous... (Habermas, Derrida, and Borradori 2003, 128-129)

The point here is, that insofar as you open yourself towards the other (you invite the other to be relevant to you as another) the other may ultimately bring forth that you are wrong in your self-understanding, and in your understanding of the world around you. The other might ultimately take over control of what she was entrusted with by accepting the invitation to enter (Habermas, Derrida, and Borradori 2003, 127-128). This means that insofar as we invite the other to be relevant to ourselves, our selves will not remain untouched. We can, of course, limit the hospitality, only opening ourselves *conditionally* to the other, set up rules that must be acknowledged before letting the other in to the premises. However, with such reductions we also reduce our experience of the Other. Consequently, we diminish our understanding of our situatedness in the world.

Summarizing, my co-reading of Løgstrup and Derrida is meant to show a common notion of hospitality as being a social form of trust that emphasizes an open and destabilizing aspect of trust. It is of course relevant to reflect on the relationship between expectation and disappointment when

⁴ In the English translation it says "as expansive as possible", but I find "spacious" a better translation of the Danish word "rummelig".

discussing trust, but analysing hospitality shows that there is also an element of openness and instability in trust, because you cannot know in advance what is the right way to handle trust.⁵ Løgstrup and Derrida demonstrate that subjectivity is a product of relations of trust that cannot be determined independently of the fragility between each of the participants in communicative relationships; and that subjectivity is also the product of an openness that prevents a fixation of the subjectivity of the participants. A prerequisite for taking each other seriously is that the relationship is left open to be affected mutually by each participant. Subjectivity cannot be taken out of the relationship lest the narrative lose all nuance. In the following, we will argue that this understanding of trust challenges the two traditional views of the trusting relationship between journalists and end-users. Journalists must break beyond existing notions of the relationship between the subjective and objective by challenging existing narratives about the individual and society.

III. Style as a way of silencing oneself

So far, the analyses have been primarily focused on immediate interpersonal relationships. In moving towards the journalistic practice, I will draw on Deleuze's critique of journalism. His argument is formulated primarily against the objectivist understanding articulated above. In this section, I will argue that the explicitly subjectivist approach also has a problem.

In 1985 Deleuze argued that journalists were (partly) responsible for a crisis in our democratic culture, because "journalists have taken over literature" (Deleuze 1995, 130). In Deleuze's analysis literature is haunted by an imperialism of a journalistic understanding of literature:

[B]ooks become accounts of activities, experiences, purposes, and ends that unfold elsewhere. They become nothing but a record. (Deleuze 1995, 130)

Deleuze was worried that public exchanges were deteriorating into mere imitations, non-critical understandings of the past or current affairs. Put another way, Deleuze was concerned about the ideal of the book becoming merely descriptive, because it would undermine the creative element of public exchanges. In fact, he goes so far as to say that when we are to evaluate a public conversation, it is less relevant whether the content of the conversation is true than whether it is *relevant* (Deleuze 1995, 130). This is not to say that truth is unimportant, but if the same truths are repeated endlessly, this in itself can be oppressive because the significance of expressions vanishes if they merely repeat what has already been brought up (Deleuze 1995, 129). That eternal repetition is a mark of the society of discipline, in which "truth" is imprisoned in a trivializing process of copying.

To understand Deleuze's way out of this problem, we must understand his account of "style". Deleuze argues that the purely descriptive approach to literature can be countered by *style*, because style is the element in descriptions that hinders them being mere repetitions. His example is tennis, which in Deleuze's analysis became something new when Björn Borg and John McEnroe entered the sport. While tennis superficially stayed the same, the style of Borg and McEnroe still changed it. Even though they had to adhere to the rules and norms of a very conservative sport their attitudes or approaches brought something new to the front.⁶ By analogy, the task of literature is not simply to reproduce the world, but to create a new world by understanding it through new forms of style.

Deleuze's account of journalism in this text is not very subtle. If one were to relate it to the distinction between the objectivist and the subjectivist approaches that were sketched above, his critique is most obviously relevant as a critique of the objectivist stance, because this approach has a

5 With Hinchman's analysis in mind (Hinchman 2017), it can be said that it is an essential part of trust that you sometimes have to disappoint in order to avoid betrayal.

