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Western journalism's 'Other': The legacy of the Cold War in the comparative study of journalism

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Abstract
In 1995, when discussing the critiques of the *New York Times* made by academics and pundits, Michael Schudson stated that the newspaper has never been anything 'like the late, unlamented *Pravda*'. This comparison, utilized in a variety of ways over time, originated in the canonical *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert et al., 1963[1956]). This juxtaposition, more broadly, uses the Cold War 'Other' to define what western journalism is, or should be, by what it is not. Building on the theoretical insights of Fredrik Barth and Edward Said, this article traces the construction of this 'Other' in the study of western journalism. Ultimately, the author argues that the use of this 'Other' in the construction of a coherent, meaningful definition of western journalism, and in the explication and justification of journalistic practice therein, constitutes a problematic guide in thinking about the development of journalism in nations that were historically part of this 'Other'.

Keywords
Cold War, Eastern Europe, Four Theories, journalism, Other

In *Last Rights* (1995), Nerone et al. posit an important question: is the authoritarian theory of the press as outlined in *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert et al., 1963[1956]) a useful 'tool' for thinking about media systems.[1] Nerone (2004) repeats the question almost a decade later. In both instances he answers in the negative. Nerone (1995, 2004) is correct in describing Siebert et al.'s explication of the authoritarian theory of the press

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as a 'classic constructed Other', a 'straw man'. From this, three issues arise. First, Nerone does not provide an in-depth analysis into just how this Other was constructed in *Four Theories*. Second, much work has been done in the US academy[2] since *Four Theories* was penned and it is important to see if and how this Other has persisted or been reconstructed in subsequent work. Third, and most importantly, Nerone is not so much asking the wrong question as he is asking only half of the question. The authoritarian theory's main function as the Other is to define and give strength to the libertarian theory. Therefore, not only must we ask if the authoritarian theory is useful but we must also ask if its opposite – 'our' ideal, the libertarian theory – is useful. More generally we must question the utility of ideal types and typographies in that they come with entailments that draw our attention away from issues that may be of great import.

This article addresses all three issues. Just how *Four Theories* constructed what I refer to as the 'Cold War Other' is outlined by utilizing the work of Fredrik Barth (1969) and Edward W. Said (1994[1979]); both thinkers focus on the discursive tactics employed in constructing the Other and its subsequent function in maintaining boundaries. From there, I trace the persistence of this Other in the work of scholars who not only draw on *Four Theories*, but also modify and challenge it: Merrill and Lowenstein (1971), Merrill (1991[1974]), Hachten (1987, 1992), Hachten and Scotton (2007), Altschull (1984), and Picard (1985).[3] Finally, I return to Nerone's (now reformulated) query and consider the 'question' of Central and Eastern European (CEE or post-communist) media systems in order to draw out the consequences of the entailments tied to using ideal types embodied in binary oppositions. Ultimately, I argue that if the US academy hopes to make a serious contribution to the issues therein, a reconsideration of not just the usefulness of the authoritarian and libertarian theories is necessary but of ideal types in general and our engagement with them.

Four Theories and the Cold War Other

The concept of the 'Other' originated in psychoanalysis and has subsequently been employed in various fields and in various formulations (Byerly, 2006). Here I focus on a very particular Other in terms of function: it defines what a group *is* by embodying what they are *not*. For example, as Europe's 'contrasting image, idea, personality, experience', the Orient helped to define Europe itself (Said, 1994[1979]: 1). This juxtaposition establishes a boundary; it is this boundary 'that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses' (Barth, 1969: 15). The works of Barth (1969) and Said (1994[1979]) highlight several important features of this type of boundary-making. Such boundaries require an overarching binomial opposition (Other-Us), which is often reinforced by complementary binaries. The resulting structure is maintained by the fact that in such processes only 'we' (in the case of *Orientalism*, the Westerner) can speak. That is, the Other is defined and described not in their own terms but in 'ours' (e.g. the Westerner). As a result, the Other is a function of 'us' – it is *for* 'us'. It is also important to note that such processes are never neutral and do not simply reflect some reality; in fact, despite the introduction of counter evidence or changes in empirical 'reality', the Other-Us boundary often persists 'through selective perception, tact, and sanctions' (Barth, 1969: 30). This section further elaborates on these features by examining the 'style, figures of speech, setting

[and] narrative devices' (Said, 1994[1979]: 21) *Four Theories* employs in constructing the Cold War Other – as well as the historical and social circumstances of this construction. However, before this analysis can proceed, the use of *Four Theories* as a starting point requires some justification.

Why start with *Four Theories*? Why begin with a work that has an all too obvious Cold War agenda (Mughan and Gunther, 2000) and lacks historicity (Carey, 1979) and empiricism (Nerone, 1995)? To add to this question, there have been numerous works that have sought to go 'beyond' (Christians et al. 2009; Nordenstreng, 1997; Ostini and Fung, 2002), 'revisit' (Nerone, 1995, 2004; Skogerbo, 1991), reformulate *Four Theories* (Altschull, 1984; Hachten, 1987; Merrill and Lowenstein, 1971; Merrill, 1991[1974]; Picard, 1985) and even perform its 'last rights' (Nerone, 1995). Regardless of all this, not even its critics deny the book's influence (De Smaele, 1999; Folkerts, 2000; Josephi, 2005): 'Almost every article and book dealing with philosophical bases for journalism alludes to this book [*Four Theories*], comments on it, or quotes from it' (Merrill, 1989, cited in Mundt, 1991). In fact, in Bryant and Miron's (2004) inventory of theories used in communications research, there is no competitor to *Four Theories*. Thus, unsurprisingly, the book is still taught in journalism education (Picard, 1985) and even some of its harshest critics find it difficult to 'teach against' (Merrill and Nerone, 2002). Most importantly, scholars admit that while critics revise its content, they maintain its form (Nerone, 2004) and, thus, it still has an effect on journalism scholarship (Jakubowicz, 1998/99) maintaining its place in the collective unconscious of journalism studies (Sparks, 2000).

