1. Introduction

"It is nearly midday. Zahra will be home soon. She and her family have decided to move back to the house in the Al-Shaab district of Baghdad (…) Zahra sits at the back of the minibus holding her baby in her arms. Together with her are her husband, sisters, mother and three children. The bus stops, and they get out". Shortly after, the scenery explodes in blood and chaos as a missile hits the pavement close to the minibus. Fifteen Iraqi civilians are killed and 40 wounded.

This incident took place in Baghdad during the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Media throughout the world reported the news in a neutral language within the taut classic news style, but the article about the Iraqi woman Zahra, who witnessed and survived the blast, was different. In terms of style, it can be characterised as *narrative journalism*, a style which implies the use of literary techniques and structures known from fiction writing. It was published on the front-page of Politiken, a mainstream social-liberal newspaper in Denmark and written by Åsne Seierstad, a Norwegian freelance journalist in Baghdad. Zahra's story is typical for Seierstad's style as she often uses literary techniques in her journalistic writing. Seierstad has pointed to the Polish war reporter and author Ryszard Kapuściński as her role model in terms of style (Habermeir 2007)[1], and thereby she has linked herself explicitly to a narrative, journalistic tradition (Aucoin 2001).

Both as a reader and as a professional journalist working for Danish media, I was fascinated and surprised by Seierstad's articles from Iraq before, during and immediately after the invasion. As a reader I was fascinated, because they offered a different and far more compelling representation of the warfare than other news media. They told stories about the war that I would remember long after the endless stream of uniform news bulletins had vanished from my memory. As a professional, I was surprised to see a major mainstream newspaper allowing Seierstad's articles to play a key role in the war coverage especially on the front page which is usually devoted to hard core news presented in the classic factual/objective style of news writing. My fascination and surprise is the impetus of this study. The aim is to analyse Seierstad's narrative style as performed in Politiken and relate it to the tradition of narrative journalism and also to the classical factual/objective news style. I will compare Seierstad's style to that of the reporter Erik Thomle, who covered the invasion for another major Danish paper, Jyllands-Posten. Based on this analysis and a review literature on narrative theory and the development of styles within journalism, I will discuss whether Seierstad's journalism opens up for a different perception and understanding of the content which she communi-

[1] Interview in the daily newspaper Information by Andreas Habermeir: *I balance mellem distance og engagement*. Information 29-11-2007; http://www.information.dk/151048

cates. Finally, I will discuss whether the high priority given to her articles in Politiken can be seen as an example of how the traditional dichotomy between hard and soft news in newspaper journalism is gradually dissolving.

Åsne Seierstad and the war coverage

Åsne Seierstad's articles from Baghdad were not only printed in Scandinavia - Norway (*Aftenposten*), Denmark (*Politiken*) and Sweden (*Dagens Nyheder*) - as first planned, but also in Finland (*Ilta-Sanomat*), Germany (*Der Tagesspeigel*), the Netherlands (*Trouw*), Austria (*Der Standard*), and Switzerland (*Tages Anzeiger*). Additionally, Seierstad reported for several radio and TV channels during the invasion. (Seierstad, 2004: 3). In this study her articles shall, however, be regarded as an integrated part of the Danish war coverage. This approach can be sustained by the fact that Seierstad had a personal contract with Politiken and was presented to the readers as the paper's own correspondent.[2]

The publishing of Seierstad's articles is also in line with a general tendency at Politiken, as narrative journalism in recent years deliberately has come to play an increasingly important role in the paper (Christiansen, 2004; Nielsen, 2006: 49 ff). Yet, it is important to note the significant political divergences between Norway and Denmark in regard to the war in Iraq: Norway opposed the American-led invasion, whereas Denmark joined the coalition. But still there were critical as well as supportive media coverage in the two countries, and the papers for which Seierstad wrote - *Aftenposten* in Norway and *Politiken* in Denmark – both predominantly exposed a critical attitude towards the war (Ottesen 2005:291 f; Hjarvard et al 2006: 89-90).

Theory and definitions

The coverage of the Iraqi War in the Danish media has been comprehensively analysed by Hjarvard et al in *Mediernes dækning af invasionen af Irak 2003* (2004) using the theory of agenda setting and framing in a large quantitative study. Jørndrup (2006) has used discourse analysis in a PhD thesis on the same topic *Journalistik midt i en krigstid* (2005*)*. Three dissertations from the Institute of Nordic Philology at University of Copenhagen (Haagensen 2002, Mortensen 2005, Nielsen 2006) have in recent years analysed narrative feature writing in Danish media using literary textual analysis, but in this study I hope to pursue a different path by combining a media science approach with a textual analysis based on narrative theory as none of the above mentioned studies have done.

[2] Danish papers frequently publish translated articles from British and American media. E.g. the daily paper Information published reports on Iraq by Robert Fisk of The Independent, but Fisk was never presented as a reporter of Information

Defining narrative journalism

Several different terms have been used to characterise the narrative style in journalism: new journalism, literary journalism, literary non-fiction and journalistic storytelling. Connery (1990) prefers the term *literary journalism* while Hartsock (2000) suggests *literary narrative journalism,* because the style borrows its tools from literature and is at the same time in a narrative mode. According to Mark Kramer, there is now a widespread consensus within the US media about naming the style *narrative journalism*, whereas the term literary journalism only is used to characterise journalism in book form (Kramer in Sønnichsen 2002: 11). The term used in recent Danish and Norwegian literature is the equivalent of narrative journalism *fortællende journalistik* (Hvid, 2002, Sønnichsen 2002, Dalviken 2005, Jo Beck-Karlsen 2007), and this will be my preferential term, too. The content of narrative articles is typically generated by the traditional means of journalistic news gathering and reporting, but in terms of style the narrative journalist is using the techniques of literary fiction writing, among these the "four devices" as formulated by Tom Wolfe, one of the major trend-setters within the American "New Journalism" of the 1960s: scenes, dialogue, shifting view (third person point of view) and details – often with a symbolic dimension (Wolfe, 1996: 46). Furthermore, people in narrative articles are characters rather than sources and when they express themselves orally, it is often in dialogue rather than with opinion statements (Hvid, 2002). A narrative article in its pure form tells a story – a narrative. A narrative is in general understood as a story about *events* which happen *over time* and involve *characters* (Berger, 1997: 4), and this definition is also valid in regard to narrative journalism. In combination with these characteristics, this study intends to identify a number of additional characteristics and develop a tool of analysis that can help identify the narrative elements in journalistic writing and distinguish between narrative and non-narrative journalism.

The content

This study is divided into five chapters after the introduction. First, I will present the basic notions of narrative theory and discuss how they can be applied to journalistic texts. Secondly, I will review the literature on journalistic style, both the narrative and the classical news style as it has developed in the USA and subsequently in Denmark. Then the method of analysis as well as the exact research questions will be presented followed by a narrative analysis. The findings are then finally discussed and theorised upon in the last chapter, which also contains the conclusion.

2. Theory on narrative Journalism

Narrative journalism is a style of non-fiction writing which borrows its tools from literature, and therefore this study will draw on the theoretical framework of literary narratology in combination with less theoretical textbooks on narrative journalistic writing. The aim is to develop a tool of analysis for the purpose of this study.

The historic development within the field of literary narratology has humorously been summarised by Martin McCuillan as a narrative in its own right:

> "In the beginning, there was Aristotle who theorised "plot", then came the novelists who theorised their own plots, then after some false starts (Propp, Benjamin, Bakhtin) narrative theory really took off with narratology (the structuralist-led "science of narrative"). However, like the dinosaurs, narratologists died out and were replaced by more mobile, covert forms of narrative theory within the post-structuralist diaspora. Narrative theory now lives on, embedded in the work and tropes of post-structuralism" (McCuillan 2000 xi).

My intention is, however, neither to provide a comprehensive survey of that development, nor to discuss in detail the post-structuralist and deconstructivist criticism of narratology. The intention is far more pragmatic, namely to provide workable definitions to key notions of narrative theory such as story, narrative, plot, and discourse and to provide theory-based answers to a number of basic questions: What is a narrative article? How can narrative style be distinguished from other journalistic styles, in particular that of classical news journalism? Which tools of analysis can be used to identify a particular article as narrative journalism? In answering these questions, I find the structuralist approach to be the most fruitful.

Aristotle – the beginning, the middle and the end

Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC), who is regarded to be the founding father of narrative theory, is often quoted as defining the narrative as a structure with a beginning, a middle and an end. The definition is to be found in *Poetics*, a piece of work explicitly about tragedy, but nevertheless Aristotle's ideas and definitions have been widely applied to other genres. The famous quote reads:

> "… tragedy is an imitation of a whole and complete action of some amplitude (…). Now a whole is that which has a beginning, a middle and an end. A beginning is that which does not itself necessarily follow anything else, but which leads naturally to another event or development; an end is the opposite, that which itself naturally (…) follows something else, but nothing else comes after it; and a middle is that which itself follows something else and is followed by another thing". (Aristotle 1953: 27).

If we consider "tragedy" and "narrative" to be interchangeable, we now have a rough definition of the narrative. Applying it to journalism allows us to conclude that a lot of news articles are not narratives, as news articles usually have no end "which naturally follows something else, but nothing else comes after it". If the article is written in accordance with the inverted news pyramid, it can be shortened or prolonged arbitrarily. In contrast, we may assume that a narrative article has a beginning, a middle and an end.

Towards a definition of the narrative

However, defining the narrative that way is insufficient for the purpose of this study. Arthur A. Berger has summarised the most generally used definitions of the narrative in a simple and intelligible way:

> "a narrative is (…) a story, and stories tell about things that have happened or are happening to people, animals, aliens from outer space, insects – whatever. That is, a story contains sequences of events which means that narratives take place within or over, to be more precise, some kind of time period". (Berger 1997: 4).

Berger does not specify the qualities of these events and characters in details, but Toolan does: the events should be

> "logically and chronologically related events, bound together by a recurrent focus (…) on one or more individuals (…) in whom the reader becomes interested (…)"

He also suggests that the course of events should expose a certain development, so that the defining features of the narrative become 1) sequenced and interrelated events 2) fore-grounded individuals 3) a crisis to resolution progression (Toolan 1988: 8). To sum up, a narrative could then be defined as a story with a beginning, a middle and an end about interrelated *events* which take place *over time* in a certain *place* or places and involve specific *characters* that go through some kind of *development*.

The distinction between *what* and *how*

So far the terms *narrative* and *story* have been used synonymously, but in accordance with the main body of narrative theory, a narrative consists of two parts: a *what* and a *how* (Chatman 1993: 19). This is a classic structuralist approach, whereas post-structuralists and neo-structuralists have questioned the dichotomy by arguing that *what* and *how* cannot be understood separately (Smith in McCuillan, 2000: 6) but in the present context the distinction appears to be meaningful.

In *Poetics* Aristotle makes a distinction between *plot* (the synthesis of pragmata) and *fable* (mythos). The Russian formalists, most notably Vladimir Propp[3], distinguished between *fabula* (fable) and *sjuzet* (plot), the former being "the set of events tied together which is communicated to us in the course of the work" or "what has in effect happened"[4], whereas the latter is "how the reader becomes aware of what has in effect happened", that is "the order of the appearance (of the events) in the work itself" (Chatman 1993: 20).[5] The French structuralists talked about *histoire* and *discours*, and Chatman has translated these terms into *story* and *discourse* (Chatman 1993: 19). These pairs - fabula/sjuzet, fable/plot, histoire/discours and story/discourse basically describe the same distinction between *what* and *how*.

When journalists talk about a story, they understand a certain content which can typically be expressed in a headline and ranked as more or less newsworthy. The course of events behind a headline like *Prime Minister involved in illegal transaction* or *Madonna is getting a divorce* is in fact often *fabula*, but this does not mean that the articles necessarily are narrative articles, because – as we have seen – the typical news articles is non-narrative.

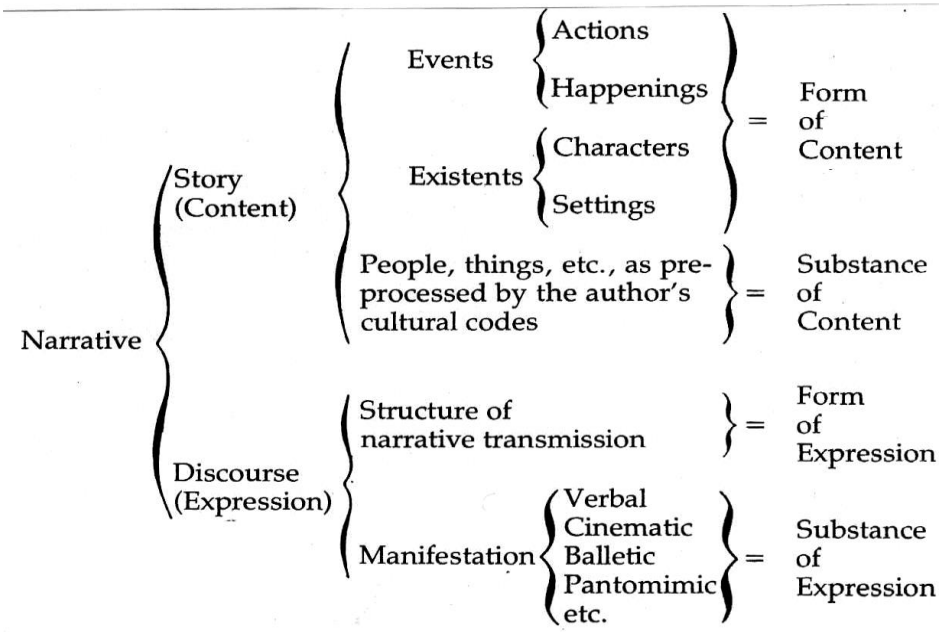
The events of a story are, according to Chatman, turned into a plot by discourse, the modus of presentation (Chatman 1993; 43). This use of the term *discourse* should therefore not be confused with the Foucault-inspired definition often utilised within media sciences as "a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge" (Fairclough 1995: 18). Scholars like van Dijk (1988) and Fowler (1991)[6] use the term in this way taking discourse analysis to be a tool with which to detect ideological biases in news, but in this study discourse will be understood in accordance with Chatman. Chatman is not quite clear when distinguishing between plot and discourse, but here, I will take the term *plot* to be what Chatman calls "the structure of narrative transmission" – that is: "the way an author tells a story and arranges for an event to occur" (Berger 1997: 66), and so discourse will mean the sum of plot understood this way and the verbal manifestation of fabula.