6 McEnroe "brought into tennis Egyptian postures (in his serve) and Dostoyevskian reflexes", Borg "produced a race of obscure proletarians" (Deleuze 1995, 132).

clear ideal to get the description of the state of affairs as objectively correct as possible – trying to eliminate subjective colouring as much as possible. In this immediate reading, one could argue that Deleuze would appreciate the plurality of styles that are the product of explicitly subjectivist approaches. To take an example: The differences between media like CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, etc. are clearly different in style, and the understanding of prevailing state of affairs that is presented through these outlets differ severely. As such this resonates Deleuze' argument against journalism that merely repeats itself.

However, a further passage in his text might suggest that Deleuze would not be quite satisfied. Deleuze argues that what we need in the public sphere is creators who, as sketched above, communicate with style. However:

A creator who isn't grabbed around the throat by a set of impossibilities is no creator. A creator's someone who creates their own impossibilities, and thereby creates possibilities. (Deleuze 1995, 133)

The quote shows that Deleuze does not think of style as something that is simply about conforming to one's own preferences. Style is a product of the individual imposing impossibilities upon oneself that are experienced as uncomfortable and invasive. Deleuze argues that style is a product of silence, whereby one allows the world to confront one in an intrusive way:

[S]tyle requires a lot of silence and work to make a whirlpool at some point, then flies out like the matches children follow along the water in a gutter. Because you don't get a style just by putting words together, combining phrases, using ideas. (Deleuze 1995, 133-4)

It would of course be naïve to claim that style is not also sometimes used to *avoid* the experience of being "grabbed around the throat". To take an example, when discussing how to handle streams of immigrants, media that support an including and open approach will tend to focus upon the suffering of the people involved⁷, while media that support a more restrictive and closed approach will tend to focus upon the criminal smugglers involved, or the domestic and social problems caused by inclusion.⁸ These different foci are products of different kinds of silencing, whereby specific aspects of the prevailing state of affairs come to the fore. However, insofar as you are reluctant or against refugees being integrated in your country, the latter approach will not grab you around the throat. Even though your resistance may be a product of some kind of anxiety, the accentuation of the problematic aspects will *confirm* that your resistance is well placed. Your understanding of the situation is affirmed.

This is what characterizes explicitly subjectivist journalism. Looking at the way style is used in explicitly subjectivist journalism, style is used to immunize oneself from those things in the world that do not fit into the pre-given understanding of the world. Style is used for self-*affirmation*. Style supports the predefined subjectivity through a silencing of issues that challenge the given starting point.

It is in other words not a given that style leads towards Deleuze ideal. In the following, I will return to the reflections on trust from the previous sections, and argue that we must distinguish between styles based on silencing *oneself* versus styles that silences *the other* – i.e. styles that silence uncomfortable issues in the world. The former approach is in line with the hospitable understanding of

7 Examples of this: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/04/12/us/crying-girl-john-moore-immigration-photo-of-the-year/index.html>, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/01/alan-kurdi-khaled-hosseini-mediterranean-refugees-sea-prayer> (both links accessed 28 November 2022).

8 Examples of this: <https://www.welt.de/vermishtes/article237140053/Berlin-Getoetete-Frau-im-Koffer-transportiert-Prozess-gegen-Brueder-beginnt.html>, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/video-shows-smuggler-drops-two-year-old-border-wall> (both links accessed 28 November 2022).

trust we have coaxed out of our reading of Løgstrup and Derrida. In this understanding the end-users of journalist work have reason to trust these products insofar as they can be seen as a self-silencing of the journalists – and an invitation to the end-users to silence themselves too. Styles that invite the citizens to grab themselves by their throat, to challenge them as broadly as possible, are trust-based styles. The trouble with the self-affirmative approaches to style is that I cannot trust that immigration critical media to inform me if there is something good to say about letting refugees into the country. Style as mere surface mannerism is not the deep style that Deleuze focuses on.