Although the title of Seibert et al.'s book states that they cover four theories, Sparks (2000) points out that its most constitutive feature is the opposition of the libertarian and Soviet theories (i.e. the Soviet-US binomial). The authors state outright: the Soviet and libertarian theories 'line up almost diametrically opposite in their tenets' (Siebert et. al., 1963[1956]: 5). Schramm, who authored the chapter on the Soviet theory, takes this even further and states that the Soviet and libertarian theories are 'incompatible' (1963[1956]: 105) and that there can be nothing 'farther from Soviet thinking than our concept of the press as Fourth Estate' (1963[1956]: 116). Thus, the continuity and coherence of the libertarian theory is dependent on what Said describes as 'a dichotomization of others as strangers, as members of another … group' (1994[1979]: 15). The last three pages of Schramm's chapter (subtitled 'The Soviet Concept and Our Own') are devoted to concretizing this binomial opposition.

To naturalize such a distinction, *Four Theories* employs philosophical questions and posits that to understand the difference between these theories, one must grasp the conflicting conceptions each theory embodies concerning 'the nature of man, the nature of society and the state, the relation of man to the state, and the nature of knowledge and truth' (Siebert et. al., 1963[1956]: 2). At the end of his chapter, worth quoting at length, Schramm shows just how at odds all of these are:

> The concepts of man are wholly different – on the one side, man as a mass, malleable, unimportant in himself, in need of Promethean leadership; on the other side, man as intelligent, discriminating, perfectly able to purchase by himself in a 'free market of ideas.' The concepts of the state are nearly opposite – on the one hand, an elected democracy conceived as governing

> best when governing least; on the other, a self-appointed dictatorship, conceived of as 'caretakers' of the people against untrue or misleading ideas. The concepts of truth are correspondingly different – on the one hand, something to be arrived at by argument and confrontation of evidence; on the other, something to be derived by straining events through a ready-made theoretical sieve. (Siebert et. al., 1963[1956]: 145)

Schramm further naturalizes these philosophical differences by tracing their lineage: he 'reminds' us that the differences he describes are simply those found between Marx and Mill (1963[1956]: 145).

Just as the Orientalists 'promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them")' (Said, 1994[1979]: 43) by constructing complementary binaries – the Occident is rational, virtuous, mature and normal, whereas the Orient is irrational, depraved, immature and different (p. 40) – *Four Theories* employs similar strategies. The media in the Soviet theory are 'planned' while their counterparts in the libertarian theory have 'just-grown' (Siebert et. al., 1963[1956]: 130). Other adjectival binaries found throughout include: state-owned/private, top-down/bottom-up, constrained/free-market, noncritical/critical, social-focus/events-focus and propaganda/news. The strangeness of the Soviet theory is made salient for Schramm by the absence of advertising in Soviet media (1963[1956]: 133). The 'reality' of such a neat distinction is concretized by contrasting media entities in each system: particularly the *New York Times* on one hand and *Pravda* on the other, a comparison that would become salient in the US academy.[4]

In the opening pages of his chapter, Schramm states that he will 'relate the Soviet theory to other theories …including *our* own' (Siebert et. al., 1963[1956]:106, emphasis added). Said's insight here is instructive: '[c]ultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver' (1994[1979]: 67); in other words, the Other is a function of (and is for) 'us'. It is not insignificant that only the chapters on the Authoritarian and Soviet theories contain sections devoted to comparing them to the other theories (i.e. the libertarian theory). While the chapter on libertarianism only mentions 'communist' or 'communism' on three pages and only once in a comparative fashion (it is void of references to Marxism), the 'terms "capital," "capitalist," "capitalism" and "capitalistic" appear twice as often in the chapter about the Soviet communist theory than they do in the three chapters dealing with … press systems based predominantly on private capital' (Nerone, 1995: 28). Thus it is clear that the actual function of these chapters – those in which the Other is constructed – is to help define the libertarian theory.

Schramm's constant use of the possessive pronoun 'our' (*our* own, *our* side, *our* values, etc.) not only makes it clear that the construction of the Other defines 'us', but that this discursive strategy also maintains our position of power by granting 'our' voice dominance. In the case of Orientalism '[o]nly an Occidental could speak of Orientals, for example, just as it was the White Man who could designate and name the coloreds, or nonwhites' (Said, 1994[1979]: 228). Similarly, throughout *Four Theories* it is clear that only (or at least for the majority) 'we' speak; in addition to the persistent use of possessive

pronouns, the most obvious indicator of this is the book's three authors, all prominent western scholars. Furthermore, while the chapter on libertarianism does not include any analysis of it through the Other's (Marxist) voice, Schramm's chapter includes several large block quotes from western scholars concerning the USSR. This is not to say that Schramm does not quote Soviets, he does regardless of how limited his reading of Marxism may be (see Nerone, 1995).[5] However, Schramm employs figures of speech and narrative forms that make it clear that it is 'we' who speak, and only 'we' who *can* speak. In a hypothetical example of a meeting of Soviet and US journalists, the American '*feels* blessed' and '*speaks proudly*', while the Soviet merely '*claims* that he is blessed' and only 'expresses *opinions*' (Siebert et. al., 1963[1956]: 105, emphasis added). The Soviet makes no real statements, only claims and opinions. This is perfectly in keeping with Schramm's portrayal of what the journalist in the Soviet system is: a conduit for the state, one who cannot speak with any authority as an individual.