[3] Propp´s "*Morphology of the Folke Tale*" first published in Russian in 1928. (English translation 1968) came to play an important role in structuralist narrative theory.

[4] Similarily defined by other authors as: *fabula* is "[S]eries of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors" (Berger 1997: 65; Bal 1997: 5; Toolan 1987: 10).

[5] The Russian formalist Boris Tomashevsky 1925: *Teorija Literatury* (Poetica). Leningrad. The quotes are translated from French by Chatman as they appears in Todorov (ed): *Théorie de la literature* and from Lemon and Reis (ed): *Russian Formalist Criticism.*

[6] Van Dijik, T. (1988): *News as Discourse* and Fowler, R. (1991): *Language in the News. Discourse and Ideology of the Press* are not in the bibliography as they are not used as theory.



***Source**: Seymour Chatman (1993): Story and Discourse p. 26*

On the whole in the present context, a narrative is understood in accordance with a structuralist approach as the sum of *what* and *how*. The *what* is the cause of events as it took place in real life, and it is called *story* or *fabula*. The *how* is two-dimensional and consists of a structure called *plot* and the verbal manifestation of fabula. Together the two are called *discourse.*

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Plots in narrative journalism

The plotting of a story/fabula is a literary technique and narrative articles can just like literary narratives be plotted in various ways, although the plot models usually differ from those of literature. The aim of plotting in journalism is first and foremost to attract the attention of the reader – and to maintain it, even if the article is of some length. The inverted news pyramid – that is adding information in the order of declining relevance - is not a useful structure in that respect, because for every paragraph the content becomes ever less relevant and interesting. Hvid has identified five different types of plot described in textbooks of journalism (Hvid 2004: 41 ff).

1) *The ad hoc model*. The content determines the plot. If time plays an important role in the story, it might be chronological, constantly emphasising the hour. If conflict is the determining factor, cross clipping is an obvious structure, and if the story is about past events influencing the present, a structure with flashbacks constantly interrupting the chronology could be appropriate (Hvid 2004: 43-44)

2) *The Story Model*. The story is told in a series of scenes 1) a complication scene exposing the conflict/theme of the article 2) a number of development scenes exposing the struggle for a solution and 3) the solution scene exposing the - not necessarily happy -solution. (Hvid 2004: 43-44). The model is developed and described by the American journalist Jon Franklin (1994) who finds it particularly useful for stories about individuals undergoing a certain development, but it is in fact a classical narrative model known from folk tales as described by Propp (1968). Kolstrup (2005) equates this structure with "the narrative" by referring to the two linguists Jean-Michel Adam (1992) and the William Labov (1972).[7] He is, however, confusing narrative with plot by not taking into account that narrative journalism can be plotted in a number of ways.

4) *The Third Way Model* (Roy Peter Clark, 1998)

This model is based on Roy Peter Clark's ideas as described in *Two Ways to Read, Three Ways to write* (Clark 1998*)* [8] and inspired by the Reader-Response theory of Louise Rosenblatt (1904-2005).[9] The two ways of reading are "the efferent" and "the aesthetic" mode – that is "reading for information" and "reading for exploration". News journalism generally corresponds to the former mode, fiction writing to the latter, whereas Roy Peter Clark suggests that narrative journalism should be a hybrid. The aim of his plot model is to combine the two modes in a "third way of writing". It consists of a story told in a number of scenes (mimesis) – most effectively three – and in between these scenes are informative text blocks written in a more traditional and summarising news style (diegesis). These informative blocks are called BBI meaning "Boring But Important", and they do not necessarily refer directly to the storyline of the three narrative blocks. So the structure of the article is: Scene 1 – BBI 1 – Scene 2 – BBI 2- Scene 3 (Hvid 2004: 44-49).

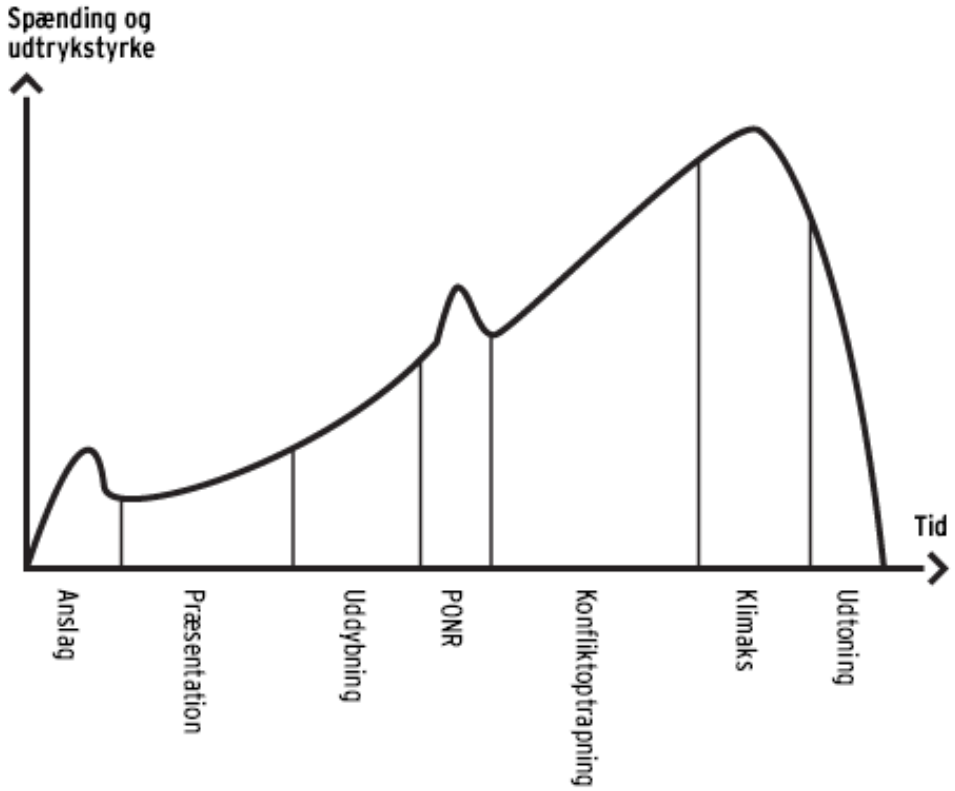
4) *The Drama Model / Hollywood Model:* Consists of seven stages of conflict escalation towards a final solution. The drama model is most frequently used in fiction films and has proven more prob-

[7] Jean-Michel Adams's version of the model reads: "Initial situation – disruption – actions – solution/non-solution – final situation" whereas Labov's version is: abstract – orientation – complication action – evaluation – solution – coda (Kolstrup 2005: 113) but basically these structures are identical.

[8] http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=5363

[9] Rosenblatt *: Literature as Exploration (1938)* Not in the bibliography. The theory is about the "readers' processes of engagement and involvement for composing their own "poem" [the reader's construction of a text]" (Church 1997*:* The Significance of Louise Rosenblatt on the Field of Teaching Literature. *Inquiry Vol. 1.No. 1. 1997: p 71-77): http://www.vccaedu.org/inquiry/inquiry-spring97/i11chur.html*

lematic in print journalism, because only few journalistic stories contain the kind of clear-cut conflict which is needed for the model to function (Hvid 2002: 62).



***Source**: Haderslev Katedralskole http://www.haderslev-katedralskole.dk/kf/Berettermodel.htm*

1) Anslag = **opening** 2) Præsentation = **exposition**: characters and the conflict are introduced, setting of the scene 3) Uddybning = **elaboration** 4) PONR = **point of no return**
5) konfliktoptrapning = **conflict development** 6) Klimaks = **climax** 7) Udtoning = **fading /resolution** Tid = time; Spændings- og udtryksstyrke = level of suspense and expressivity)

5. The Wall Street Journal Model was developed by William Blundell (1988), a former Wall Street Journal journalist as a guide to good feature writing. The model has four stages: 1) Lead: teasing the reader to continue 2) "Nut graph" summarising the core elements of the story 3) Body developing the argument 4) "Kicker" repeating what it was all about, so we don't forget (Blundell 1998:95; Hvid 2004: 56-61).

Some journalists argue that the inverted news pyramid also is a plot model (Hvid 2004: 43; Faber in Nielsen 2005: 48), but even if we accept this argument, it does not automatically imply that the news article is a narrative.

Literary devices in journalistic narration

Plotting is not the only literary technique used in narrative journalism. Tom Wolfe has identified four literary devices as defining New Journalism (Wolfe 1996 (1973): 46 ff). These four devices have been used as tools of analysis in three recent studies of Danish narrative journalism (Haagensen 2002, Mortensen 2004, Nielsen 2005), and as they have proven relevant, I will also use them in this study. The devices are:

1. "*Scene-by-scene construction*" telling the story by moving from scene to scene"´(Wolfe 1996: 46) The scenic approach is "showing" as opposed to "telling" – or in slightly more academic terms: *Mimesis* rather than *diegesis.* The distinction between these two notions in literature dates back to Plato who understood mimesis as "imitation of actions, when a poet adopts a persona to deliver a speech" (McCuillan 2000: 322) and diegesis as "telling, recounting or narrating as opposed to showing or enacting as in drama" (ibid. 317). The terms *mimesis* and *diegesis* equate what some authors call *narrative mode* and *discursive mode* (Hartsock 2000: 55), but as both modes can be used in narrative journalism, I prefer to use the Greek terms in order to avoid confusion.

2. Dialogue: Recording authentic dialogue between the characters rather than quoting them as sources Dialogue can make the text appear as fiction, it is controversial and has often been criticised. Contemporary narrative journalists and scholars of journalism like Mark Kramer insist that the use of this devise must be based on accurate research, and that invented dialogues have no place in narrative journalism (Sims & Kramer 1995: 25).

3. *Third-person point of view:* "the technique of presenting every scene to the reader through the eyes of a particular character giving the reader the feeling of being inside the character's mind and experiencing the emotional reality of the scene as he experiences it" (Wolfe 1996: 46). The use of a third person point of view in journalism has been met with the same objections as the dialogue has.

4. Details. This device is the recording of everyday gestures, habits, manners, customs, styles of furniture, etc. Wolfe understands these details as symbolic of people's "status life" and explains that he is "using that term in the broad sense of the entire pattern of behaviour and possessions through which people express their position in the world, or what they think it is, or what they hope it to be" (ibid: 47).

In conclusion, a narrative article can now be defined as a journalistic article distinguished by the use of literary techniques, in particular the four devices: scenes, dialogue, third-person-view and sym-

bolic details. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. It is about interrelated *events* which take place *over time* in a certain *place* or places, and they involve specific *characters* who undergo some kind of *development,* and it is plotted – most likely in accordance with one of five commonly used models. In order to be characterised as narrative journalism, an article should thus display all or most of these features. It might display some of them and be characterised as "semi-narrative", but if it displays only a few or none of these features, it will be regarded as non-narrative journalism.

3. Literature review

Journalists with literary ambitions are undermining objective journalism. So reads a general critique by many news journalists who deny the narrative or literary style a place in news reporting. One of them is Flemming Rose, the cultural editor at the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten. In a heated debate with Åsne Seierstad in February 2008 about her recent reportage book from Chechnya, *The Angel of Grozny*, he fundamentally questioned her style: "This is a slippery slope leading to the decay of our trade. If we continue this way, we will all end up as storytellers" he exclaimed, and "storyteller" was not meant as an appellation of honour. Rose claimed that Seierstad is not paying enough attention to facts and details to which quick-witted Seierstad replied: "Fact is a dead horse" hereby emphasising that her journalism has a wider purpose than communicating facts. Her intention is not to mediate textbook information, but rather, she explained, to drag the reader into the story, forcing him or her to relate to – in this case – real life experiences of ordinary people during the lengthy and bloody conflict.[10]

The debate between Seierstad and Rose reflects a fundamental conflict within journalism dating back to the rise of the factual/objective style. As it emerged, the factual style in scholar John Hartsock's wording provoked "an epistemological crisis for subjectivity, be it the journalist's the reader's or that of the object of the report" (Hartsock 2000: 51). Narrative journalism, as that of Seierstad, can be understood as an attempt to solve this crisis. This chapter will explore the epistemological conflict and in doing so, I will first provide a survey of the development of factual news journalism since the late nineteenth century, and the emergence of the ideal of objectivity and the controversy about this notion. Then I will examine how narrative journalism, in particular in the USA, arose in response to the alienation inherent in the factual style, and finally I will discuss the compatibility of the two styles. The main focus will be on the American media, because both the

[10] Relster, Andreas (2008): *Fakta er en død hest*. Dagbladet Information: http://www.information.dk/155323

objective style and the modern narrative style have spread from the USA, but also the Danish perspective will be included, as this study is about narrative journalism in a Danish media context.

The invention of *The New Style*

Accuracy, shortness and clarity are the quality parameters of factual news journalism. News stories are told in accordance with the inverted news pyramid – that is in a non-chronological *relevance order* (van Dijk, 1991:115). A typical news article consists of a headline, a lead, and a body. It answers the basic questions of who, what, when and where, and the over-all ideal is the objective communication of facts (e.g. Høyer 2005: 34).

