The Language of Periodical News in Seventeenth-Century England

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present volume draws on research I have carried out on seventeenth-century print and manuscript news over the last twelve years. However, when I started out all that time ago, I never imagined even for a moment that this foray into early modern English news discourse would be so long lasting. After all—or so I thought at the time—there did not seem so much to write, given what on early viewing seemed straightforward enough. How wrong I was.

The colleagues and fellow researchers who have made me realize this are numerous, and come from many different disciplines. Indeed, one of the pleasures of realizing the full interdisciplinary nature of one's own research area is the possibility of striking up friendships with people from different cultural, linguistic and geographical backgrounds.

My first contacts and discussions were with the Zurich historical news team, led by Udo Fries. I found Udo's work inspirational, and am very happy to be still undertaking research with him. Together with Patrick Studer, one of the Zurich team, I had the opportunity of meeting further researchers in news discourse at the first Conference on Historical News Discourse (CHINED) that Patrick and I organised in Florence, 2004. Admittedly, we were numerically quite a select group, but perhaps it was partly because of that that the discussion proved so dynamic. I owe much to those initial conversations and debates as I also do to the energy and intellectual purpose of Andreas Jucker who enthusiastically organised the second CHINED Conference in 2007. In a beautiful Carthusian monastery not far from Zurich I was able to appreciate the wide ranging studies other historical linguists were carrying out into the development of English news discourse in the early modern period. New directions and possibilities in the study of news emerged, and friendships with fellow participants were forged.

However, I also wish to acknowledge the insights I have gained from discussions and contact with early modern historians. In particular, I am grateful to Brendan Dooley. Brendan organised two very fruitful seminars in Bremen, where we debated late into German winter evenings just how news disseminated and was understood in early modern Europe. Through these discussions, and the follow-up correspondence that then developed, I came to realize that any analysis of English news required knowledge of

news transmission and practice in Europe generally. In the light of this, I am particularly grateful to the Medici Archive Project research team for encouraging me to study seventeenth-century Tuscan and English diplomatic newsletters found in the Medici Granducal Archive in Florence. I have found this correspondence fascinating, and likewise very rewarding and enjoyable have been discussions regarding the documentation with Lisa Kaborycha, a project fellow.

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I offer thanks to my department at the University of Florence (*Dipartimento di Lingue, Letterature, e Culture Comparate*) for research grants and administrative support. Likewise, I would like to thank the numerous libraries and their librarians who have helped me over the last years. These include the British Library, British Library Newspapers (Colindale), the Public Record Office (London), the British Archives (Kew), *Biblioteca della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Firenze*, *Biblioteca della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* and the *Archivio di Stato di Firenze*.

Short extracts in Chapters 2 and 3 of the present volume were originally published in my early study on early seventeenth-century news, *Corantos and Newsbooks: Language and Discourse in the First English Newspapers (1620-1641)*.

For the joy they bring me, I would like to dedicate this book to Grazia, Christian and Thomas.

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PREFACE

Seventeenth-century English news writers knew there was a market for news—about that there is no doubt. Right from the very first decade, there was what has been variously described as a 'thirst', 'appetite', or even 'itch' for news about contemporary events and affairs. The readers were out there, but whilst eager or even desperate (if we are to judge from what Ben Jonson scornfully said about these early news addicts) to read print news, they were not prepared to hand over their two pence for a weekly news pamphlet unless convinced that what they were getting was worth the money. And it was this that disturbed and troubled news writers then just as much as it does now in the twenty-first century. In short, how do you, the journalist, present news? What language do you use to persuade the news readers that the money they are spending—or in the case of the internet more simply what they are doing—is a good investment? Whilst seventeenth-century news writers were unaware of modern-day media discourse terminology, such as, 'public idiom', that is, the need to create a language that your reading public finds suitable for the communication of news, they certainly knew about the consequences if they did not meet their readers' expectations. There was no need for surveys, questionnaires, or focus groups: if the seventeenth-century readers lived in London, they would simply go up to the St. Paul's area, where most of the publications were printed and sold, and bluntly tell whoever happened to be around—be it the printer, publisher, or editor cum writer— just what they did not like about what they had bought. No doubt, even then, the commercial principle that the customer was always right was well understood by the publishers of the day, but, from the passage below, we can tell that sometimes the publisher and editor must have been left exasperated by the readers' apparently conflicting expectations and desires.