Despite the power imbalances in the construction of the Other, the Other is not formulated in isolation – even if the Other does not (have to) recognize it (Said, 1994[1979]: 54) – but through processes of social exclusion and inclusion dependent on a certain level of mobility, contact and information (Barth, 1969: 9). Simultaneously however, these boundaries act as 'codifications of experience', maintained 'through selective perception, tact, and sanctions' (1969: 30). They persist despite changing interactions and even large reductions in differences between groups are not necessarily accompanied by similar changes in boundaries and the maintenance processes involved (1969: 9, 32–33). For example, no matter how the Orient was studied or represented certain things were kept intact: its eccentricity, backwardness, silent indifference, feminine penetrability and supine malleability (Said, 1994[1979]: 206). Several scholars have already pointed to the lack of empiricism in *Four Theories*, showing its incongruity with historical evidence. For example, Sparks shows that *Four Theories*' Soviet theory not only never mirrored the systems within Central and Eastern Europe (1998: 56–62) but that it was also completely incapable of explaining change in these systems. However, for my purposes here, what is most important is not the disconnection between such boundaries and some reality, but rather, how such boundaries guide and delimit further experience. Even as *Four Theories* was being penned, Khrushchev renounced Stalin and his excesses.[6] All of a sudden there is criticism within the system that supposedly has no room for any. For Schramm this does not signal that *his* theory of the Soviet system (and it is indeed his theory) is erroneous and does not justify a reformulation of his theory; in fact, he claims that 'the fundamentals are all left unchanged' (Siebert et. al., 1963[1956]: 112). Thus, he reinforces Barth's insight that '[r]evision only takes place where the categorization is grossly inadequate – not merely because it is untrue in any objective sense, but because it is consistently unrewarding to act upon within the domain where the actor makes it relevant' (1969: 30).

Perhaps the analysis above is not surprising given the social and political context in which *Four Theories* was penned (see Nerone, 1995). Said (1994[1979]) indeed points to the importance of such environmental factors. However, what is more surprising is that this Other has persisted, even in attempts to reformulate and challenge *Four Theories*. I begin my explication of this by examining the work of Lowenstein and Merrill.

Ralph L. Lowenstein and John C. Merrill

In *Media, Messages and Men* (Merrill and Lowenstein, 1971), Merrill describes the alterations Lowenstein made to *Four Theories*. For my purposes here, what is important in Lowenstein is his nomenclature. He replaces *Four Theories*' category of 'Soviet-Communist' with 'Social-Centralist' in order to acknowledge that not all communist states are alike and to get rid of the negative connotation associated with the original terms. Perhaps in the social context – long after McCarthyism and the Cuban Missile Crisis – such a change is not surprising. However, he defines 'Social-Centralist' as a system with '[p]ositive government controls to harness the press for national economic and philosophical goals' (1971: 186). This is more akin to what is called 'Development Press' – that is, a media system that stemmed from authoritarian roots and was characterized by government control, but was justified in that it was transitory and necessary for the development of a state (Hachten, 1987) – and not the Soviet theory. Rather, Lowenstein places the Soviet Union in the authoritarian press philosophy ('Negative government controls over the press to stifle criticism and thereby maintain ruling elite') and thus retains the Soviet-US relationship found in *Four Theories*. Charged with ignoring the distinctions made between the Authoritarian and Soviet theories, he later added a fifth philosophy 'Social-authoritarian' (akin to Soviet-Communist) (Mundt, 1991: 17). Lowenstein did not thoroughly develop his theory, but John Merrill, who made much of the assumptions and problems of this theory more explicit, picked up where Lowenstein left off.

Merrill makes his biases clear at the beginning of his book *The Imperative of Freedom* (1991[1974]): 10–11). Details aside, these point to his staunchly radical libertarian position. While Merrill agrees with the authors of *Four Theories* that media systems are inherently tied to political systems and political philosophies, he also breaks with them in several ways. First, he eschews any relative or culture/context-dependent definitions of freedom.[7] For him, the fundamental definition of freedom is 'freedom from outside control', one he believes most Americans share (p. 26); even professionalization is a mechanism of control from the outside (p. 132) leading him to reject any idea of 'social responsibility' (p. 24).

Second, Merrill bemoans the simplistic 'Aristotelian dualism' of authoritarian-libertarian that underlies both *Four Theories* and Lowenstein's work (1991[1974]): 25) as well as the implied progression towards a libertarian system and then a social-libertarian (social-responsibility) system that he identifies therein. To correct for this perceived shortcoming, Merrill formulates a 'continuum' theory (Figure 1). Ultimately, Merrill believed that a system could move either toward authoritarianism or toward libertarianism and that it could do so through both capitalism and socialism – even if he himself saw societies tending toward authoritarianism, as they get more complex (p. 40).[8]

While Merrill attempted to nuance the 'pigeon-hole' approach, he retains particular oppositions and binaries. While, in practice, he does not use the Soviet-US binomial opposition dogmatically, he still maintains the Soviet as the Other. Merrill sees the USA heading toward authoritarianism. Consequently, he redefines their relation to one another as 'twilight-and-day' (1991[1974]): 26) rather than 'night-and-day' as promoted by *Four Theories* and Lowenstein. Regardless, the Soviet system retains its spot