Obviously, the style of news journalism is neither eternal nor universal. On the contrary, it has developed only since the last decades of the nineteenth century - then called *The New Style*. It probably first emerged in a rudimentary form in American newspapers in the 1860s. By the 1890s it was commonly used in the American media, and it was described for the first time in a textbook in1894 (Høyer 2005: 35). Within the Danish media the New Style was introduced by Henrik Cavling, the editor of Politiken from 1905 and onwards, but it took several decades before it was the dominating style in the Danish media (Jørgensen, 2007: 11, Høyer 2005: 39). As Kolstrup has demonstrated in a quantitative study of 75 newspapers from 1870 to 1941, the use of the news pyramid was significant at the turn of the century, but it took yet another 30 years, before the traditional linear construction of news articles had totally disappeared (Kolstrup 2005: 111).

The first Danish textbook on journalism, published in 1928,[11] further facilitated the spread of *The New Style*. The author, Ole Cavling, the son of Henrik Cavling, enthusiastically wrote:

> "[A] ll modern journalism is based on News. The accurate and promptly communicated report on the events of the day is the source of success for the press. Without the News the paper is only entertaining – not enlightening" (Cavling, Ole 1928 in Jørgensen 2007: 12).[12]

This, now classic, news style has dominated Danish textbooks on journalism ever since in accordance with a general European trend, as Finn Frandsen found in a meta-study comparing Danish, French and English textbooks (Frandsen 1996), and still today, these norms prevail almost unchallenged in recent standard textbooks used in Denmark (Jørgensen 2007: 17-19).

[11] Henrik Cavling's son, Ole Cavling, who had studied media science in the USA and worked as a foreign correspondent in London, published it.

[12] Cavling, Ole (1928): Journalistik. Kortfattet Vejledning i Moderne Journalistik:14-15 in Jørgensen, 2007: 12. (My translation).

News criteria – a part of *The New Style*

The relevance structure of the factual/objective news style does not only apply to the individual article, but also to the ranking order of stories throughout the newspaper. The selection and ranking of news is a process of construction based on certain values (e.g. Schudson 1989 in Berkowitz 1997). The theory on news values was first formulated by Galtung & Ruge (1965) in a study of foreign news in Norwegian newspapers. Their work has later been critically revised by e.g. Harcup & O´Nell (2001). How journalists and editors in practice make judgements about the news value of specific stories has been surveyed in a number of sociological and ethnographic newsroom studies since the early 1970s by for example Altehidé (1973), Epstein (1973), Tuchman (1978) and Schelsinger (1978). In continuation of this tradition Ida Schultz has recently conducted a newsroom study in Denmark – the first of its kind ever. She found that news in the Danish media generally is selected according to a more operational set of criteria, namely: 1) Topicality 2) Importance 3) Conflict 4) Identification 5) Sensation (Schultz 2006: 57). There was a broad consensus about these criteria throughout the newsrooms of the surveyed media including both newspapers, the two public service television broadcasters and the national news wire, Ritzau (ibid: 67). Applying the theoretical framework of Bourdieu, Schultz concludes that

> "[T]he news criteria is a very strong journalistic orthodoxy: There is no discussion about other possible values than those five categories. The only difference from one media to the other is a variation in the priority given to the particular criteria" (Schultz, 2006:67).[13]

Some of the criteria are likely to be more powerful than others. The journalists in Schultz' study seem to agree that *conflict* and *sensation* always have a high priority, but there are also indicators that the importance of *identification* has increased in recent years, as Hjarvard has demonstrated is the case regarding television news (Hjarvard, 1999).[14] This increasing priority given to *identification* might be to the benefit of narrative journalism, as the narrative style often makes use of mimetic representation – showing scenes from the life of "real people" – instead of the diegetic mode based on information as is the norm in the factual/objective news style.

[13] My translation. The term "orthodoxy" in this context derives from Bordieu's theory on *doxa.* Doxa is the unspoken and self-evident "truth" that is generally taken for granted As opposed to doxa, *heterodoxy* and *orthodoxy* are positions representing disagreement and consensus about certain values respectively (Schultz 2006: 32 & 66 ff).
[14] Based on the summary of Hjarvard's book "*TV nyhederne I konkurrence" 1999.*Summary available on CFJE: http://www.update.dk/cfje/Kildebase.nsf/(ID)/KB00078344

The origins of the idea of journalistic objectivity

The ideal of journalistic objectivity born out of a broader cultural movement of scientific naturalism is another predominant feature of the classic news style. It was, however, not explicitly expressed until the 1920s (Schudson 2001: 158 & 161 ff, Streckfuss 1990: 973), although studies by Donald L. Shaw (1967) and James Carey (1989)[15] have proved a decline in news bias in American papers already since the last decades of the nineteenth century. Shaw and Carey have suggested that new technology such as e.g. the telegraph, which required shorter and more focused messages, caused this development. Others have opted for economic explanations pointing to the increasing commercialisation of the newspaper industry which made it lucrative to abandon political partisanship (Schudson 2001: 150). Schudson has, on the other hand, rejected these explanations as "economic and technological reductionism" (ibid: 158). By choosing a sociological approach he interprets objectivity primarily as a tool of social control and "a kind of industrial discipline" in accordance with Weber's theories, and he suggests that the ideal also spread, because it encouraged a sort of tribalism within the journalist community and allowed journalists to affiliate themselves with "the prestige of science" (ibid 161-162). This sociological approach is in line with e.g. Tuchman (1972) who understands objectivity as a "strategic ritual" primarily serving the purpose of protecting the journalists from criticism.

Yet, the sociological approach seems to ignore the socio-political dimension and the role of journalism in relation to democracy. Richard Streckfuss argues that the notion of objectivity must be understood in the historic and ideological context of the inter-war period. He emphasises that "objectivity was founded not on a naïve idea that humans could be objective, but on a realisation that they could NOT" (Streckfuss 1990: 974). According to Streckfuss, the ideal of objective journalism was first and foremost introduced as a bulwark against the emotionalism and propaganda that marred the media during the First World War. Secondly, the ideal also was a reaction to the mistrust in the rationality of the human mind, a notion that emerged from modern theories of psychology such as John B. Watson's behavioural psychology and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis (ibid. 975). These arguments were efficiently promoted by for instance Walter Lippmann,[16] who saw objectivity not as a passive justification of the status quo, as contemporary critiques of the idea claim, but rather as a

[15] Shaw and Carey: referenced in Schudson 2001: 158

[16] Walter Lippmann (1889-1974). Journalist, a media critic and a philosopher concerned with the tensions between liberty and democracy in the modern world. Author of e.g. *Liberty and the News(1920)*

means of improving democracy and bringing about radical social change (ibid 979; Hartsock 2000: 155; 229-230).

Europe did not have equally strong promoters of objective journalism, and although the European media were to an even larger extent dominated by propaganda during the First World War, the Europeans were hesitant to embrace the idea. The partisan press was strong in most European countries and also in Denmark, where it ultimately ceased to exist in the 1980s (Høyer 39).[17] However, Cavling at an early stage introduced a segregation of content in Politiken, and he later argued "[G]ood old press practice draws a distinct demarcation between reportage and commentary. The reportage must be absolutely neutral and not express any opinion - let alone a particular point of view" (Cavling quoted in Mortensen, 2004: 28).[18] These norms of being "*absolutely neutral"* and "*not express any opinion"* were of course paraphrasing the journalistic objectivity, and from 1910 Politiken inspired other major newspapers in Denmark to develop into non-partisan omnibus newspapers – "papers for everyone", and by and large embrace the idea of objectivity (Haagensen 2002: 19).

The critique of objectivity

The ideal of objective journalism based on a positivistic ideal seems somewhat naïve in the post-modern world, and so contemporary media scholars have contested it. If defined as "extra-ideological reporting of absolute or universal truth" (Fulton 2005: 228), objectivity is obviously not achievable and understood this way, it is unconditionally rejected by post-structuralist scholars

> "since external reality can be accessed only through practices of visual or linguistic representation that are always already ideologically positioned" (ibid).

From this perspective, objectivity is dismissed as both impossible and undesirable (ibid. 231). Scholars like Theodor Glasser have argued that any representation of reality is subjective, and he claims that journalists striving for objectivity rely falsely upon a "naively empirical view of the world, a belief in the separation of facts and values, a belief in the existence of *a* reality – the reality of empirical facts" (Glasser 1992).[19]

But a total rejection of "the reality of empirical facts" – or the rejection of the existence of a reality outside discourse – leads to a problematic relativism. Journalists, as well as most other human be-

[17] The partisan paper Land & Folk owned by the Danish Communist Party only closed in 1991.
[18] The quotation is my translation of Cavling Sr. – the editor of Politiken from 1905 and onwards. Mette Mørck Mortensen 2004 has reproduced the quote from Borker & Brøndgaard (2001): *Avisreportagen – fra Cavling til Sabroe.*
[19] The quote is from Glasser's essay "*Objectivity and news bias"* in Elliot D. Cohen (ed.*): Philosophical Issues in Journalism*. New York: Oxford University Press p. 183 quoted by Kieran 1998 in Kieran (ed) (2002): Media Ehics.

ings, need to assume that reality does exist for *real,* and that it is possible to reach some kind of consensus about what and how it is, and thus that it makes sense to talk about facts and to evaluate some statements about reality as more *true* than others. Pragmatic scholars like Matthew Kieran try to bridge the gap between the "objectivists" and their critics by acknowledging that news on the one hand essentially consists of value-laden constructions (Kieran 2002: 24), but on, the other hand that the role of journalism is "informing the public about significant events in the world, and this goal requires journalists to strive to be impartial, and thus objective" (ibid: 35). But in so stating, Kieran is in fact replacing objectivity with impartiality. Also terms like balance, accuracy, completeness, factuality and neutrality have been used to replace the controversial term of objectivity, but they have all been equally disputed. (Fulton 2005: 229). Michael Ryan has suggested redefining objectivity as a code of conduct, including for instance:

> "receptivity to new evidence and alternative explanations (…) scepticism, typically toward authority figures, the powerful, and the self-righteous (…) initiative in finding ways, for example, to research difficult topics (….) imagination, creativity, and logical consistency in making strategic decisions" and "honesty about personal idiosyncrasies and preferences" (Ryan 2001: 4).[20]

Ryan even includes a demand on "presenting narratives in interesting and compelling ways" (ibid). When understood this way, objectivity is no longer a characteristic of the text itself but rather a working method, and thus the notion has moved far beyond its original meaning as a natural scientific way of describing reality. Thus the question remains what objectivity actually is in a modern media context, and whether it is better obtained within the classic style of factual objective news journalism than within other styles of writing, i.e. whether the style or rather something else determines how truthful a specific piece of journalism is to reality.

The narrative response to factual journalism and objectivity

Back in the 1890s, Theodor Drieser began working as a newspaper journalist. As he walked into the newsroom on his very first day at work at *New York World,* he was struck with astonishment by what he saw as he looked around the great room. There, pinned to the walls, at regular intervals were printed cards saying: "Accuracy, Accuracy, Accuracy! Who? What? Where? When? The Facts

[20] Ryans list is even longer: (a) accuracy, completeness, precision, and clarity in information collection and dissemination; (b) receptivity to new evidence and alternative explanations; (c) scepticism, typically toward authority figures, the powerful, and the self-righteous; (d) initiative in finding ways, for example, to research difficult topics; (e) fairness, impartiality, and disinterestedness, in that no social–political agenda is served and the tenets of objectivity are observed; (f) imagination, creativity, and logical consistency in making strategic decisions (e.g., in selecting stories) and in presenting narratives in interesting and compelling ways; (g) honesty about personal idiosyncrasies and preferences; (h) communality and verification, in that results are freely shared; and (i) universalism, in that outcomes are not evaluated on the basis of the practitioner's personal characteristics" (Ryan 2001: 4).

– The Color – The Facts!" Dreiser felt uneasy: "Most excellent traits, I thought. But not so easy to put into execution as comfortable publishers and managing editors might suppose" (Hartsock 2000: 43)[21].

The unease and discomfort of the young reporter can, as John Hartsock suggests "be seen as a simmering revolt against the positivist spirit that had influenced American journalistic practice" (Hartsock 2000: 44). Drieser later became a novelist and a narrative journalist, and the narrative style, which he and other ill-fitted reporters at that time developed, should be seen as more than technical tools. It was rather a deliberate resistance against the mainstream factual news style, and it can be understood as an attempt to find "more honest interpretations of the phenomenal world" (Hartsock 2000: 41). There is, Hartsock argues, more to the reality of a private soldier fighting and dying in a devastating war than the Who? What? Where? When? And equally, the fundamental transformation of the American society in the late nineteenth century and the financial panic in 1873 and again between 1884 - 85 could not be properly depicted by factual news journalism. Reporters would write about statistics, facts and figures and not about hysterical brokers bursting into tears as they saw their fortunes vanish (ibid). The objectified and objectifying journalism simply failed to account for what was happening in people's lives, and this failure provoked no less than an epistemological crisis to which narrative journalism could offer a solution (ibid 59). And so

> "[V]iewed this way narrative literary journalism has been working across a spectrum designed to narrow the distance between the alienated subjectivity and the indeterminate object in a narrative strategy opposite that of objectified versions of journalism. In effect, narrative literary journalism's ambition is to engage the objectified Other" (ibid 42).

However, narrative non-fiction writing does in itself date further back in history both in the USA and in Europe as demonstrated by for instance both Kerran & Yagoda (1997)[22] and by Weingarten (2005: 9 ff). But along with Hartsock's argument, it seems relevant to date the origin of the modern American narrative journalism as *counter-style* back to the post-Civil War period and to understand its emergence as a reaction to the factual/objective news style (Hartsock 2000: 21 ff Connery, 1990: 3ff).

[21] Hartsock is quoting Newspaper Days 624-25

[22] In *The Art of Facts. A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism.* The earliest examples in the anthology are written by Daniel Defoe, Henry Matthew and James Boswell in the 18th century and also Charles Dicken's journalistic writing from the nineteenth century is included.