In the next section I will focus on the relevance of these analyses of Løgstrup, Derrida and Deleuze to the problem of the crisis of trust in journalism. The crisis of trust has many aspects, but the chief among them is the rejection, by media end-users, of the journalist as a trustworthy dialogue partner. I cannot propose one all-encompassing solution to the crisis of trust, since there are many paths to understanding how journalism can continue and flourish as a trusted and trusting enterprise. One path I will not follow is how the trusting relationship differs according to the communicative materiality (e.g. text, audio, video, interactivity, etc.) through which relations are mediated. Such a path would have brought the *differences* between Løgstrup and Derrida more to the front: Løgstrup's analysis is very much characterised by an analysis of the immediate encounter. To take such a path credibly, however, would have presupposed a starting point in the thinking of early Derrida (e.g. Derrida, 1967b, 1967a, 1967c, 1972), and in these writings Derrida takes more of a *semiotic* starting point, whereas the concern in the present context is the *social* context.

In what follows, therefore, I will presuppose that even though relations of trust will take different shapes within different kinds of mediation, a necessary openness towards the uncontrollable, even to the point of vulnerability, should be part of the communicative exchange. From this starting point, I will consider how one might think of an alternative to the bipolar narrative model, defined by either an objectivist or an explicitly subjectivist side. By bringing together Løgstrup's analyses of trust with Derrida's analysis of the host/guest relationship, which requires a hospitable invitation of the strange and the Stranger, in order to orient the individual in the world, a notion of trust emerges that points toward the gains of silencing oneself. Through Deleuze's analysis, "style" is brought to the fore as a particular way of silencing oneself in terms of how one fashions oneself. Absolute silencing of oneself is, however, neither possible nor desirable in the host/guest relationship. There is both a rhythm of talk and a rhythm of silence. In order to be affected by the unfamiliar, one needs to have a conceptual horizon to which one can relate the experiences. The task of hospitable journalism, however, will be to challenge, through varying forms of style, *different* parts of the given, thereby constantly challenging the subjectivity of the individual user and of the journalistic medium.

IV. Hospitable journalism

On the road from Løgstrup and Derrida's analyses towards journalism it must of course be admitted that one cannot infer from Løgstrup's phenomenological description or Derrida's deconstruction of the immediate encounter any normative program that can be absorbed in some journalism class curriculum. Partly this is because the journalistic relationship with users is often not an immediate encounter. As well, though journalism may well suffer from a crisis of trust, this does not entail the abolition of trust. Both current objectivist and explicitly subjectivist approaches seem to actually generate some level of trust between journalists and users – even if it is granted that there may be some level of crisis in the models (as sketched in the opening of this paper).

The normative suggestions in the following will primarily take as their starting point that there seems to be something about trust that we forget if we reduce the trusting relationship to being based either on objective knowledge or adherence to the shared subjective starting point. In other words, I

want to ask whether some elements in Løgstrup and Derrida's models of the immediate trusting relationship could be transferred to the mediated relationship between the journalist and the end-users.

In this reflection, I will assume that the mediated communicative relationship presupposes some of the same mechanisms as the immediate encounter, in as much as common social factors impinge on both phases of the reporting business. Against this assumption it is of course obvious that journalists do not necessarily assume that all users acknowledge the communicative messages, just as users often cannot respond immediately to the journalistic product – at least not in a way that reaches the journalists. But neither Løgstrup nor Derrida presuppose that the communicative relation always succeeds, and these objections primarily articulate boundaries in the practical, individual communicative event. The boundaries set by the media are known to both journalists and users. Normally, a user will not expect a TV-speaker to respond if he or she shouts at her in the living room. And even in settings where there *is* an opportunity for real feedback on journalistic products (e.g. in comment boxes, social media, etc.), users quickly learn that journalists do not respond to every post that they receive – and thus they gradually adapt to that.

Løgstrup and Derrida's analyses are thus primarily about what it takes for a communicative act to be successful in the sense that one enters into a mutual social relation with another. And while journalistic media do not always create perfect frameworks for this, the focal point of any journalistic work is to achieve such a relationship – one in which both parties agree on the quantity of interactions and (not least importantly) the quality of the results from such interactions. In these contexts, a relationship of trust is indispensable, and the question raised here is whether trust can be gained in other ways than the objectivist and explicitly subjectivist approaches.