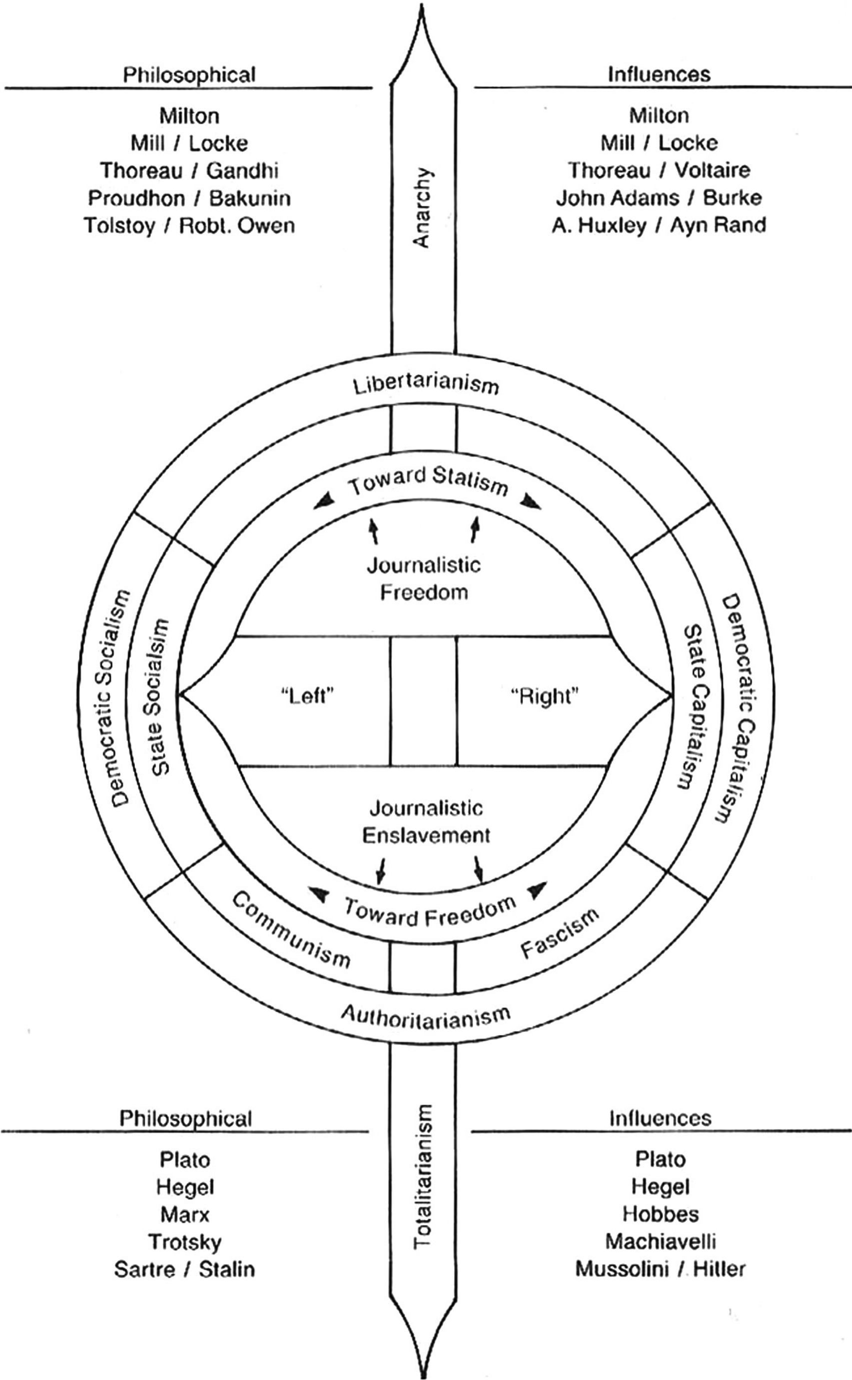

Figure 1. Merrill's Political Press Circle
Source: Merrill (1974: 42)

opposite of (ideal) libertarianism and thus still serves as the Other for the USA (Merrill does after all place communism directly opposite libertarianism; see Figure 1). Again Barth's insight is illustrated: changes in empirical reality (Merrill sees US system as less free than others) do not correlate with a parallel change in boundaries. Like Schramm, Merrill also naturalizes these distinctions by tracing their origins in intellectual history: Plato and Marx on the one hand and Mill and Milton on the other (pp. 30–31). In addition to all the complementary binaries associated with the Soviet-US binomial opposition, he adds that of popular/elitist: '[u]nlike authoritarianism, libertarianism is hailed by non-elitists and democrats' (p. 31). It is here that similar tactics used by *Four Theories* emerge in Merrill's work.

It is in Merrill's treatment of Marcuse – his favourite 'elite' target – that we again see that only 'we' can speak: Merrill does not cite Marcuse, but only a scathing review of his work by McIntyre (1991[1974]): 29). Also, his use of phrases such as 'unlike authoritarianism' serves as a reminder that such delineations of the Other are for 'us'; it defines us and puts us in a privileged position. Such phrases and narrative structures are common in *Global Journalism* (1991), a volume edited by Merrill. The chapter on Europe (Paraschos, 1991) describes Eastern European countries (including the Soviet Union – from which a majority of its examples are taken) as those that are 'least Western' and those that 'look Western' (p. 116). Both print media and electronic media are seen as presenting information in a dull, verbose, polysyllabic, bureaucratic language with 'Western-style hard news' rare (p. 118). Entertainment programming is overly dull and didactic by 'Western standards' (p. 121). Western journalism and media is defined in this chapter through such starkly opposite examples. Perhaps, not surprisingly, the chapter on North America makes no such comparisons, but describes media therein on its own terms.