Early narrative journalism in the Danish media

As explained above, the factual/objective news journalism did not gain a foothold in European papers until later in the twentieth century, and therefore the early narrative journalism of the nineteenth century in e.g. Danish newspapers cannot in the same way be understood as a reaction to the positivistic and alienating news style. But narrative journalism did exist in Danish media in the late decades of the nineteenth century as it did in other European countries, for instance in the UK (Kerran &Yagoda 1997; Weingarten 2005,) but not as Kolstrup has suggested simply as chronological linear structures in contrast to relevance structured news (Kolstrup 2005: 111). On the contrary, narrative journalism in Denmark in the late nineteenth century was rather marked by the sophisticated literary style developed most notably by Herman Bang (1857-1912), later a celebrated realist novelist. (Jørgensen 2003; Lehrmann 2001; Mortensen, 2004). Bang's style and excellence in the art of reportage fully explore all Tom Wolfe's "four devices": scenes, dialogue, shifting view and symbolic details (Wolfe 1996: 46) as well as a multitude of other literary techniques.
Bang came to serve as a role model for modern narrative journalism writers in Denmark in the 1970s and 1980s (Jørgensen 2003, Lehrmann 2001, Mortensen 2004), and as such he was idealised not only because of his literary style, but also for his subjectivity as he explicitly exposed himself as a first-person narrator. Ironically, Herman Bang saw his own writing as "objective", a fact that reveals a major change in the interpretation of this notion over time (Jørgensen 2003: 43). To Bang, objectivity meant recounting what he actually saw, and both as a journalist and as a novelist he was committed to "telling the truth" about it. Most importantly, he dissociated himself from political partisan opinion making. His aim was to show the conservative bourgeois readership of *Nationaltidende* how life was spelled out at the bottom of society in the poorhouses, the orphanages or the mental hospitals of the 1880s (Jørgensen 2003: 42 ff). Doing so from a subjective position seemed not in conflict with his ideal of "telling the truth". So, although not writing in protest against a modern objective news style, Bang apparently submitted to the idea that a truthful account of reality is best told by a subject in a narrative style.

The "New Journalism" of the 1960s and 1970s

In American print media, the narrative style has existed as an undercurrent ever since the late nineteenth century, but both Hartsock (2000) and Connery (1990) identify three peak periods: the 1890s, the 1930s/1940s and 1960s/1970s, the latter being the time of New Journalism. These historical periods have also been times of change, of war or social conflict. The 1960s and the early 1970s, for

instance, were indeed tumultuous years in the USA. Major cultural and social changes took place. The signs of the period were the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War and the anti-war movement, generation-conflicts, feminism and various other aspects of counterculture including the use of psychedelic drugs. During this period, a new wave of narrative journalism also arose in the American print media as a few handfuls of talented writers - "aces" - created a "new" journalism, a "higher" journalism often in a very personal and deliberately subjective style. They would "wreak evil havoc in the literary world (…) causing panic, dethroning the novel as the one literary genre starting the first new direction in American literature in half a century" (Wolfe 1973/1996: 16). At least that is how Tom Wolfe, himself one of the "aces", describes the emergence of the new type of American journalism in the 1960s, a divers phenomenon, in fact not at all constituting a coherent movement (Weingarten 2005: 7ff) but sharing the resistance against objective reporting with the aim of replacing it with a personal and subjective account.

In Denmark, the American New Journalism writers were first introduced by the TV documentarist Poul Martinsen and the author Erik Thygensen in the 1970s. A narrative journalism environment developed around the cinematic magazine *Levende Billeder* (Jørgensen 2007: 31-32), and in 1983, when New Journalism was in fact already retreating, the first introduction to the style was published in Danish.[23] Yet, there never was a major breakthrough for the American style of New Journalism in Danish mainstream media either because the style was too deeply rooted in the American reality, or because the time-consuming working methods were too expensive for Danish media (Nielsen, 2006: 9) but, nevertheless, individual journalists such as Morten Sabroe, Lasse Ellegaard and a few others developed a personal, narrative style, not so much inspired by contemporary colleagues in the USA as by the journalistic writing of Danish authors.[24]

The heirs of the narrative style

The great practitioners of American New Journalism are now dead, retired or have moved on to other pursuits long ago. They did challenge the establishment – both within journalism and literature, but the factual objective journalism has not ceased to exist, and that was maybe not the intention of New Journalists either (Weingarten 2005: 293). The narrative style did, however, not disappear, although it has changed in various ways. After a decline in the 1980s, it has again become in-

[23] In 1983 Jesper Klit published an introduction to news Journalism: *Journalistik og Fiktion. En bog om fænomenet New Journalism* (not included in the bibliography)

[24] Apart from Herman Bang these for instance the Nobel Prise winning author Johannes V Jensen, and –as mentioned by Lasse Ellegaard - the social realists (and Communists) Hans Kirk, Otto Gelsted and Hans Scherfig (Mortensen 2004: 65).

creasingly popular in the USA and also in Denmark (Sønnichsen 2002: 8). Kramer explains the new popularity with the newspapers' crisis: A serious decline in circulation, a constantly aging readership and tough competition from the Internet media and television urge the print media to look for new means of survival, and narrative journalism is seen as a way of attracting new, and younger readers as it offers depth, absorption and identification unknown to the overwhelming fast flow of context-free news stories in the electronic media. (Kramer in Sønnichsen 2002: 12 f). Thus the contemporary narrative journalism, in contrast to the *New Journalism* of the 1960s, might be seen less as a protest of critical individuals as a relief to beleaguered publishers in economic crisis. Also style-wise the contemporary narrative journalism is different. The use of a first- person narrator is no longer as common as it was in the 1960s and 1970s and thus, in so far as subjectivity still is a main characteristic of the narrative style, it is now most often indirectly expressed: The narrator is often hidden. Two decades ago, Mark Kramer, himself a narrative journalist and a professor at Harvard University, praised the personal voice as the hallmark of narrative journalistic writing:

> "It is the voice of someone naked without bureaucratic shelter, speaking simply in his or her own right, someone who has illuminated experience with private reflection, but who has not transcended crankiness, wryness, doubtfulness, and who doesn't blank out emotional realities or sadness, glee, excitement, fury, love" (Kramer 1990: 29).

Now Kramer emphasises that narrative journalists ought only rarely use a first-person narrator - only if there is a unique personal experience of relevance for the story (Kramer in Sønnichsen 2002: 18). But when the first person narrator is abandoned, the subject speaking is likely to be hidden in the text, and that is deeply problematic, some critiques maintain. Jo Beck-Karlsen, a Norwegian scholar and teacher of journalism, has serious reservations concerning "hidden" (skjult) versus "open" (åpen) narrators. Although he is calling for more narrative journalism in the Norwegian media, he is warning against the modern style American Narrative journalism imported to Norway via Denmark.

A hidden narrator combined with devices such as inner monologues and reconstructions based on sources' memories, as recommended by some promoters of the style leads to a crisis of credibility and to the blurring of the boundaries between journalism and fiction, he argues (Bech-Karlsen 2007). Bech-Karlsen sees Åsne Seierstad's journalistic book "The Bookseller of Kabul" as a classic example of the problem caused by the hidden narrator. In the book Seierstad uses inner monologues, third person points of view and reconstructions. At the same time, as a narrator she is omniscient and hidden, and therefore it is unclear from where the knowledge about for instance the characters' thoughts and feelings in the past derives. This constitutes a serious ethical problem as

Seierstad "insists on subjective interpretations while at the same time hiding as a subject" (ibid 210-211). Lack of transparency is from Bech-Karlsen's point of view the major problem with this type of journalism, and therefore he considers the style of Seierstad's book on Iraq *A Hundred and one Days. A Baghdad Journal* (2004) to be far more acceptable, as she in that book appears as an open first-person narrator (Bech-Karlsen 2007:212). The narrative journalist should, according to Bech-Karlsen, always be either a first person narrator or an *authorial* narrator by which he understands an implicit, yet identifiable voice in the text (ibid 16).

The ethics of narrative journalism

Besides disagreeing about the role of the narrator, the followers of the contemporary American style narrative journalism are also more concerned about the ethics of journalism than their predecessors. There seems to be a broad consensus about a set of "thou shalt nots" as formulated by Mark Kramer:

> "no composite scenes, no misstated chronology, no falsifications of the discernible drift or proportions of events, no invention of quotes, no attribution of thoughts to sources unless the sources said they'd had those very thoughts and no unacknowledged deals with subjects involving payment or editorial control"(Sims and Kramer, 1995: 25).

Also Roy Clark, another influential narrative journalist and teacher, stresses the importance of maintaining high ethic standards and getting the facts right. Clark remains absolutely unaffected by the post-modernist objection to the ideas of truth and reality which only create a "web of problems" from which journalists should find "a simple escape route before the spider bites"– and there is such a route, he claims: "a simple set of rules [such as Kramer's] which allows journalists to navigate in troubled waters" (Clark 2002: 343). This approach implies a pure dismissal of post-modern scholars like James Aucion. In a study of the literary journalism of Ryszard Kapuściński argues against Kramer's set of rules, because it

> "ignores the mounting evidence from science and philosophy that denies the existence of a verifiable reality that can be described through logical-positivist empiricism and affirms that reality is socially and culturally constructed" (Aucoin 2001: 7).

Aucoin demonstrates how Kapuściński – who happens to be Åsne Seierstad's role model (Habermeir 2007) – actually violates many of Kramer's standards without, from Aucoin's viewpoint, losing credibility. Kapuściński creates scenes and dialogues, makes use of composite characters, offers analysis without attribution and invents inner monologues attributed to people he has not even talked to (Aucoin 2001: 6-7). To Kramer, Clark, and indeed to Beck-Karlsen that is absolutely un-

acceptable. But Kapuściński's point of departure for developing his narrative style was the unease – or epistemological discomfort – he felt when writing factual/objective news stories for the Polish Press Agency. His feelings were quite similar to those of the young Theodor Drieser when entering the newsroom of *New York World* about a hundred years earlier:

> "I was always left with a feeling of inadequacy. I had only covered the political event, and not really conveyed the deeper and, I felt, truer nature of what was going on"(Kapuściński in Aucoin 2001: 12).[25]

Ryszard Kapuściński solved the epistemological crisis by becoming an author of literary journalism books, but he never applied the narrative style in his news articles and thus did not try to adjust his style to the norms and rules of newspaper journalism. That is, however, what Clark and Kramer are concerned about: making the narrative journalism fit into mainstream newspapers and to develop it in terms of epistemology as "a third way" of writing (Clark 1998).[26]

American impact on contemporary Danish narrative journalism

Roy Clark and Mark Kramer and also Jon Franklin[27] have played a major role in the development of narrative journalism in Danish media, as they have regularly been teaching classes and giving speeches at conferences on narrative journalism in Denmark. The American influence on the Danish media has in general been on the increase since the 1990s and indeed so in regard to narrative journalism (Kabel, 2001: 16, 26). Teachers of journalism have flocked to Poynter Institute of Media Studies in Florida and to the Neiman Conferences on narrative journalism at Harvard University (Hvid, 2002; Sønnichsen, 2002).[28] The Journalistic Education and Research Centre, CFJE has launched a database with scholarly articles about narrative journalism,[29] and seven books about the topic have been published since 2001. The undisputed bestseller is "*Fascinerende Fortælling* (2002), an introduction and practical guide to narrative journalism written by Mikkel Hvid whose major source of inspiration is the above mentioned American journalism teachers. [30]

[25] Aucoin is quoting Buford, B (1987): *An interview with Ryszard Kapuscinski*, Granta 21 (Spring) 81-97
[26] http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=5363
[27] Franklin, Jon (1994): Writing for story. New York: Plume/ Penguin Group
[28]The Poynter Institute: http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=67829; Nieman Foundation – narrative journalism: http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/NiemanFoundation/ProgramsAndPublications/NarrativeJournalism.aspx

[29] http://www.update.dk/cfje/VidBase.nsf/ID/VB00573891
[30] Published by Forlaget Ajour, owned by The Danish School of Journalism. The manager, Teddy Pedersen has by email informed me about *Fascinerende Fortælling* being the best selling book on narrative journalism, widely sold in both Norway and Denmark and also used for educational purposes. Ajour is now running the fourth edition.

The new wave of narrative journalism in Denmark has in particular been reflected in Politiken where since the millennium narrative experiments specifically have been encouraged (Christiansen 2004). Narrative journalism was not unknown to the paper's readership as it has been widely practiced in particular by Morten Sabroe who defines himself as a literary journalist explicitly opposed to objective journalism as "[T] here is only one type of journalism worth engaging in, and that is yourself and your own experience" (Mortensen 2004: 43). He appears as an admirer of the late Hunter S. Thompson, the eccentric icon of the *New Journalism* movement in the USA.

In contrast, the new generation of narrative journalists at Politiken has a different approach. These journalists understand the narrative style as a tool to be applied when suitable simultaneously with the factual news style, and they have in particular written serial narratives as taught by Roy Clark.[31] A serial narrative is a journalistic story cycle. Each story can be read in its own right, but it is also a chapter in a more extensive story. Whereas narrative articles tend to be lengthy, the serial narrative can accommodate the demands of shorter and more easily read units which fit nicelyinto the mainstream newspaper, and Politiken has successfully used serial narratives to tell stories about topics which are considered important, but hard to make appealing such as road deaths, HIV and AIDS in Africa (Christiansen 2004, Dalviken 2005:76ff, Nielsen 2005: 47 ff).

On the whole, as the modern style of narrative journalism is likely to appear in Politiken, it is no surprise that Åsne Seierstad was hired to cover the invasion of Iraq for this particular paper, yet the high priority, including the front page placement, given to her stories might be more of a new departure considering the strong tradition of the factual news style within Danish media. In the following chapter, I intend to examine her style in detail and evaluate its compatibility with classical journalistic standards.