Following Deleuze's suggestive comments on style, I suggest that a "hospitable journalism" would be in line with the aspects of trust that are brought forward in this paper. They would be incorporated into the journalist's self-reflection, her self-fashioning as a journalist. A hospitable journalism would be one based on the insight that by silencing one's own overriding subjectivity in the discursive space, one creates space for the other, the Stranger, to be invited as a real challenge to what the journalist, equipped with her questions, seems to represent. By inviting the stranger to be a stranger, the journalist can herself become a stranger that challenges the end-user. This can ultimately challenge the individual's horizons of understanding in ways over which one has no control. To do this, Deleuze argued that one needs to establish a media style – in this sense, hospitable journalism is consistent with the explicitly subjectivist approach. A style that comes about through silencing, i.e. by focusing on certain dimensions of reality, at the expense of dimensions that do not conform to prevailing norms of subjectively defined relevance.

Hospitable journalism departs from the traditional subjective approach in recognizing that silencing is not all of a piece. It has different functions and, thus, different styles. In the traditional subjective approach, style is used to *consolidate* a predefined subjectivity. Explicitly subjective journalism does not give its users the opportunity to be challenged, because it sets up a drama in which the elements are already known. A journalist carefully cultivates a self-representation and sticks to it. The end-user sees this as a filter through which the world must pass before it is allowed to appear as relevant. This kind of journalism is pleasant for its recipients because horizons of understanding, prevailing world-views are not challenged. The stereotypes are preserved, because the trusted journalist responds to the desires of the trusting end-user. But this way of making the news old before it is even new deprives users of an opportunity to learn about the complexity of the world, and to see how to orient themselves within it. Traditional subjective journalism cuts the world into stereotyped wholes by silencing the uncontrollable other, who nonetheless continues to exist in the world.

In contrast, hospitable journalism is about establishing a style that *challenges* the involved subjectivities, by challenging the prevailing horizons of understanding. Returning to K. Fink's

suggestion above, one could say that hospitable journalism is journalism that seeks to temper its own subjectivity. A journalism that seeks out the Stranger. A journalism that seeks out that which falls outside of normal attention. A journalism that challenges the given field of attention to such an extent that the parties involved ultimately move out of their character shells. Hospitable journalism must of course express itself from a subjective approach, recognizing that what is outside the field of attention varies across different subjective approaches, cultures and societies. But this subjective stance is open to interrupting its narrative control, allowing for the Stranger to emerge outside of the totalizing ego of the narrator, forming the narrative as, essentially, an invitation to become a part of an open host/guest relationship.

This can be done, for instance, by inviting the *recognised* “enemy”. Pro-immigration media outlets could invite into the discursive space the anti-immigration activist and, instead of the usual point-counterpoint or q & a format, host real discussions about real motives, seeking a real sense of not only the present, but of the common past. In such a discussion, views are not pre-marked as inhumane or un-patriotic, nationalist or cosmopolitan, but are expanded into narratives that explain these positions. In such an invitation it will be important that it is a *genuine* invitation. The hospitable invitation must be about inviting the stranger in as a *relevant* other from whom something might be learned. This is not to say that one necessarily ends up agreeing with the other. The host does not necessarily let the guest run the house, or use the opportunity for provocation or propaganda. Listening is not agreeing – it is, rather, agreeing to listen. The end result could be a clarification of the way anti-immigrant activists and immigrants are oriented in the world. They may not share the same problematic, but their positions will emerge in relation one to the other. The strength of this kind of journalism is that it brings to light aspects of the world relations under discussion that one does not normally focus on oneself.

Alternatively, of course, the hospitable journalist's invitation of the stranger may also be about inviting a hitherto unrecognised position as being relevant – to challenge existing conceptions of the friend/enemy relationship (Derrida 1994, ch. 3). This approach is probably a little more in line with K. Fink's proposal that journalists should try to spot something in the world that one was not aware of beforehand. In relation to this way of doing hospitable journalism, the main challenge is to spot who the unrecognised other might be. It is easier to identify who is in opposition to one's own point of view (i.e. the “enemy”), whereas the irrelevant other is precisely often invisible (Derrida 1994, 71-4). One way to spot the invisible other might be to examine who does not think the posited friend/enemy opposition is relevant. So, in relation to the above mentioned issue of immigration, who is it that does not find it relevant to discuss immigration? Who is it that thinks that the immigration discussion drowns out other (more important) issues?⁹