In the work of Merrill we can see phenomena similar to those found in *Four Theories*. Though more nuanced than *Four Theories* again it is clear that 'we' speak *for* ourselves in binomial oppositions and binaries that do not necessarily correspond to some empirical reality, and although the Soviet Union and the United States are not, according to Merrill, on extreme opposites ends of the media systems spectrum, the Soviet Union continues to occupy the place of the Other.

William A. Hachten

In examining the work of Hachten I utilize three editions of his *The World News Prism* (1987, 1992; Hachten and Scotton, 2007) as they occur over a significant time period in which the 'reality' of the bipolar world changed dramatically. The second edition (similar to the original 1981 edition; see Mundt, 1991) was written just before the fall of communism in Europe; the third edition during communism's unraveling; and the seventh edition (co-authored with J.F. Scotton) long after. Hachten (1987), like Merrill, accepts the tenet that media systems reflect political systems and acknowledges his indebtedness to *Four Theories* (p. 15, fn1). It is telling that he maintains this statement of indebtedness in the 2007 edition (p. 16, fn1). Hachten divides the world into five press theories (or ideologies as he calls them): Authoritarian, Western (combining *Four Theories*' libertarian and social-responsibility), Communist, Revolutionary and Developmental.[9] In Hachten's work we again find the same devices as explicated above.

Hachten's idea of 'Western' is predicated on a binary of western/non-western and is a striking example of Barth's insight that boundaries do not correspond to any outside reality. Hachten (1992) acknowledges that the authoritarian theory has roots in western philosophy (i.e. Plato, Hobbes, Hegel and Marx – the latter solidifying the connection between authoritarian and communist) and yet keeps it separate from his western classification. Indeed, for Hachten (1987) the real western tradition stems from the Enlightenment and subsequently Milton, Locke, Jefferson, and Mill. 'Western' is also not simply a categorization that corresponds to a geographic reality. It includes countries as diverse as Canada, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan and India.[10] Here we can see that western is a value judgment, not simply a philosophical lineage or geographic concentration.

Hachten's promotion of the Soviet-US binomial opposition is interesting in that it gains strength in the later editions of his book. The Soviet theory has always been a function of the libertarian ideal in Hachten's work: it is explicitly judged by legitimate (*our*) standards and defines us through a negative (opposite) example. In the 1987 edition he disagreed with those who considered 'it fallacious to judge the press of non-Western nations by Western standards' (p. 23) and referred to the news in the Soviet system as 'boring and predictable', lacking any 'good news [stories] by Western standards' (pp. 24–5). This function only becomes more prominent over time. In the 2007 edition, the section on the communist theory/ideology is entitled 'The Rise and Fall of the Communist Concept'. In order to justify such a change he removes any mention of China or examples from therein used in the earlier editions. Thus, unlike in the previous editions, the (now former) Soviet Union becomes even more central in the opposition between libertarian and communist philosophies; the Soviet-US binomial opposition is strengthened in Hachten's work ironically long after the fall of communism in the Soviet Union. He uses several narrative strategies to solidify this. The section begins:

> For more than seventy years, the Western concept of the press had been under *direct challenge* by the advocates of the Communist press theory, just as capitalism itself was under *assault* by Marxist/Leninist economic doctrines. (2007: 23, emphasis added)

Now, the particular characteristics of the Soviet system (planned, one-party monopoly) are seen as simply setting 'it *apart* from Western journalism' (2007: 24, emphasis added). That is, because these features set the two systems apart they solidify the definition of the western ideal negatively – through the Other.

It is also clearer in this later edition that it is 'we' who speak. In earlier editions, Hachten quoted Lenin; in the 2007 edition, Hachten and Scotton employ a summary of Lenin's thought via McQuail (p. 24) as if the fall of Soviet communism delegitimized the authority of the very man they consider to have developed the communist theory – even if it is fallacious, as Sparks (1998) shows, to consider Lenin as the father of a coherent unchanging media theory. Connectedly, it should be noted that the section on the western concept of the press changes little over the 20 years these editions cover and that within it the tenets of the western concept are positively stated and reinforced by theorists associated with its lineage.

Hachten does much to preserve these boundaries. Hachten (1992) acknowledges criticisms of the western conception, in that they are not completely free of controls and

outside influences. However, instead of drawing parallels between the Soviet and US systems (as does Sparks, 2000) he uses this again to reinforce the binary: for Hachten these criticisms 'illustrate a built-in advantage of the Western concept' (1992: 23). Here the existence of criticism outweighs its very content; the fact that the criticisms can be made maintains the oppositional nature of the systems. In addition, when Hachten states that Soviet reporting tended to 'stress official views' (1987: 27), he makes no mention of work, written before his first edition, on the US media system that found similar phenomena (Strentz, 1978; for a summary on work related to news sources see Berkowitz, 2009; Zelizer, 2004: 150–153). This is indeed the selective perception Barth discusses in the maintenance of boundaries.

Hachten's work employs the same binomial oppositions and complementary binaries as the scholars discussed above. The Soviet-US opposition becomes (somewhat surprisingly) increasingly prominent in subsequent editions of his *The World News Prism*. In addition to these he makes prominent a western/non-western binary that disregards both the history of philosophy and geography. Also, in his description of the Soviet concept, Hachten's use of the narrative devices mentioned above illustrates that in his work – like that of *Four Theories*, Lowenstein and Merrill – only 'we' speak and we speak *for* 'us'.