[31] http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=117323

4. Methodology

The present chapter will explain the methods of analysis applied in this study in order to elucidate the characteristics of Seierstad's narrative style as performed in Politiken during the invasion of Iraq in 2003 in comparison with a more traditional style of news reporting.
The method used will primarily be narrative and textual analysis based on the concept of narrative journalism developed in the methodology chapter. [32]
Quantification of certain story elements will also to a lesser extent be applied: Sources will be counted and ordered in categories such as nationality, gender, and professional/life-expert. This quantitative analysis is, however, only meant as a supplement to the qualitative analysis, and there will be no further elaboration on the statistical material in SPSS or similar programmes. Only Excel will be used for this purpose.
I shall also compare Seierstad's style with that of Erik Thomle, a reporter at another of the three major national newspapers in Denmark, Jyllands-Posten.[33] Thomle was the only (other) Danish journalist in Baghdad during the invasion,[34] and consequently he has reported on some of the same news events as Seierstad. Furthermore, Jyllands-Posten explicitly regards Thomle's journalism as "classic reportage", intended to be "value-free and neutral", "credible, critical and unprejudiced" (Jyllands-Posten: *Hæderspris til Journalistik*, 20.06.2003),[35] and he has been praised by one of his editors as a true promoter of classical journalistic values: "dauntlessness, a desire to be objective and for the capability of working alone" (Jørn Mikkelsen, Jyllands-Posten: *Aktuelt portræt* 24.03.2003). Therefore, I will initially consider Thomle's style to be a typical example of the factual/objective style as understood by mainstream journalists and thus also suitable for comparison with Seierstad's assumed narrative style.

The sample and the data gathering

The core sample of this study is a complete collection of Åsne Seierstad's 53 articles from Baghdad before, during and immediately after the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 as published in

[32] The checklist used for the analysis is to be found in the appendices.
[33] There are seven daily papers published nationwide in Denmark – not including the free sheet papers. The three largest and most important are Berlingske Tidende, Jyllands-Posten and Politiken. Berlingske Tidende did not have a reporter of its own in Baghdad during the invasion.
[34] According to Jyllands-Posten he was *the* only Danish reporter in Baghdad, as Åsne Seierstad is Norwegian. She was, however, employed on an individual contract by Politiken.
[35] Thomle was honoured with Jyllands-Posten's award, Laust Jensen Prisen, for his reportages from Iraq and informed the readers about this in *Hæderspris til klassisk journalistik.*

Politiken. Eighteen of these were front-page stories. The articles have been collected and downloaded as text files from the Danish database Info-media. Most of them were also accessible for download as PDF-files showing the layout and the context of the individual article (to be found in the appendices). A few articles were not available as PDF-files online, but had to be collected and printed from microfilm in the State Library (Statsbiblioteket) at Århus University. As described in *A Hundred and One Days. A Baghdad Journal* (Seierstad 2004) Seierstad arrived in Baghdad in January and left by the end of April 2003. Consequently, the search has been limited to that period of time; the month of May has nevertheless been included as well in case some of the articles had been postponed and published later on. To make sure that the collection was complete, I checked all editions of Politiken in the above-mentioned period on microfilm.

The comparative sample consists of 32 articles by Erik Thomle's from Baghdad during the same period, but only a minor selection of his articles were available on Info-media. Therefore, I collected all copies of Jyllands-Posten from January till the end of April from microfilm. They were not available for download, but most of them were accessible in text versions from Jyllands-Posten's web-archive. The archive contains more articles from Baghdad written by Thomle during the above-mentioned period, but assumedly the additional articles have only been published on-line, and I have therefore chosen not to include them in the sample. Thomle arrived in Baghdad on March 11, 2003; his first article was published on March 17. He covered the breakout of the war from Baghdad, but left on March 27 as his freelance photographer was imprisoned due to accreditation problems (Thomle 30.03.2003). He returned by the end of April, though, and his articles from April 19 to April 27 are included.

I have selected four of Åsne Seierstad's front-page articles for qualitative in-depth analysis and four equivalent articles by Erik Thomle for comparison. My hypothesis is that the narrative style partly replaced some of the more traditional news coverage of the Iraqi war in Politiken, and therefore it seems logical to concentrate the data analysis on the front-page articles which by tradition are news-angled and written in a factual/objective style.

Two major news events took place during Seierstad's coverage of Iraq: the outbreak of the war on March 20, 2003 and the fall of Baghdad on April 9, 2003. As Thomle left before the fall, there are no comparable articles from Jylland-Posten on the latter event. Therefore, I have concentrated on the invasion and selected the front-page articles by both journalists from the day of invasion as well as from the day before and the day after. That is March 19, 20 and 21. Furthermore, I have selected one additional front-page article published a few days later: a story about another significant event

covered by both Seierstad and Thomle, namely the one about a bomb explosion in a marketplace which killed about 15 civilians and injured approximately 40. It was published in both newspapers on March 27, 2003.

The articles to be analysed:

		Seierstad in Politiken	**Thomle in Jyllands-Posten**
No.	***Date***	***Title***	***Titel***
25	19.03.03	Irakere på flugt Iraqi on the run	Bagdads indbyggere på flugt Baghdad's citizens on the run
26.	20.03.03	Bagdad ser krigen i øjnene Baghdad is facing the war	Soldater indtager Baghdads gader Soldiers take over the streets of Baghdad
27.	21.03.03	Bagdad vækket af bomber Baghdad awakened by bombs	JP I Irak: Øjenvidne i Baghdad Eyewitness in Baghdad
34.	27.03.03	Blodig dag i Bagdad Bloody day in Baghdad	Civile dræbt i angreb Civilians killed during attack

Further details can be found in the appendices. [36]

The tools of analysis

There is no ready-to-use method in regard to the analysis of narrative journalism, but the definition developed in the theory chapter will be used as a tool of analysis. This implies that the textual analysis will focus on the identification of the use of:

* The four devices: scenes, dialogue, third-person-view and (symbolic) details.
* The structure: are there a beginning, a middle and an end.
* The narrative dimension: Is there a course of *events* which takes place *over time* in a certain *place* involving specific *characters* who undergo some kind of *development*
* The plot: is the story plotted in accordance with one of five commonly used models

[36] Seierstad's four articles can be found in the appendices in a lay-outed Danish PDF version, in Danish text version (Info-media) and in an English version based on the translation in *A hundred and one day in Baghdad* (2004). Thomle's articles can be found in a Danish text version (Info Media and JP Archive) and in the downscaled photocopies of the newspaper pages in question.

In addition, the role of the journalist as a narrator will be included as a parameter: Is the narrator an implicit and *hidden*, an o*pen* first-person narrator or a recognisable *authorial* narrator (Jo Bech-Karlsen, 2007), and what are the consequences for the story. [37]

The ethics

Narrative journalists are often criticised for crossing the line between facts and fiction by mixing it all together thus presenting a distorted picture of reality, and Seierstad is no exception. She has often been criticised for a careless handling of facts.[38]

Seierstad's practice in regard to the mixing of facts and fiction will be examined with Mark Kramer's ethic rule for narrative journalism as my point of departure: No composite scenes. No misstated chronology. No falsifications of the discernible drift or proportions of events. No invention of quotes. No attribution of thoughts to sources, unless the sources said they had had those very thoughts. No unacknowledged deals with subjects involving payment or editorial control. (Sims and Kramer, 1995: 25).

A comparison between the articles in Politiken and the equivalent passages in *A Hundred and one Days in Baghdad* will be conducted in order to find possible discrepancies concerning names, places, quotations and events. If for instance names are changed or identical statements are attributed to different characters in different situations, it indicates that Seierstad's journalism does not comply with Kramer's rules.

The epistemological crisis

Hartsock (2000) has suggested that the narrative journalism has the potential of being more true to reality than factual/objective journalism and might thus provide a solution to what he has called the "epistemological crises of subjectivity". But there is indeed no simple method of analysis which allows us to prove or disprove his contention neither in general nor specifically in regard to Åsne Seierstad's journalism. However, from the present sample it is possible to illustrate how the same events have been presented differently by Seierstad and Thomle, and this also gives us an idea about how these differences in style may influence the way the story can be understood and interpreted.

[37] The checklist used for the analysis is included in the appendices: Appendix 5.1

[38] As described e.g. by Jo Beck-Karlsen and Flemming Rose but also e.g. by Jesper Vind Jensen, who reviewed *A hundred and One Day in Baghdad* in Weekendavisen 12.12.03 and by the Swedish novelist and journalist Jan Guillou: *Læs bogen og tænk selv* www.journalisten.se 23.09.2003

The research questions

1. Style: What characterises the style of Åsne Seierstad's articles on Iraq in Politiken, January-April 2003, in terms of style? To what extent can the style be characterised as narrative journalism as defined in this dissertation? And: How does this style differ from the factual objective news style in general and from Erik Thomle's Iraq coverage published in Jyllands-Posten?

2. Ethics: Does Seierstad live up to the ethic rules, the "thou shalt nots" as formulated by Mark Kramer? If not, is it then a built-in consequence of the narrative style or rather due to other reasons?

3. Epistemology: Does the narrative style allow the reader to perceive and understand the stories in a different way than the factual/objective news style is understood?

5. Narrative journalism on the front-page – data analysis

Åsne Seierstad's articles from Baghdad were given high priority in Politiken, as eighteen out of 53 articles were front-page stories and her front-page frequency increased significantly as the war broke out. She had 24 articles published prior to March 19 – the day before the invasion - out of which two were on the front-page making the frequency 8 per cent. These two stories were the semi-narrative *The poison vendor of Baghdad* (20.01.2003) and a short news angled article written together with another Middle East correspondent, Adam Hannestad: *The USA: Please, do escape, Saddam* (30.01.01). But from March 19 and until April 17 Seierstad was massively featured on the front-page with 16 out of 29 articles, and so her front-page frequency increased to 55 per cent.
In this chapter, I will analyse the narrative structure and characteristics of four of the eighteen front-page articles, compare them with the corresponding articles by Erik Thomle in Jyllands-Posten and finally evaluate the ethics of Seierstad's journalism as performed in Politiken.

5.1.1. Politiken, 19.03.03, front-page: *Iraqis on the run.*

Erik Thomle in Jyllands-Posten: *Baghdad's citizens on the run*

On March 19, 2003, the last day before the invasion, Seierstad had a reportage published on the front-page of Politiken, but not as a top-story. On the contrary, the main story that day is a sharply angled news story: *Danes are against a war in Iraq* based on a newly published public opinion survey which revealed that only one third of the respondents were in support of the government's decision to join the invasion forces. Also on the front-page *Danish military support in front* can be found in which the readers are informed about the mandate of the Danish military force in Iraq. Seierstad's article about the fleeing citizens starts at the bottom of the front-page and continues on page 10, but it is illustrated with the principal photo of the page, and so it is highly exposed although subordinated other news stories. The subheading is a brief summary of content: "There is a feeling of depression in Baghdad. Shops are closing and citizens are leaving. But the majority are just waiting for the war to begin – and to end again."
In Jyllands-Posten Erik Thomle also reported from Baghdad with an angle similar to Seierstad's: *Baghdad's citizens on the run*. The article is the top-story on the front page that day above another war story: *Tanks are moving into Iraq:* The invasion is impending. Both stories are news angled and told in accordance with the inverted news pyramid.

5.1.1.a Structure and mode

Seierstad's story opens without further explanation in *medias res* with a scene at a petrol station where the entire story unfolds:

> "The three Persian carpets are tightly rolled up on the roof of the car in front. On top of them several cardboard boxes have been tied down. Inside the car five people sit squeezed together between suitcases, crates and boxes. A suit hangs from the window and a bag of lemons lies squashed under the seat."

She is using the mimetic mode, descriptive details and a zooming technique first showing the reader the carpets on a roof, then the family in the car and later on the entire queue. Having now set the scene she proceeds in diegetic mode zooming out even further by summarising where we are, and why there is such a long queue at the petrol station. She zooms in on the queue again with a taxi driver telling his story – a small narrative embedded in the larger one: he is hoarding petrol, because the price goes up every day. He has four hundred litres in his garden already, but dares not store any

more because it might explode, and he has small kids. But still, he is quite happy: when prices go up, he can also charge his customers more. The narrator then takes over with yet another explanation about the general situation and about how people, often in vein, try to leave the country. Back in the queue another woman tells how she cried when she had to leave her family behind, and Seierstad rounds off the article with a general remark or "morale".

The structure can be summarised as follows:

A beginning:	*Scene /Mimesis:* (zooming in) "Three carpets on the roof " including an explanatory first person account from Jasir and his mother-in-law
A middle	*Diegesis* (zooming out): "The family is waiting in the queue a few hours north of Baghdad. The queue moves slowly, the cars several rows deep"
	Quote/Mimesis: (zooming in) First person account by the taxi driver Muhammed
	Diegesis: (zooming out) The implicit narrator explains about the general gloomy atmosphere in Iraq and how people try to escape.
	Quote/Mimesis (zooming in) First person account by a woman who has left her family behind.
An end	*Diegesis* – The "morale" (zooming out): "But still, most Iraqis face more severe obstacles to their getaway from the bombs than a car queue at a gas station".

5.1.1.b. Persons/sources

The persons quoted in the article, Jasir, his mother-in-law, the taxi driver Muhammed and the crying lady are characters rather than sources, and their statements are miniature narratives in their own right rather than quotes in the journalistic sense: stating opinions or providing facts. In contemporary narrative journalism quotes are often avoided as they are seen to distort the narrative flow (Hvid 2004, Jo Beck-Karlsen 2007), but Seierstad is in fact using the quotes to support this flow.