> Gentle Readers; for I am sure you would faine be known by that Character, how comes it then to passe, that nothing can please you? For either custome is so predominant with you, or corruption of nature caries such a mastring hand; that you must be finding faults, though you know no cause. If we afford you plaine stuffe, you complaine of the phrase, and peraduenture cry out, it is Non-sense; if we adde some exornation, then are you curious to examine the method and coherence, and are forward in saying the sentences are not well adapted

This editor's address to his readers was written in November 1623,[1] just three years after the beginning of English periodical news, but already the news writer is setting out in print what no doubt had already been taxing his mind for some time: how do I write up this periodical news?

It is this question, which lies at the forefront of the seventeenth-century 'news revolution', that I wish to examine in the present volume. I intend to follow the beginnings and development of seventeenth-century English periodical print news and see how contemporary news writers set about responding to this primary presentational and communicative concern.

In my narrative we will see some of the most significant modes of news presentation adopted during the century: from the translation of foreign news dispatches to the language of hard news, the presentation of epistolary news, editorial bonding with the reader, prototypical headlines, text structure and the strict chronological reporting of news (thereby further underlining the interrelationship between English and continental European reporting strategies), the language of propaganda and the use of non-standard language in ideologically construed texts, what periodicity actually meant in practice in relation to the reporting of the Tuscan crisis in 1653, the language *The London Gazette* employed in its 'Advertisements' section in 1681, and finally a diachronic examination of just what the terms NEWS, INTELLIGENCE, and ADVICE signified during this century.

I am conscious that apart from my narrative there are many others that could be written as to the language of seventeenth-century periodical news. As Braudel says, "All historical work is concerned with the breaking down of time past, choosing among its chronological realities according to more or less conscious preferences and exclusions" (1980: 27). However, I would also like to think that my "conscious preferences" can be justified by the insights these specific studies provide as to how some very resourceful news writers grappled with ways of telling news during one of the most momentous centuries in English history.

In my volume I will be constantly drawing on the excellent work already carried out by news historians working in the early modern period. The work of such scholars as Folke Dahl, Brendan Dooley, Joseph Frank, Michael Harris, Jason McElligott, Marcus Nevitt, Jason Peacey, Andrew Pettegree, Joad Raymond, and Charles Sommerville, to name just a few, has been invaluable for my own understanding of how English periodical news developed during the seventeenth century. However, apart from these historical works I have also looked elsewhere in my aim to come to terms with the news language found in the sundry corantos, newsbooks,

[1] *The affaires of Italy*, 20 November 1623.

and gazettes of this century. I have necessarily had to consider linguistic and cultural insights provided by researchers working in translation studies and early modern correspondence, the work of early modern language historians, the methodologies of historical discourse analysis, recent studies in modern-day media discourse and corpus linguistics, and, of course, the research carried out by historical news linguists working in the field of early modern news. Such researchers include Birte Bös, Claudia Claridge, Udo Fries, Maurizio Gotti, Andrew Hardie, Andreas Jucker, Thomas Kohnen, Tony McEnery, Patrick Studer, Irma Taavitsainen, Laura Wright as well as myself. Mine is therefore an interdisciplinary approach, nothing else would have been possible given the highly eclectic attitude seventeenth-century news writers themselves had to the writing up of news. They borrowed and took from everywhere: all was possible, all was justified in their determination to find and keep an audience.