Robert G. Picard and J. Herbert Altschull

Several other scholars made significant contributions to this line of inquiry into the nature of media, most notably Robert G. Picard and J. Herbert Altschull. Picard (1985) built on the work of Hachten and proposed to add yet a sixth theory: Democratic-Socialist. This theory 'is built upon the view that society leans heavily upon media in its efforts to meet social needs' and that the state should have a role in this (p. 68). This system is characterized by making the use of media a right of all citizens; public (non-state), nonprofit and some private ownership; control of media set in place via collective management and law; and a focus on the safeguarding of all citizens' social, economic and political rights (Mundt, 1991; Picard, 1985). This system was developed in Western Europe and is based on a combination of modern Marxist and liberal philosophy. Picard's combination of philosophies, which had by and large been considered diametrically opposite, illustrates his motivation to go beyond the Cold War mentality of *Four Theories* and its uncritical promotion of the Anglo-US liberal democratic tradition. However, Picard did not completely shed these biases. Ostini and Fung see Picard's work as falling well within a lineage of work that reflects western idealism and the promotion of the 'Western perspective of democracy' (2002: 44). More importantly for the purposes of this article, he does not go past the Cold War binary he criticizes. This warrants some further comment.

Table 1 illustrates that he simply inserts his theory, with some modifications, into Hachten's typology where authoritarianism and liberalism are at opposite poles. Of course he goes beyond the Soviet-US binomial *within* his own theory (Democratic-Socialist) by incorporating thinkers associated with both authoritarianism and libertarianism. Picard also states that it goes beyond this binary because within his theory media are not agents of either the state or private firms (1985: 68). However, and

Table 1. Picard typology

Authoritarian-tending		Balanced or Indeterminate tendencies		Libertarian tending		
Authoritarian	Communist	Revolutionary	Developmental	Western		
				Democratic socialist	Social responsibility	Libertarian

Note: Recreation based on Picard (1985: 69)

perhaps ironically, the meaningfulness and placement of his theory is dependent on the authoritarian-libertarian binary. He simply seeks to balance them out (notice the subheading under which his theory is found in Table 1) but this requires them to be placed on opposite ends. Moreover, his placing of the Democratic-Socialist model under the 'western' heading is telling. This theory incorporates the work of Marx, work that had been excluded from the 'western' umbrella. One may ask why the communist theory is not also placed under the heading of 'western' as well.[11] This, again contrary to Mundt (1991), is not a geographic delineation as Picard is openly adopting Hachten's framework (albeit with some modifications); as shown earlier, in Hachten's work 'western' is not a geographic category.

Altschull sees the 'us-versus-them' mentality of the Cold War found in *Four Theories* as irrelevant (Severin and Tankard, 1991: 290). Indeed, it is Altschull (1984) who perhaps goes furthest away from *Four Theories* than any of the aforementioned scholars. Altschull eschews classifying media systems based on their accompanying or foundational political systems, and opts for one based on economics. This foundation leads Altschull to create a typography of three models: First, Second and Third Worlds (1984: 280) – an unfortunate choice of nomenclature, suggestive of a privileging of the libertarian theory associated with the First World. He goes on to refer to these three models more often as market, Marxist and advancing. In his examination, Altschull focuses on each model's defined purpose of journalism (1984: 284), their articles of faith (p. 287), and views on press freedom (p. 294).

Altschull attempts to break down some of the binaries associated with the Soviet-US binomial opposition. He recognizes the political/apolitical opposition associated with the Soviet and libertarian theories; that is, Soviet journalists have a designated political task while journalists within a libertarian system are said to be 'above politics [and] present information impartially, without taking sides' (1984: 283). For Altschull, however, no press can be apolitical and in each system the press is an agent of power. In line with Barth, Altschull recognizes the role of boundaries in maintaining such delineations:

> US hostility to an educational function is probably the result of unwillingness to be associated with anything that might smell of propaganda, for it is the Soviet Union that is said to be using the press for the purposes of propaganda. (1984: 280)

Such boundaries, says Altschull, exist despite the fact that they vary empirically over time and space – they are the product of very purposeful maintenance. Despite Altschull's

insights he has been relegated to another scholar attempting to add yet another 'new' theory (i.e. 'advancing') (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 7, fn 4). Hence his work has not been developed fully.

The US academy and the Central and Eastern European question

The preceding analysis highlights just how *Four Theories* constructed – and how subsequent work in the field (in the US) maintained – the 'classic constructed other' that Nerone (2004) identifies. Its persistence points to the maintenance of a particular normative framework. That is not to say that recent work has not attempted to explicitly move away from such normativity; most notable is Hallin and Mancini's (2004) *Comparing Media Systems*. Steeped in rich empirical data, Hallin and Mancini show the existence of a variety of systems within the nation-states that long fell under the rubric of 'western'. They identify three models: polarized pluralist, democratic corporatist and liberal. Placed in this order (from polarized pluralist toward liberal) commercialization becomes more pronounced while the roles (and direct influence) of the state, political parties, and interest groups gradually diminish. While the book itself has become the new standard in comparative media research, claims (such as made by Josephi, 2005) that this contribution goes beyond normative judgments is perhaps too strong an assertion. Simply showing that the reality of media systems is varied in those states that were once all lumped under the 'western', 'libertarian', or 'liberal' headings should not be equated with an abandoning of normativity.[12] It is simply avoided – and only partially at that – by not discussing systems once classified as Other. Similarly, showing that the Other is varied and complex also does not wash our hands of normativity.[13] What is needed is an explicit turn to the meta-narratives and meta-devices used in constructing boundaries, others and ideals.