5.1.1.c Devices

The opening of the story is the most elaborated *scene,* but in general the scenes do not dominate the article. Seierstad is using *details* in accordance with Wolfe's suggestion, for instance when describing the old woman, Jasir's mother-in-law, who "draws heavily on a cigarette, all the while fingering the packet" before she sighs: "Whatever happens, Allah decides our destiny, but sometimes we have

to give him a hand". There is *no dialogue*, since the counterpart to whom the characters tell their stories – the journalist herself – is not explicitly present in the text. Instead their statements appear as monologues, and so the point of view is shifting as they for a while take over the role of the narrator with their small first person accounts. This is, however, not what is usually understood by the *third person point of view* within narrative theory. The third person point of view is rather a description *of* the actions, thoughts and feelings of a third-person character *by* a narrator and understood that way, there is no use of a third person point of view in the article.

5.1.1.d Narrator

Seierstad is an implicit narrator, but not completely hidden as Jo Bech-Karlsen criticised her for being in her book *The Bookseller of Kabul.* It seems obvious that the characters are neither talking to themselves nor to their relatives. They tell their stories to "somebody" who does not know them already, namely Seierstad, and thus she is what Bech-Karlsen (2007) calls an *authorial* narrator – implicit, but recognisable.

5.1.1.e Narrative status

In conclusion, the article does contain significant narrative elements: An Aristotelian structure and some use of the four devices. The story is unfolded in a certain place: the petrol station over a limited period of time; it contains events – those connected to waiting in a queue - but there is no convincing *course of events* evolving over time which involves characters who undergo some kind of development as the definition requires. The structure is rather in accordance with Roy Peter Clark's *Third Way Model* (1998) where scenes alter with non-narrative, diegetic paragraphs. Altogether, it therefore seems relevant to classify the article as semi-narrative.

5.1. 2. Politiken, 20.03.03, front-page: *Baghdad is facing the war*

Erik Thomle, Jyllands-Posten: *Soldiers take over the streets of Baghdad*

The US-led attack on Iraq was launched on March 20, 2003 at approximately 02:30 GMT - 5:30 local time – that is after the deadline of the Danish morning newspapers. The papers therefore had a major disadvantage in comparision with the electronic media as they could not report on the outbreak of war until the next day. On this first day of war, Åsne Seierstad took the lead on the front page of Politiken for the first time. The headline of her story reads: *Baghdad is facing the war* followed by a subheading referring to the situation the previous day: "The Iraqi capital is marking time. Yesterday shops were shut and their stocks emptied. Only outside the mosques citizens were busy preparing for war". The story is, as we shall see, a narrative article. The other major story on the front page is a brief news angled article with a large illustration: *The USA prepare for blitzkrieg*, and two notes refer to articles in the paper: One about the political disagreement over the juridical aspects of Danish participation in Iraq, and the other about the American media being uncritical to the warfare. In Jyllands-Posten the lead story of the day has a domestic angle: *New threats against Folketinget* (the Parliament) in the wake of a happening the previous day, when an anti-war activist gained access to the parliament building and threw red paint on the Prime Minister. JP also has the article: *Ready for blitzkrieg against Iraq*, and Erik Thomle reports from Baghdad: "*Soldiers take over the streets of Baghdad."* His article is at the bottom of the page and illustrated with a large picture.

5.1.2.a Structure and mode

Seierstad's article opens in the middle of an apparently dramatic scene which might for a moment seduce the readers to believe this is a report on a tragic event of the war that broke out only a few hours earlier:

> "On the floor is a distorted female body. Two arms have been flung to one side. Part of the torso totters on a stand. The naked display dummies are being unscrewed and stowed away. Round about are large stacks of *abayas* – the black loose-fitting coat that women in Baghdad wear."

Not until the word "display dummies" has been registered, one clearly understands that the scene is a tailor's shop and not a Baghdad neighbourhood hit by a bomb. Again, Seierstad is using mimetic mode and details in the opening scene allowing the reader vividly to visualise the little shop where the tailor, Karim, is packing up the entire stock and other movables.

The structure can be summarised as follows:

A beginning:	*Scene /Mimesis:"* On the floor is a distorted female body (…)" As part of the scene the voice of Karim, who has not been introduced yet, explains what he is doing.
A middle	*Diegesis:* the narrator tells in diegetic mode about the tailor, the abbayas, his customers and the Shia Muslim neighbourhood. *Quote/mimesis:* A first person account by Karim about the decrease of his trade, how he will lose even more income now, his fears of the war, his anger and his worries for his young son. *Diegesis:* a brief linking passage introduces Karim's friend, Naji Musad who has attended the afternoon prayer and now enters the shop. *Quote/mimesis:* A first person account by Naji. He tells about all what he has done to prepare for the war and his possible death: fasted, given alms, kept the hours of prayer, cancelled debts so that he can die with a clean conscience. He is even committed to sacrifice himself as a suicide bomber and become a martyr. *Diegesis* the narrator comments: "It is as if the mood has become more angry these last few hours" *Quote/Mimesis*: A woman passing by takes off her shoes. She condemns Bush and tells how she lost her son. She is blaming Bush and starts crying.
An end	*Scene /Mimesis:* The story ends with yet another scene. Karim has now finished packing. He decides to leave the mirrors behind as they are likely to break anyway. He looks at himself, sighs in resignation and closes the shop.

5.1.2.b. Persons/sources

The persons quoted are the tailor, Karim Ghani, his friend Naji and an anonymous woman walking by in the street. Both Naji's and the woman's statements are small narratives in the story. All three of them appear as characters, and each of them tells a story which supports the narrative flow of the article rather than stating facts. They do express opinions though, not as detached exclamations, but rather as an integral part of the stories they tell about themselves.

5.1.2.c Devices

Two elaborated scenes with descriptive details surround the story. There is no real *dialogue,* since those who speak are addressing the hidden narrator, Seierstad. Their statements appear as first person accounts, but there is no *third person point of view* as conventionally understood.

5.1.2.d Narrator

Seierstad is once again an implicit narrator and hard to recognise. Only the fact that the speaking characters are not addressing each other, but obviously are talking to *somebody* reveals that the narrator is present as part of the scene. She is thus still an authorial narrator, though almost a hidden one.

5.1.2.e Narrative status

The article has a number of very convincing narrative characteristics: There is a *course of events* (the packing down and finally closure of the shop) which takes place over a certain limited *period of time* (from sometime before the afternoon prayer and until dusk) in a certain *place* (a tailor shop), and it involves *characters*, in particular the main character Karim, the tailor who undergoes some kind of *development* from reluctance to acceptance of the fact that he has to close the shop and leave. There is some use of the devices, in particular scenes. Also there is a clear beginning, middle and end. Still the structure is closer to the *Third Way Model* than to any of the other narrative models in the theory chapter of this dissertation, but altogether there seems to be sufficient support for characterising the article as narrative journalism.

5.1.3. Politiken, 21.03.03, front-page: *Baghdad awakened by bombs*

Erik Thomle, Jyllands-Posten: *A city is preparing for war*

On March 21, Politiken has three stories on the front page: *USA is advancing into Iraq* is the news angled top story. At the bottom is *Demonstrations all over the world,* a news story about the widespread protest demonstrations against the war, and Åsne Seierstad's contribution is in between: *Baghdad awakened by bombs.* In Jyllands-Posten, the lead story is: *Storm on Iraq* and Thomle's *A city is preparing for war* is the only other front-page article.

5.1.3.a Structure and mode

Baghdad awakened by bombs is a report on the outbreak of war. It has no subheading but a diegetic news angled lead:

> "The citizens of Baghdad were yesterday awakened at about half past six in the morning by loud explosions, aircraft noise and vigorous shooting from the Iraqi anti-aircraft missiles. The attack lasted for about one hour before the sound of sirens announced that the danger was over. But most people stayed indoors for the rest of the day".

Quotes by Mona, a student of literature and Teijo, a human shield from Finland are then alternating with explanations in a diegetic mode throughout the article, and finally a group of optimistic football playing youngsters is introduced, and one of the boys makes a brief statement, the message being that they will carry on playing football every day as usual.

The structure and mode are as follows:

News lead	*Diegesis*: news angled, diegetic description of the attack on Baghdad: "The citizens of Baghdad were yesterday awakened at about half past six in the morning by loud explosions (…)."
Elaboration	*Quote, diegetic explanations:* Mona, a student of literature, explains how she experienced the attack, and her statements are linked by the narrator's description of her situation and a reference to the official Iraqi statement on the number of killed and wounded. *Diegetic*: Explaining how it took some time after the danger-over siren had sounded before people dared leave their houses, and how Saddam Hussein appeared on TV and encouraged the people to fight. *Quote, diegetic explanations:* Mona comments on the speech expressing her fear of a civil war and concerns about how she will be able to concentrate on studying today. Her lines are linked together by a few explanatory diegetic remarks. *Scene:* (short) Teijo, a human shield from Finland, is chained to a tree on the central reserve in one of Baghdad's main streets *Quotes, interview:* Teijo tells why he is there and answers a question from Seierstad. *Quote:* Mona says that this is only the beginning *Diegesis, quote*: boys are playing football under a bridge. One of them says that they'll come back tomorrow no matter what.

5.1.3.b. Persons/sources

The persons quoted are the student Mona talking on the phone, Teijo, who is chained to a tree, and Hamid, a football-playing teenager. Mona and Teijo are quoted extensively. Mona is describing the situation in her home, but their quotes are predominantly opinion-based.

5.1.3.c Devices

There is hardly any use of the four devices. Still, there is a three-line attempt to establish a scene around Teijo at the tree, but it remains undeveloped. There is no dialogue, though still a fragment of an interview. There are no significant details in the descriptions, and no third person point of view unless the quotes are seen as such.

5.1.3.d Narrator

Seierstad is an authorial narrator, implicit, but more recognisable than in the previous articles as she integrates one of her own interview questions to Teijo: *"What do your parents think about you being here, tied to a power plant*?" [39] She does not refer to herself while doing so, but it is obvious to the reader that she is the questioner, and consequently she is almost explicitly present in the text.

5.1.3.e Narrative status

The article is surely non-narrative, but it is not a typical news article either as – except for the lead – there is no clear relevance structure. As we have seen, there is no significant use of the four devices, there is not a single and coherent course of events evolving during a well-defined time period, and the events described are not interrelated. In addition, the persons appearing in the article are primarily sources of information rather than characters, although Mona potentially could have been developed as a main character. Furthermore, there is no clear Aristotelian structure. The last paragraph seems arbitrary and plays no vital role in relation the rest of the story. The message from the boys is that they will go on living their life as if nothing has happened. It can be seen as an overarching theme of the entire article, but still the boys do not add any new information or value to the article. The ending could just as well be Mona's last sentence: "This is still not the real Hell" or Teijo going home to "yet another night on the camp bed, waiting for yet another bombardment to start". Alter-

[39] There is a strange inconsistency to the question: Earlier on the readers were informed that Teijo was tied to a tree in a central street of Baghdad, but in the question Seierstad refers to Teijo as tied to a power plant. There is no obvious explanation to the error.

natively, more sources and information could also have been added without the structure being affected. Thus there is no natural ending to the story and no clearly limited middle – which means that the Aristotelian definition of a narrative does not apply. Descriptive news reportage is probably the most appropriate name for this type of article.

5.1.4. Politiken, 27.03.03, front-page: *Bloody day in Baghdad*

Erik Thomle, Jyllands-Posten: *Civilians killed during attack*

March 26, 2003 was the first day with serious civilian casualties in Baghdad: 14 or 15 people were killed and about 40 wounded as two missiles hit a marketplace. On March 27, the incident had already been covered by TV, radio and on the Internet, and so the papers were confronted with the well-known dilemma: on the one hand they felt obliged to tell about this landmark, the first casualties, but on the other hand, most readers probably already knew the story from the electronic media. Thus both in Politiken and Jyllands-Posten the story from the marketplace is subordinated a story on a later development. In Politiken the main story is *Iraqi elite forces respond* and similarly in Jyllands-Posten*: Saddam's elite forces sent to fight.* Seierstad's article: *Bloody day in Baghdad* is in the middle of the page with the main picture. Also on the front page is a minor story to the right*: 60.000 Kurds ready to fight* and at the bottom: *Danish defence forces will suffer a major cutback.* They are all, except for Seierstad's, news angled stories. In Jyllands-Posten Thomle's article *Civilians killed during attack* is the equivalent to Seierstad's. Also on the front page is a news story about emergency aid: *Panic over relief supplies* and in addition two small notes on domestic affairs. So despite being yesterday's news, the missile story has been given high priority in both papers, but Thomle and Seierstad chose to cover the incident in radically different ways.

5.1.4.a Structure and mode

Right from the beginning Seierstad's article signalises that this is not a traditional news story: The headline *Bloody day in Baghdad* appears to be more literary than informative. There is no lead and the story starts right away by setting the scene and introducing Zahra, the main character. The article tells the story about the blast through her and her family, who all experienced the attack, were wounded, brought to hospital and all luckily survived. By using the present tense Seierstad is creating a dramatic atmosphere from the very beginning.

The structure and mode are as follows:

Beginning	*Diegesis*: Setting the scene: Zahra is on her way home with the family.
Middle	*Mimesis/scene:* Zahra and the family want a break. They park the car in the marketplace and get out. Meanwhile a driver has also parked his lorry and is now crossing the street.
	Mimesis/Point of no return: A missile hits the pavement close to the lorry. The driver and those standing close by are killed.
	Mimesis/scene: Muhammad, a young man, comes running as the next missile hits. He is wounded, falls to the ground screaming. "One leg is a bloody pulp, the other peppered with metal". The dreadful scene is further elaborated on and ends with Zahra and her family now lying unconscious on the ground while Muhammed is still conscious.
	Diegesis: The (hidden) narrator summarises: the wounded are brought to the hospital and severed body parts are removed from the street.
	Mimesis/scene with quotations from the outbursts of angry bystanders who are condemning Bush. It begins to rain, and the blood is washed into the puddles.
	Mimseis/scene: Meanwhile Zahra wakes up in hospital and is reunited with her family. Everybody has survived
	Quote/mimesis: The doctor, Sermed al-Gailani, is entering the scene and utters the final lines thus rounding the story off: "These are innocent people and did not deserve it. But such is war. More will be killed, more will be wounded. To believe anything else would be to deceive oneself. This will be far worse than anything we have previously seen"
The End	*Diegesis*: Outside the hospital it is now dark and still stormy. The war goes on while the blood is washed away from the street.