V. Hospitality and Trust

Would a hospitable journalism solve the crisis of trust presently undermining not only journalism but, more broadly, trust in the democratic process? This of course is a promise one cannot make, given the entrenchment of media organizations, the flows and trends on social media, and the exploitation of resentments that define a large part of the present landscape. However, I will end the paper with a plea for some introducing hospitality as a legitimate form of journalism. For trust relations to be *better*, it is certainly decisive to have a norm against which to assess these relations. At the beginning of the paper, I proposed a connection between a journalistic turn towards hospitality and the *democratic* process. This, of course, requires a specification of what is meant by democracy.

Derrida suggests to think of democracy as a politics of the *to come* – a politics that reaches towards something that is not given in advance – a “democracy to come, not a future democracy” (Derrida

9 I have given an account of one way to discover the invisible other in Hansen, 2023.

2006, 81). Derrida points out that politics becomes more democratic the less it is defined by a future that is given in advance. In relation to this ideal, hospitable journalism has the advantage that it is founded on the idea that the Stranger, with views and ways that are not pre-scripted, has a role in the discourse, such that all positions among political players and citizens are not given in advance, as these are constantly being challenged and therefore changing. Such a definition of democracy naturally implies a radical openness:

Democracy is the only system, the only constitutional paradigm, in which, in principle, one has or assumes the right to criticize everything publicly, including the idea of democracy, its concept, its history, and its name. (Derrida 2005, 87)

Media that dare to be so open that they risk inviting their own self-destruction (“letting democracy challenge its own concept”) instils trust because it allows the end-user to imagine beyond its subjective or institutional self interest, thus putting its own horizon of self-understanding at risk. It accepts, in other words, its own contingency, even its own mortality. While it is necessary to live through horizons of understanding that make the world comprehensible, it is also important to have the horizons challenged if they are inadequate or problematic in some ways.

The analyses of Løgstrup and Derrida’s views showed that the more space you dare to give the other to be a relevant other, the more space you give to know yourself even in losing yourself, and your limits to the outside world. This understanding of trust brings forward a fundamental and radical openness in the relationship between the trusting and the trusted, which is underexposed in many philosophical analyses of trust. Although the trusting can often have a reasonably clear idea of how the trusted can redeem the expectations of the trusting, Løgstrup and Derrida’s analyses point out that the most trustworthy redemption can often consist in fundamentally breaking with these expectations, because otherwise we end up limiting ourselves. If I, beforehand, setup limits that the other can only be relevant to me in a limited way, I am not trusting the other. In doing so, I limit the degree to which the other can become a relevant host to myself as a guest. In this way we create a comfortable community founded on a false sense of the cost of its upkeep and the contingency of its existence. Necessarily, this community can only preserve its comfort by reducing or falsifying its challenges.

Similarly with the relationship between media and their recipients: if media only address their recipients insofar as they are (to take an example) critical of immigration, they have at the outset reduced their recipients. It may well be that some (many) recipients feel recognized in those views, but if media do not practice hospitable journalism, they deny their recipients the opportunity to be challenged on those very views, challenged in ways that reflect the real fluxes in the world. Recipients come only to be told what they already know, thus, in effect, forgetting the condition of knowledge – that it is endlessly challenged and changed. Recipients are oriented, thus, to a world of more of the same, which is not a state of the real world. It thus becomes a symbiotic community of mutual affirmation – but it is a limited affirmation, where only certain kinds of information are allowed to come into play.

In terms of a democratic politics of the *to come*,¹⁰ this is problematic as it forces citizens into a self-affirmative loop where they become suspicious of anyone who contradicts their strongly established understanding – partisans without a sense, even, of the terrain on which they supposedly fight. This is a false starting point for a democratic debate, which should invite the Stranger specifically because governance is about change and contingency, the uncontrolled and unexpected.

10 Just as a *to come* democracy in its pure form would produce a political order with low stability, a public sphere with only hospitable journalism would probably also be difficult to navigate in, which could end up making citizens insecure, with a consequent low willingness to be challenged. Hospitable journalism should thus primarily be thought of as a necessary complement to existing trends – not as an outright replacement.

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