This article has done just this and shows that, along the same lines, it is not simply enough to ask if the authoritarian theory is a good 'tool' for thinking (as Nerone does). Rather, we must also ask if the libertarian/Liberal theory-ideal is also helpful. In other words, when asking if the Other is a useful tool, we must not simply focus on the Other (in a way this maintains the boundary in that it privileges the 'US') but on the binomial opposition itself. Such a change in foci does not make Nerone's concerns void; rather, it strengthens them and pushes the question further. Several examples will make this clear. First, Nerone states that the authoritarian theory as formulated in *Four Theories* prevents us from identifying authoritarian practices he defines as 'concentration[s] of power' (1995: 38). The failure to see such concentrations in the 'West' is not simply a result of the authoritarian theory but the binomial opposition it is in. It is not just how the Other is defined, but the boundary, the binary itself, that is important – our ideal and its relational position to the Other limits our ability to see such concentrations.

Second, recall Hachten's work and his refusal to refer to the content of media in communist regimes as 'news' because they 'stress official voices'. Hachten failed to acknowledge the multiple works on US media that stated the same problem and that illustrate the types of concentration of power Nerone discusses. Indeed, the binaries we have been discussing direct focus on differences (absence/presence of direct

government influence) rather than similarities (predominance of official voices). It is not a simple effect of the authoritarian theory itself, but as a result of it being the opposite, the Other of *our* ideal. Third, in delineating the Soviet and libertarian theories, *Four Theories* states that news in the former is focused on social processes while the latter presents events-based news. Several scholars have lamented the lack of contextualization in US media and its malignant effects (e.g. McChesney, 2004). Here, only asking if the authoritarian theory is useful does not get at the issue of importance as it still privileges the libertarian/Liberal ideal.

In effect, we must question the general utility of ideal types (e.g. of 'us' and 'other'). As a form, ideal types promote certain kinds of understanding often embodied in either/or arguments. Such ideal types persist within academic thinking: attempts to theorize a system that blends these opposites, in particular that of Picard (1985), still rely on the normative binomial opposition (as outlined above). Such 'ways of thinking' no longer allow us to understand circumstances in the world. The question of Central and Eastern Europe will more dramatically illustrate the implications involved.

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are especially poignant in looking at this issue as they were geographically[14] and philosophically part of this much maligned Other. The CEE media systems are, and have always been, complex. Sparks (1998) shows that, before 1989, the media systems within communist countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary were characterized by fluctuations of freedoms and restraints, the result of a multitude of political, social and economic factors. The post-communist reality of these countries is no less complicated. These nations struggle with internal division, economic challenges and an international rhetoric that posits them as needing to catch up or join in, accompanied by a rhetoric of 'transition' within the literature on media systems. There was an initial hope that the experiences within these nations would provide a new model for studying media systems (Coman, 2000), but thus far it seems that, for now, 'Westernization' or 'Westification' of media in this region dominates and may even be the 'best that can be hoped for'(Jakubowicz, 2007: 370). Both Coman and Jakubowicz, however, posit that the CEE post-communist experiences of these nation-states are at a nascent stage and that the current patterns are not to be read as an 'end of history' of sorts. In fact, even if there is a mimetic tendency on behalf of CEE countries toward Western Europe (one of several tendencies Jakubowicz, 2004, highlights) there is much reason to caution against its promotion as the examples that follow will make clear. This mimetic tendency suggests an adoption of the western ideal. Thus, when dealing with CEE media systems, it is not simply enough to ask whether our previous theory (which encompasses these states) is helpful, as the answer is all too obviously negative in that only considering it directs our attention to 'purging the communist legacy' (Jakubowicz and Suksod, 2008); refocusing on the binomial itself and questioning the usefulness of our ideal is necessary if we want to adequately address some key issues in Central and Eastern Europe.

Jakubowicz (2004) and Jakubowicz and Sukosd (2008) employ the notion of multiple post-communisms and outline four categorizations (based on a 2002 World Bank Report): competitive democracies, concentrated political regimes, non-competitive political regimes and war-torn political regimes. Here, I use the latter three to illustrate the points above. 'Concentrated political regimes' are characterized by a high level of political

contestability along with a high concentration of power; within 'non-competitive political regimes' there are large barriers for entry into the political process; and 'war-torn political regimes' are burdened by 'prolonged wars and civil conflicts, generally rooted in ethnic or territorial divisions' (Jakubowicz and Sukosd, 2008: 29). Simply questioning the usefulness of the authoritarian theory cannot address the issues these bring up. Without questioning the usefulness of the libertarian/liberal ideal itself we ignore the fact that the practices (dependency on official sources and events-based journalism) common to media systems categorized as 'western', would do nothing but exacerbate the problems these post-communist states face. A dependency on official sources would only further the barriers to entry into the political process, and events-based reporting, which lacks contextualization, has the potential to only intensify the conflicts in both 'concentrated' and 'war-torn' political regimes. Surely, Becker's dismissal of the problems for democracy that the libertarian ideal may cause by simply stating that 'we are not there yet' (2004: 146) seems to ignore the context where it has thrived – stable(r) democracies; Central and Eastern European countries 'are there' and therefore this uncritical lauding of this ideal must be questioned. This context forces us to reconsider our use of not just the Other, but 'our' ideal as well.

Conclusion

De Smaele claims that when communism fell in Central and Eastern Europe, 'the western media systems lost their common antithesis' (1999: 185). On the contrary, as seen in the analysis above (especially in the work of Hachten), the Other persists, the binomial opposition remains. As Barth (1969) points out, such boundaries do not change with empirical reality. I have outlined that the Cold War Other, in relation to a multitude of complementary binaries, has persisted over the last 50 years in the work of the US academy, even when the usefulness of this binary has been questioned or modified empirically. The question of Central and Eastern Europe highlights, in a dramatic way, the consequential nature of our ideal types; ideal types that are the result of the construction of boundaries and Others.