5.1.4.b. Persons/sources

The persons in the article are first and foremost the following characters: Zahra, the members of her family, the driver and also Muhammed who is the victim of the second missile. Neither of them are quoted – only doctor Sermed al-Gailani and the anonymous bystanders are, but still their quotes are more like lines in a classical theatre play: The bystanders play the role of the chorus, and the doctor is the kind of narrator who steps onto the scene and explains the morale as if he were addressing an audience: "These are innocent people and did not deserve it. But such is war (etc.) "

5.1.4.c Devices

There is a significant use of the four devices. The story is predominantly told in *scenes*. The conversation between Zahra and her daughter is not an interview in disguise as the monologues in the previous articles, but real *dialogue:* "Where is Hamudi?" Aishia asks. "Hamudi is at home. He's all right" Zahra responds. There are also examples of *third person point of view*: the family members "*feel* it would be safer to live close to the town centre", "the driver has *decided* to have lunch", Muhammad *heard* the noise: what people feel, decide or hear is not visible from the outside, and these examples clearly qualify as third person point of views. Also *detailed descriptions* are used.

5.1.4.d Narrator

In this story Seierstad is implicit and hidden as a narrator, and at times she even appears to be omniscient, and so it is not quiet clear where the information about what happened actually comes from. The reader might wonder whether Seierstad herself was present when the missile hit. In fact, she was not. In *A Hundred and One Days*, she describes how she arrived after the blast and tells how "with the help of eye-witnesses, neighbours and relatives I tried to reconstruct what happened on this stormy Wednesday in March" (Seierstad, 2004: 186). So Seierstad's description is a reconstruction based on the account of others. But still there are details which the informants cannot have told her about: How does she know that the driver had decided to have lunch at the restaurant Ristafa? Did he tell anybody who then later told Seierstad? He has obviously not talked to her, because he was killed before she arrived. Maybe he crossed the street, because he wanted to use the restaurant's toilet; maybe he just wanted to have a cup of coffee or maybe for other reasons.
Of course, this detail is in no way important to the story, in fact it is irrelevant, but nevertheless it might be an example of Seierstad crossing the line into the sphere of fiction. Also when taking the important role of Zahra into consideration, it is unlikely that Seierstad has not met her. But Zahra was unconscious when she was brought to the hospital and so were the rest of her family. Therefore, Seierstad must have visited the hospital later on. But how can she then know what is going on at the marketplace while Zahra is about to wake up? Even if the reconstruction is based on good informants, it is not clear to the reader who they are and how they know. It can be questioned whether Seierstad made up the details and if so, what else did she make up?

5.1.4.e Narrative status

More than any of the previously analysed articles *Bloody day in Baghdad* qualify as narrative journalism: There is an Aristotelian structure and extended use of the four devices. Mimesis is the dominant mode, and normal journalistic quotes are practically absent. There is a clear and even dramatic course of interrelated events which take place over a limited period of time in two specific places. There is a main character experiencing a certain development and even a morale expressed by the doctor. Furthermore, the story is plotted in a literary way as the structure fits both the drama model and the classical story model. As pointed out in the theory chapter, the drama model implies a "point of no return" beyond which the course of events can only be intensified by an escalation of conflict, leading to a climax and a resolution. *Bloody day in Baghdad* fits nicely into that pattern:

1) Opening: It is nearly midday, Zahra is almost home**.**
2) Exposition: Zahra and the family are introduced as they arrive on the scene of events
3) Elaboration: the marketplace is described and so is the driver crossing the street.
4) Point of no return: the first missile hits, the driver is killed, the entire family fall to the ground.
5) Conflict development: Mohammed comes running, the second missile explodes - all is chaos.
6) Climax: the ambulance arrives and takes the wounded to the hospital
7) Fading/resolution: the marketplace is cleaned of blood, and the family is happily reunited

The story also fits into the classical story model as described with minor variations by Propp and several other linguists, e.g. Jean-Michel Adams (Initial situation – disruption – actions – solution/non-solution – final situation) and Labov (Abstract – orientation – complication action – evaluation – solution – coda) (Kolstrup 2005: 113) and as developed by Jon Franklin (1994) for journalistic purposes (complication - struggle for a solution – resolution):

1) Initial situation/orientation: Zahra with her family is on her way home.
2) Complication/disruption: the missile hits and chaos breaks out.
3) Actions: the ambulance takes the wounded to the hospital, and the marketplace is cleaned
4) Evaluation: the doctor interprets the situation and predicts the future
5) Resolution: Zahra and the family are reunited in the hospital, and harmony is re-established.
6) Coda/final situation: the rain is washing the blood away, and the war continues.
So the article on the missile in the marketplace is convincing as a piece of narrative journalism.

5. 2. Comparison: Thomle vs. Seierstad

When comparing Seierstad's articles with Erik Thomle's coverage of the invasion on the front-page of Jyllands-Posten, there appear to be major differences in terms of 1) structure and mode 2) the narrator/narrating voice and 3) the use of sources.

5.2.1 Structure and mode

Thomle's articles are in general non-narrative. There is no use of the four devises, no narrative structures as described in the analyses of Seierstad's journalism and only a very limited use of the mimetic mode. All the stories are news angled although they are not told strictly in relevance order, and thus the style ought rather to be classified as descriptive news reportage with a personal view than as classical objective news journalism. There are attempts towards creating scenes for instance in the description of the slums of Saddam City in *Soldiers take over the streets of Baghdad (*20.03.2003):

> "Pieces of clothing were still drying on the shelling walls while women and men were dragging big bags of tomatoes, onions and paprika across the muddy dirt roads to the overpopulated apartments filled up with mattresses."

The description is to some extent mimetic, but still not quite: Thomle does not *show* the reader the apartments, he just *tells* about them. In the same article he also *tells* about the queues at the petrol stations, he *tells* that people are driving like idiots, and he *tells* that the driver *said* they were all nervous. So diegesis is by far the dominant mode in this article as well as in general.

5.2.2 Narrator/narrating voice

Thomle is easily recognised as an authorial narrator with a strong, personal voice. In the four articles he never exposes himself as a first person narrator, but still there is a limited use of the personal pronoun *we,* for instance in *Civilians killed during attack* (27.03.2003). In *Soldiers take over the streets of Baghdad* (20.03.2003) he refers to himself as "Jyllands-Posten" instead of using first person pronouns. Also when Thomle refers to the driver and the official guide, it is obvious to the reader that this is Thomle's driver and Thomle's guide, and when he describes the various obstacles to gaining information, it is evident that the problems are those experienced by the journalist. In *A city prepares for war* (21.03.03) his personal voice is loud and clear when putting "American aggression" in quotation marks thereby indicating that he does not agree with the use of the term "aggression", but first and foremost his personal viewpoint comes out clearly when he describes the

human shields honoured by Iraqi officials. Two Australian women are described as "baby-boomers" with "Peace, not War" T-shirts (*A city prepares for war* 21.03.03), and one of these women has previously (…) been described in the following way as she participated in a press briefing:

> "An elderly Australian woman, who called herself Rosemary, was floating around in a purple velvet tunic with a dress bow and talked herself warm by blaming the Western leaders who refused to follow the request of the peace demonstrators".

Later on this woman is referred to only as "the dress bow", and another shield, who is listening to a speech, is described as:

> "A red-haired Italian woman, who had until then been caressing her girlfriend, could not hold back her excitement and jumped up and down to the rhythm of the cheering Saddam supporters" (*A city prepares for war* 21.03.03).

Thomle makes no attempt to hide his disrespect for these people, likewise when he is writing about the Iraqi officials. In comparison, Seierstad only seldom reveals her private opinions openly and in general, she allows her sources to speak in their own voices without commenting on them. Therefore, we may conclude that Thomle is far more pronounced as an *authorial* narrator than is Seierstad.

5.2.3 Sources

Thomle's use of sources is radically different from Seierstad's. He is always explicit about their identity: Either he mentions their full name, or he tells the reader that the person is e.g. a gardener who wants to be anonymous (*A city prepares for war* 21.03.03). In comparison, Seierstad always names her sources but most frequently only by their first name, and she never reveals whether the name is made up. The sources in Thomle's articles are primarily quoted for factual information rather than for the purpose of telling real-life stories based on their own experiences as in Seierstad's case. Thomle's driver explicitly plays an important role as a source. He is even appointed the role of being "the voice of the people".

> "The driver is the voice of the people. Also when he tells about his wife who cried of fear in front of their two little girls" (*The citizens of Baghdad on the run* 19.03.2003).

But the readers neither hear this *vox populi*, which Thomle expresses on the driver's behalf, nor "*see*" his wife cry. In contrast, Seierstad e.g gives the lady in *Iraqis on the run (*19.03.2003) a voice of her own when she recounts a similar emotional experience with *her* family:

> "Yesterday I said goodbye to my relatives. We just sat and cried. No one has a clue what will happen. Do you know, on my way out of Baghdad I saw two collisions. People can't even con-

centrate on driving. That's what it is like to live under the threat of bombs" (*Iraqis on the run* 19.03.2003)

If the above described differences between Seierstad's and Thomle's use of sources mark a general tendency, it should be identifiable in the sample as a whole. And in fact a quantitative survey of the oral sources in both reporters' articles substantiates the assumption that Seierstad is more likely to use "life-experts" than professional sources and also more likely to talk to Iraqis and to women than is Thomle:

The use of sources in Seierstad's 53 articles on Iraq

Sources. Total	Iraqis	Men	Women	Life-experts	Professionals
210	185	168	42	153	60
100 %	88 %	80 %	20 %	73 %	27 %

The use of sources in Thomle's 32 articles on Iraq

Sources. Total	Iraqi	Men	Women	Life-experts	Professionals
48	33	41	7	28	60
100 %	69	85	15	58	52

Further details: See appendix 4.1 and appendix 4. .[40]

A life-expert is in this context a person telling about his or her own life and experiences, whereas professionals are people quoted because they hold a certain position. The different composition of sources reflects the difference in style and the fact that Seierstad is telling stories about how ordinary Iraqi citizens are affected by the war, whereas Thomle is focusing on his own situation as a journalist in a difficult situation and interpreting this experience and the information he gathers from a personal opinion-based point of view. Taking this into account, Thomle's journalism may well be descriptive news reportage, but cannot be said to represent the classical factual/objective journalism as his editor has claimed, because it is so significantly marked by private opinions.

5.3. Ethic standards: Is Seierstad mixing facts and fiction?

Regardless of style, journalistic stories are stories about real life and must not contain any invented elements unless it is absolutely transparent to the reader. So reads the credo of scholars such as

[40] Thomle's figures have been adjusted for overlapping of sources: Hans Blix was quoted in four articles but counts only as one.

Kramer (2002), Clark (2002), Hvid (2004) and Beck-Karlsen (2007). Since narrative journalism borrows its tools from literature, it is even more important to get the facts right in order not to blur the distinctions between fiction and non-fiction. According to the ethical rules of narrative journalism as formulated by Kramer (1995), the narrative journalist should not invent characters, events or quotes.

Obviously, it is either difficult or downright impossible in retrospect to verify whether these rules have been obeyed, but in the case of Seierstad a comparison between the articles in Politiken and equivalent passages in *A Hundred and one Days in Baghdad* (2004) can help to reveal her practice. The comparison reveals a number of inconsistencies. For instance in the article *Seven fat and all the meagre ones* (23.01.2003) a businessman who is talking to Seierstad in a café comments critically on the regime; here he is called Mohammed but in an identical passage in the book with identical quotes, his name is Mahmoud (Seierstad 2004: 64). Correspondingly, a market vendor and volunteer Baath soldier is called Kadim in the article (Politiken 22.03.2003,) but Taha in the book (Seierstad 2004: 173) although quoted and described in exactly the same way. More remarkably, in the article *Baghdad awakened by bombs* (21.03.2003), Mona, a student of literature, is attributed a number of statements in quotation marks, but in the book the very same statements are expressed by Aliya, Seierstad's interpreter, an employee at the Ministry of Information (Seierstad 2004: 164). In the article "Mona" adds a few more comments, for instance:

> "Anyhow, I have no plans to go to university today. I will rather study at home - if I can concentrate. That is the most difficult thing during a war: to think about anything but the fear."

This indicates that either Mona is a composite character or that the latter part of the quote is invented, because Aliya is not a student. A similar phenomenon appears in *The New Iraqi Hero: The Martyr Ali* (31.03.2003). In this article Isra, a female student at a bus stop, says:

> "He must be brave" (…)"It has not been easy" and "Now he is in Paradise" (…) "He will go straight to the top, you know. In Paradise there are seven levels, and he'll go to al-firdous – the top level. Only the Prophet Muhammed and holy men and martyrs are there".

The same statements are attributed to the interpreter Aliya in the book (Seierstad 2004:220). It is unlikely that two sources will use exactly the same wording even though they hold the same opinion. Therefore Isra is also likely to be an invented stand-in for Aliay. The two examples involving the interpreter are different from the case of Mahmoud-Muhammed and that of Kadim-Taha, because Aliya is not only given another name but also a new identity, and her relation to Seierstad is hidden.