Before commencing my narrative, I need to explain what I mean by periodical news, and how these news publications differ from occasional news pamphlets. The basic difference lies in the fact that whilst in the latter the publisher's intention was never intended to provide anything other than a one-off account of a particular event in the former periodical news publications the publisher's aim was to offer readers regular updates of current affairs. Admittedly, in the early years of such periodical news, which in my opinion can be dated to the first so-called corantos of 1620, the regularity of publication was erratic but this often resulted from practical difficulties involved in the transmission of news, including reliance on wind-dependent packet boats carrying post from Antwerp to England.

In determining the concept of periodicity, one also has to recognise that the development of seventeenth-century print news is an uneven story, containing not just a few blips but also months and indeed years of total silence. Hence, those times in the early 1620s, when news publications are published fairly regularly, can be compared to the period from 1632-1638 when only occasional news pamphlets are published. In short, if we are to distinguish news publications designed to provide regular news updates from occasional news publications—and in my opinion this is an important distinction— we cannot be too strict in our understanding of what is meant by periodicity.

It is therefore through this framework of periodicity that we can examine how seventeenth-century news writers adapted, created and exploited multiple news discourses in their attempt to capture, inform and even entertain contemporary readers.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LANGUAGE OF OCCASIONAL NEWS PAMPHLETS (1600-1620)

Although the focus of my book is on periodical print news, which began in 1620, in this first chapter I shall examine the language of news found in intermittently published pamphlets sold in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. We shall see that whilst the advent of periodical news ushered in novel modes of reporting current events, some of the most characteristic features of news presentation and language in the first two decades were not totally abandoned, never to be adopted again throughout the rest of the seventeenth century. By examining some of the central features of news discourse and language prior to the advent of periodical published news, I believe it is easier to appreciate the processes of change, development and continuation found throughout the rest of the century. In my analysis of the language of pamphlet news between 1600-1620, I shall focus, first, on news pamphlets as such, that is pamphlets bearing the words 'newes'[1] or 'relation' in their title, and then on news pamphlets written in the form of a letter.

1. Newes and Relations

Occasional news pamphlets in the first two decades of the seventeenth century most commonly carried the word 'newes' or 'relation' on their title pages.[2] Either the terms appear together or they are reported singly.

[1] For the first two decades of the seventeenth century the word 'news' was almost invariably spelt 'newes' in pamphlets. In the 1620s we find the modern spelling advancing and by the mid-1650s it was this which had substituted the old orthographic form. See Chapter 10 for a diachronic analysis of the frequency and usage of the word NEWS in seventeenth-century periodical news publications.

[2] I have focused my attention on news pamphlets of no more than twenty-eight pages since longer publications contain features more typical of extended essays or monographs. All the pamphlets cited in this chapter can be found in Pollard and Redgrave (1976-1991) and can be read electronically in *Early English Books*

When they combine, we see that that 'newes' is the superordinate term, with 'relation' found in the subtitle: *Newes from France. Or a relation of a maruellous and fearfull accident of a disaster* (1618),[3] *Newes from Spain. A true relation of the lamentable accidents* (1618), *Newes from Turkie. Or a true and perfect relation sent from Constantinople* (1618). However, the word 'newes' or 'relation' can also appear by itself, as in the publications *Further newes of Ostend* (1601), *Lamentable newes out of Monmouthshire in Wales* (1607), *Newes from Perin in Cornwall* (1618), *Miracle vpon miracle. Or a true relation of the great floods which happened in Couentry* (1607), *A trve relation of two most strange and fearefull accidents, lately happening* (1618).

Although the terms are different, as regards format, content and style there seem to be no clear distinguishing features between 'newes' and 'relation' publications. The format was small quarto, woodcuts were often found on the title page, the font was usually gothic, and the number of words per page varied between 350 to 400. The pamphlets reported both foreign and domestic events, be it natural disaster, criminal deed, political spectacle, naval confrontation, child monster and wonder stories, or whatever else was deemed to excite the public's curiosity.[4] Given pre-publication licensing requirements, none of the pamphlets published news that would have been considered in any way controversial by the English monarchy of the day.[5] As for the narrative style, here again there are no clear cut divisions between those pamphlets entitled "newes" and "relations". The style ranged from the most rhetorical to the most factual, from crisp, concise factuality to ambling philosophical disquisitions on man's cosmic destiny. The language of news was therefore highly varied, and given that such heterogeneity did not reflect any fundamental difference in the terms 'newes' and 'relation', I shall examine these news publications as a whole.