It is plausible that the processes and consequences they bring are inherent to any construction of any ideal; an ideal needs an Other. Said and Barth both acknowledge the universality or naturalness of processes of boundary-making and 'othering'. These boundaries have an inherent normative dimension ('US' is desirable, 'Other' is not). This does not necessarily mean that we are to abandon normative theories, mainly because they will likely be implicitly formulated regardless. Therefore, the critical problematic becomes not simply recognizing or identifying that a media system has both elements of authoritarian and democratic practices; while such work is indeed important, simply describing what is on the ground as a mix of such practices or 'theories' does not free us from the entailments of our ideal types. Rather, what is required is an approach that incorporates an examination of the very boundaries we have developed that allow us, in the first place, to dichotomize such practices; an approach that involves an explicit turn to face our normative ideals and question whether or not they allow us to understand contemporary circumstances in a constructive way, while, nonetheless continuing the empirical work needed to understand those circumstances.

What would such an approach entail? Most evident is the need for rich empirical data. Such data must take into account a changing global media landscape where the nation-state is no longer the obvious unit of analysis – though, as the recent Google-China debacle highlights, the state cannot be disregarded and is still central. Due to its continuing power, rather than abandoning the state as the unit of analysis, what is needed is a focus on the processes of international communication fostered by new technologies that affect the media landscape of a nation-state (Jakubowicz does this in his book *Rude Awakening*, 2007). However, as mentioned earlier, these normative ideals do not necessarily change along with 'reality'; thus, while dependent on rich empirical data, the goal of such an approach purported here cannot be fulfilled by it alone. More importantly, any empirical data must be accompanied by a meta-focus that is (perhaps unsatisfactorily) at its core theoretical. This is something akin to the self-reflexivity found in anthropological or ethnographic work. The purpose of such an approach is not to wash our hands of the entailments of normativity; rather, it allows us to adjudicate – even if in a limited manner – the repercussions of our normative positions and how they may affect our study of media systems. This also requires scholars to justify these positions rather than simply assume them and their value. In cases of unstable states, such an approach is crucial as the CEE examples above indicate. Thus, if the US academy is to make a significant impact on such cases the investigation of empirical conditions that dominate such work must be accompanied by a persistent interrogation of the categories and values inscribed in such investigations.

Notes

1. As the title states, I am interested in journalism. I examine the work done on media systems because, historically, these analyses have focused primarily, if not exclusively, on journalism.
2. While my focus is on the US academy – Christians et al. (2009) also place the works examined here in this category – the work of scholars from around the world on this topic should be noted. First, several scholars such as McQuail (2000), Ostini and Fung (2002), and Huang (2003) (see Jakubowicz, 1998/99, for others) have proposed modifications of *Four Theories* or alternative approaches to studying media systems. Second, many European scholars have made poignant critiques of *Four Theories* (Nordenstreng, 1997; Skogerbo, 1991). Third, others still have pointed to the limited usefulness of typologies that divide 'the world into capitalist and communist blocs' (Jakubowicz, 1998/99: 5; see also De Smaele, 1999; Mughan and Gunther, 2000; Sparks, 2000). Lastly, Christians et al. (2009) attempt to provide a comprehensive guide and new approach to normative theories within the field.
3. It should be noted that just as *Orientalism* was not intended to be an entire inventory of Orientalist work, this article is even less so in regard to the US academy's work on journalism. The literature on journalism is vast and the purpose here is to examine a particular strain of thought that has been identified as influential within the US academy's work on journalism (Christians et al., 2009, also identify the works found in this article as seminal in the US academy); it is by no means the entire story but an important part.
4. US media is compared to *Pravda* in Herman and Chomsky (1988) and McChesney (2004) to highlight its deficiencies.
5. It should be noted that one of his main sources was Andrei Vyshinsky, a chief prosecutor for Stalin's 'Great Purge'.
6. Seibert et al. posit an intrinsic tie between the political and media systems of a nation-state. Thus, this example is telling.

7 *Four Theories* paid some lip service to this idea. While the book outlined the differences in how the USA and the USSR defined freedom, it can be argued that, based on the analysis above, this did little to nuance the Soviet theory outlined therein.
8 The irony here is that as a radical libertarian, Merrill does not promote any outside control; enforced-libertarianism is a contradiction in terms for him. However, if a libertarian system is the ideal, its attainment in light of a natural tendency toward authoritarianism, would require some sort of systematically implemented action.
9 These latter two are both considered to be temporary or transitory (Picard, 1985).
10 The example of India is telling. Over the 20 years that these three editions were published, the statement on India has not changed: 'And India, the world's largest democracy [most populous], has enjoyed a remarkably free press despite its diverse problems' (Hachten, [1987: 19], 1992; Hachten and Scotton, 2007: 20).
11 This highlights the ideological dimension of the works examined here: exactly what the principle characteristic of a media (theory) is that places it on either end of the dichotomy is never clear.
12 Indeed, others have claimed that the subtext of the book is a privileging of the liberal model (COST A30, 2007). One could also point to the ordering of the chapters as progressing towards the liberal theory.
13 Work on development journalism is also normative in that is sees a progression towards an ideal. Even scholars that have eschewed the transitory paradigm and argue for a focus of those states in a 'grey zone' (Carothers, 2002) do not necessarily avoid normative arguments.
14 Said (1994[1979]) discusses the importance of geography in the maintenance of the Other.

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