The same is the case in the article *They are shooting in the rush (24.03.2003)* about the assumed crash landing of an American helicopter. A young man tells about what he has seen. His name is Amir, and the reader learns nothing more about him. But in the book his statements are attributed to Sadik, a Baath party member and the brother of Seierstad's driver. (Seierstad 2004: 181-184).
So again: not only is a name replaced, but also an identity and the source's relation to Seierstad is hidden. In *Death in the Iraqi desert* (28.03.2003) things are a little more complex. The article's first sentence reads:

> "My best friend returned from the front in Najaf yesterday", tells Ali. Dead. Kadim was the commander of a detachment of the Najaf front 200 kilometres south of Baghdad. Ali knew nothing about how his friend was killed. Only that he had met his death in the desert [outside Najaf]."

The book has an identical paragraph, but Ali is now Abbas, the driver of one of the other Western journalists, and his friend Kadim is called Hamid. In the book, Abbas has a past in the military intelligence service (Seierstad 2004: 192) whereas in the article, Ali is just an academic, and we learn nothing more about him. So also in this case both name and identity have been changed. Furthermore, in the book Seierstad reflects on the validity of the information given by Abbas as an employee at the Ministry of Information, and these reflections are obviously absent in the article.
We may thus conclude that Seierstad has altered the names and occupations of some of her sources without letting the readers know. She is attributing assumedly real quotes to characters which are probably invented, and maybe she is also making up quotes to fit invented characters. In addition, she is hiding her personal connection to several of the sources. While hiding the true identity and the affiliations of these sources, Seierstad is impeding the readers' source criticism. This might reflect a built-in temptation in the narrative mode to compose and invent things as the style is close to that of fiction writing. In Jyllands-Posten, Thomle is, as we have seen, also using his drivers and his official guide as sources, but they appear in that capacity in the text – not as random citizens of Baghdad. Therefore, one of the questions to be addressed in the following chapter is whether this difference in actual practice is determined by the style or primarily by something else.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The preceding narrative analysis has demonstrated how Åsne Seierstad to a large extent is using literary techniques in her journalistic writing on Iraq. This concluding chapter will summarise the results of the analyses and discuss how they contribute to answering the research questions of this study. In doing so, I will draw on the theory previously presented, but also include an American reception study specifically about how readers respond to different styles of journalistic writing.[41] Finally, I will conclude on how Seierstad's articles have contributed to the development of narrative news journalism within the Danish media.

Seierstad's style compared with the classic news style

Two out of the four stories analysed in the previous chapter appeared to be narrative articles, whereas one was semi-narrative and one was non-narrative. However, when applying the same method in analysing all of Seierstad's eighteen front-page articles, the distribution proves slightly different: On a whole, there are no more than these two purely narrative articles in the front-page sample. Eight articles are non-narrative though not necessarily told in accordance with the inverted news pyramid, and the remaining eight stories can be classified as semi-narrative. So Seierstad's journalism is far from entirely narrative despite an extended use of literary techniques which are not common in the classical factual/objective news journalism. [42]

Yet, it is worth noting that the method used to identify the narrative, semi-narrative and non-narrative style is not an "objective" one. It is replicable, but the categorisation still depends on the subjective judgement of the analyst. In particular, the category "semi-narrative" is somewhat fluid and not so easily defined and therefore another reader might choose to categorise some of the semi-narrative stories differently. For the same reason, I have chosen to put emphasis on qualitative analysis as it clearly exposes my analytic judgement, and only to a minor extent include quantitative calculations. Using the four devices described by Tom Wolfe as a tool to identify narrative elements was not simple either as they appeared not to be quite as unambiguously identifiable as first assumed. However, I did after all find the four devices useful as analytic tools and have found all four of them in Seierstad's articles.

[41] This study – *Ways with Words* - became available to me only shortly before the deadline of this dissertation when it was no longer possible to rewrite the literature review. But as the findings are of major interest in the present context, I have chosen to include them in this final chapter instead.

[42] A form showing the distribution is to be found in the appendices. The detailed analysis of the single articles has been left out for reasons of space, and because the four analyses included are considered adequate in order to demonstrate both how the method is applied and to indicate the results.

The analysis showed that most notably Seierstad is using *scenes* (mimetic mode) with descriptive, though not necessarily symbolic, *details*. Also *dialogue* can be found however rare, and the same counts for the *third person point of view*. Altogether, the most significant differences in comparison with classical news journalism are the extended use of mimetic mode, the use of life-experts who often appear as characters rather than sources, and the use of storytelling including personal accounts told by the characters as small narratives in their own right embedded in the larger context. In comparison, Jyllands-Posten's reporter, Erik Thomle, is using neither the mimetic mode nor the four devices but, although his articles are news-angled, they are not told strictly in relevance order either. In addition, Thomle is distinctly expressing personal and value-based judgements which are not usually considered compatible with the factual/objective style. As his editor praised him for his performance of the classical news values and objectivity, we may conclude that these values either are difficult to practise, or that there is a significant lack of awareness about what they actually implicate - even in some journalistic environments.

Identification as news criteria

Seierstad's articles were, as we have seen, given high priority in Politiken, as eighteen out of her 53 articles were front-page stories and when the war broke out, her front-page frequency increased significantly from 8 per cent prior to the invasion to 55 per cent after March 19. Recollecting the conclusions of Ida Schultz in *Bag Nyhederne* (2007) that is hardly surprising. Schultz found an overwhelming consensus throughout the Danish newsrooms on how news is identified and ranked in accordance with the five basic news values: 1) Topicality 2) Importance 3) Conflict 4) Identification and 5) Sensation (Schultz 2006: 57).

The breakout of a war initiated by the world's only superpower supported by the Danish government and involving Danish military forces had of course an unconditionally high score in regard to topicality, importance and conflict. Many Western media did not have a correspondent of their own in Baghdad during the invasion, and therefore it is only natural that Seierstad's coverage would be given front-page priority. Still, what is not commonplace is the combination of a topic usually considered *hard* news and the front-page placement on the one hand, and the narrative and semi-narrative style on the other. Narrative journalism has traditionally been connected with *soft* human-interest stories and, as we have seen, Seierstad's journalism does convincingly involve stories about ordinary Iraqis and their life and worries in times of fear and uncertainty. Although they live in a far-away country under conditions foreign to most readers, they are represented in a way that allows for empathy and identification. Politiken's order of priority could therefore indicate that the fourth

news criteria, *identification*, has come to play a more important role in the printed news media and not only in television news as first demonstrated in a Danish context by Hjarvard (1999) and later confirmed by Schultz' news room studies (2007).

One of the reasons behind this development is most likely the competition from TV and the Internet. The increasing importance of identification as news criteria on television has obviously affected newspaper journalism, but the unequal competition with the Internet media can also be seen as an explanatory factor. The two pure narrative articles in the sample are about very significant news events – the breakout of war (*Baghdad is facing the war*) and the first major attack on civilians (*Bloody day in Baghdad*). The papers could hardly report on these events as news stories because by the time they reached the audience, the stories had already been reported in the new media. So, as the newspapers cannot compete on speed, they need to find alternatives; and by choosing a narrative style for the coverage of these events it is possible to add a different dimension and maybe a deeper understanding to familiar stories. Altogether this indicates that the old dichotomy of hard and soft news in the papers is under pressure and maybe even about to break down.

Narratives are efficient in communication

The emergence of the factual/objective news style at the turn of last century gave rise to a certain feeling of unease among some journalists and editors who considered the style itself to be a constraint regarding the way reality could be represented by the media. These feelings have been shared by narrative journalists of the *New Journalism* generation and also by for instance Ryszard Kapuściński who considered the classical news style useless in terms of communicating truthful accounts of war and conflict.

Narrative journalism obviously does offer a different representation of reality than does traditional news journalism. Yet, whether this difference is rooted in differences in content or whether the storytelling and the structuring of these stories as such make them more appealing is hard to say, and the body of empirical research and scientific literature on the topic is almost non-existent. However, one particular study is worth offering attention to: *Ways with Words* (1993), a study initiated by the Literary Committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) and conducted in cooperation with media scientists from The Poynter Institute for Media Studies and University of Wisconsin-Madison and also with the help of journalists and editors at St. Petersburg Times, Florida. The study uniquely involved real stories and reporters working on deadlines on a real newspaper with real readers who did not know they were participating in an experiment. Journalists from the

paper wrote four different news stories on ordinary news topics, but each of them in four versions: one in the "traditional" factual news style, one as "narrative", one with "radical clarity" – i.e. very explicit and repetitive and finally one as "point-of view", clearly coloured by the writer's opinion. As the paper was published in four local editions, it was possible to have groups of readers who read only one version of the stories respectively. Each of the four versions contained the same factual information - only the style was different. Every night, after the paper had been delivered, inquiries over the telephone were carried out to question a random sample of subscribers – a total of 964 to be exact. The readers were asked a series of questions about how much of the story they read, what they learned (using true-false question) and how fair, balanced and well written they considered the stories to be. They were also asked whether they cared about the subject, whether it connected with their own experiences, and whether it made them relate to the subject in order to find out more or get involved. None of the writing techniques were found to be clearly superior at all times for everyone, but most significantly the study showed that:

> "The traditional, inverted-pyramid style that dominates newspaper writing does not work very well with readers" and that "[S] storytelling techniques offer great potential for newspapers" because: "Averaging all kinds of readers and all four stories, the narrative versions tended to outscore the others. They simply were better read, and they communicated information better" (Denton 1993:19, 21).

Interestingly enough, to most readers the least efficient mode was the point-of view technique where the journalists expressed their own opinions, as did Erik Thomle in his reportages from Iraq. The readers also ranked these articles lowest in terms of quality (ibid: 21).

In sum, the *Ways with Words* study is revolutionary: For more than a century, journalists and editors have been convinced that the factual objective news style with its inverted news pyramid and relevance order is the most efficient way of communicating content, but *Ways with Words* demonstrates that this is not at all the case – on the contrary: it is rather inefficient. Consequently, it seems as if Seierstad and Politiken are backing the right horse although more studies involving European papers and readers are needed in order to generalise about how the readership of newspapers like Politiken perceive different news styles.

Telling stories and getting the facts right

In spite of the narrative style being efficient in communicating content, the ethic aspects need to be addressed when recalling Seierstad's comment as she was criticised for not being accurate with the

factual information in her book *The angel of Grozny* (2007): "Facts is a dead horse". Seierstad has often expressed similar opinions in interviews and discussions while emphasising that her ambition is not to mediate textbook information, but to drag the readers into the story and force them to relate to the real life experiences of ordinary people.

On the one hand, the rationale of this approach is supported by the findings in *Way with Words* as the study suggests that relating to the sources as human beings is important to the reader in order for them to understand the content. On the other hand from my point of view, it is problematic if Seierstad's approach implicates a compromise with the factuality and accuracy as core principles of journalistic writing. This viewpoint might be deemed naïve and outdated by post-modern (post-structuralist) scholars such as James Aucoin who argues that Mark Kramer's ethic rules in regards to getting the facts right and avoiding "invention" within narrative journalism make no sense. Nevertheless, I will maintain the contention that there is a reality outside discourse – a reality of verifiable facts - although these facts can be mediated in numerous ways. As Åsne Seierstad states in the preface of *A Hundred and One Days* (2004) "there are millions of true accounts [about Iraq] and maybe just as many lies" (ibid: 2) but this truism is no excuse for inaccuracy in newspaper journalism. My view is – however modernistic and old-fashioned it may sound – that the media still has a crucial role to play in relation to democracy and as citizens and voters, the readers depend on access to factual information - for instance, when deciding on whether or not to re-elect a government which has opted for active participation in the Iraqi War as did the Danish government. The readers should thus rightly expect stories on Iraq published on the front-page of a well-esteemed newspaper to be based on verifiable facts - unless otherwise stated. It *does* make a difference whether the sources of a journalistic article are civil servants of a totalitarian state or random students in the street. Readers of newspapers should obviously expect the sources to be real and the quotes to reflect their statements. This is where newspaper journalism and literature diverge. Fiction stories can be "true" although they are invented, and the readers do not expect to find the same kind of accuracy in a novel or maybe not even in a documentary in a book on real events as they do in journalism, since the notion of truth within literature is not identical with that of journalism - be it narrative or classical news journalism.

Having said that, it is worth repeating that there is no obvious contradiction between getting the facts right and writing in a narrative style. As described above, the articles on identical topics in *Ways with Words* contained the same factual information although written in different styles, and consequently worries about the style itself being a source of inaccuracy seem unjustified.

The Third Way – a promising alternative

Another objection to a more widespread use of narrative journalism in newspapers is that it tends to mediate a far too narrow perspective on the events as it often focuses on individuals. The narrative article *Bloody day in Baghdad* for instance allows in a lifelike way the reader to see – on his or her inner screen – how it looks when two missiles explode in a densely populated marketplace and also to identify with people who experienced the blast. But nevertheless, the article neither provides much background information nor any knowledge about the context - not to mention any analysis of the political consequences and implications of the events.

Therefore, the semi-narrative style with its altering of the mimetic and the diegetic mode seems to have a far larger potential within news journalism, since it at the same time allows for both story-telling and for the transmission of facts. A major part of Seierstad's articles in the sample are actually semi-narrative and although not mixing the mimetic and the diegetic mode quite as systematically as Roy Peter Clark has suggested, the result is often close to his *Third Way Model* as demonstrated in the analysis of *Iraqis on the run.* As described earlier on, Clark's point of departure is the existence of two distinct reading modes, namely what Louise Rosenblatt has called "the efferent mode" and the "aesthetic mode", the former being "reading for information" and the latter "reading for exploration" (Clark 1998). But then, Clark suggests, a third way of writing needs to be developed: a mixed mode writing equally for story and for information. Seierstad's semi-narrative articles in Politiken do in fact contribute to the development of this third way of writing. And so in conclusion with her Baghdad reports from before, during, and after the invasion in 2003, she has demonstrated that it is possible to cover what has traditionally been considered hard news by using literary tools and storytelling. She was to a large extent able to *show* what the war was like for the civil population *and* yet *tell* the important facts.

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