Online. See also Collins (1943) for a description of the cited pamphlets in this chapter as well as others published between 1600-1610.

[3] In all citations I have left original spellings and punctuation intact, except for the long *s* which has been modernised.

[4] For a study of the more sensationalistic aspects of news pamphlets in early seventeenth-century England, see Lake (1994).

[5] See Chapter 2 for how censorship was exercised in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

1.1 Paratext

My analysis will begin with an examination of the paratext. In referring to the term 'paratext', I am following Genette (1997 [1987]) in indicating those parts of a published work that provide a framework for the written text. Paratextual elements typically include the title page, preface, contents pages, illustrations and appendices. Genette argues that although the paratext amounts to just a "a fringe of the printed text ... [it is] a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that [...] is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it" (1997: 2).

This definition of Genette's is certainly applicable to paratextual features found in many early seventeenth-century news pamphlets. Many of them make extensive use of the paratext to attract, inform, and orient the reader. With regard to the first two objectives, that is, attracting and informing potential readers, the title page is extensively exploited, whilst reader orientation is most obviously seen in prefatory dedications or authorial addresses.

What frequently catches the readers' gaze on the title pages are half-page woodcuts. Particularly frequent in news concerning crime and natural disaster, the woodcuts are often dramatic and sensational, usually illustrating in broad but arresting images the main brunt of the story.[6] In some cases the woodcuts were probably created specifically for the news in the pamphlet whilst in other cases, especially those news pamphlets concerning natural disasters such as floods, it would appear that the drawings were recycled.[7] For example, both *Lamentable newes out of Monmouthshire in*

[6] Only occasionally do the woodcuts seem of little pertinence to the news story. For example, in *Miracle vpon miracle. Or a true relation of the great floods which happened in Couentry* (1607) the woodcut provides a picture of a group of houses, with smoke billowing from the chimney tops, but with no immediately recognizable depiction of a flood.

[7] For a specially created woodcut, see *A true relation of a most desperate murder* (1617), where we see two figures who seem to correspond to how the protagonists are described in the murder report. See Voss (1998: 738-743) for an analysis of particularly arresting woodcuts in late Elizabethan pamphlets, and Davies (1986), Watt (1991: 131-177) and Knapp (2005) for more general information on the use of woodcuts in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Information on European news pamphlets during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including the use of woodcuts, is found in Pettegree's history of the book in the renaissance (2010: 130-150). See my Chapter 7 for an analysis of woodcuts in the 1640s newsbook *Mercurius Civicus*.

Wales (1607) and *Newes from Spain. A trve relation of the lamentable accidents* (1618) print the same woodcut depicting flooded countryside.

Whilst woodcuts are only found on the title page of some pamphlets, a summary of the pamphlet contents is almost invariably provided on this opening page.[8] The detail and length of the summary varies according to whether the title page also contains visual illustration, and if so its size. Where there is no woodcut, or other occasional graphic visuals such as devices, the contents summary is quite long.[9] Thus, in *Englands farewell to Christian the fourth* (1606) the title and summary amount to 100 words. This figure can be compared to *A true relation of Go[ds] wonderfull mercies, in preseruing one aliue, which hanged fiue dayes, who was falsely accused* (1605) where the large and vivid depiction of a man hanging from a scaffold leaves only enough space for the above title and imprint details.[10]

From a semantic point of view, the text in the contents summary can be divided into different parts. They are, in order, the initial information relating to the subject of the relation, further background details concerning the event, and finally explicit editorial comment on how the news will affect the reader. The first part, the title, is always found, whilst the other two elements, and especially the last, are only sometimes present.

An example of a news pamphlet where all three components are provided is the following 1612 publication. The title-page bears a woodcut in the bottom part of the page above which is the text:

> A most true Relation of a very dreadfull Earth-quake, with the Lamentable effectes thereof, Which began vpon the 8. of DECEMBER 1612. and yet continueth most fearefull in *Munster* in *Germanie*. READE AND TREMBLE.
> (*A most true relation of a very dreadfull earth-quake*, 1612)

The initial information is found in the words up until "Lamentable effectes thereof". This first layer of information is then furnished with

[8] An exception is *Newes from Spain* (1618), where given the large and dramatic woodcut occupying most of the title-page, the contents are presented on the inside page.

[9] See Morison (1932: 1-70) for a description (with illustrations) of devices and woodcuts on the title pages of seventeenth-century news publications.

[10] Imprint details generally include the place and date of publication, name of printer and where the pamphlet can be bought. Thus, in *The araignement and execvtion of the late traytors* (1606) the imprint reads, "London, *Imprinted* for Ieffrey Chorlton, and are to be solde at his shop, at the Great North dore of Powles. 1606".

additional details in the words from "which began" until "Munster in Germanie". Following this, one finds explicit editorial comment relating to how readers will react to the text: "Reade and tremble".

In the introductory information of many pamphlets the word 'relation' is very frequently collocated with 'true', 'most true' or other words underlining the authenticity of the news.[11] Indeed, so often do the terms 'true' and 'most true' collocate with 'relation' that the adjectives lose some of their semantic force. As they are almost invariably associated with the term 'relation' they are to a certain extent delexicalised. Given this, it is difficult to see how the presence of such words can have rendered the text more authentic in the eyes of the prospective buyer. What instead does help to underline the verisimilitude of the news is the factual precision of much of the information in the contents summary. Very often precise information is given as to the basic components of quintessential reportage: details relating to *what*, *where*, *who* and *when* are frequently found in the title page summaries.

Thus, the above title page of *A most true relation of a very dreadfull earth-quake* (1612) gives precise details about *what*, *where* and *when*. So does *Miracle vpon miracle or a true relation of the great floods which happened in Couentry* (1607), whilst in *A true relation of a most desperate murder* (1617) the title page provides specific information not only about *what*, *where* and *when*, but also *who* and *how*.[12] This emphasis on factuality is designed to underline the authenticity of the news. Although the complex question of news authenticating strategies in early seventeenth-century periodical news will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, we can briefly refer here to one such feature. The feature in question is examined by van Dijk in his analysis of linguistic resources aimed to enhance the appearance of truth and plausibility of modern-day news reports. In his opinion one key news authenticating strategy revolves

[11] See, for example, *A true relation of Go[ds] wonderfull mercies* (1605), *A true relation, of the happy peace concluded by the two mighty princes, Christian the Fourth, King of Denmarke, and Norway* (1613), *A true relation of a most worthy and notable fight* (1616), *A true relation of a most desperate murder* (1617), *A wonder woorth the reading, or a true and faithfull relation of a woman* (1617).

[12] *Miracle vpon miracle. Or a true relation of the great floods which happened in Couentry, in Lynne, and other places, on the 16. and 17. dayes of Aprill last past, in this present yeare of our Lord God, 1607* (1607), *A true relation of a most desperate murder, committed vpon the body of Sir Iohn Tindall Knight, one of the Maisters of the Chancery; who with a pistoll charged with 3. bullets, was slaine going into his Chamber within Lincolnes-Inne, the 12. day of Nouember, by one Iohn Barterham Gent: which Barterham afterwards hanged himself in the Kings-Bench in Southwarke, on Sunday being the 17. day following. 1616.* (1617).

around language signalling precision and exactness in relation to such detail as persons, time and events (van Dijk 1988b: 87). This view as to modern-day reportage is equally relevant to early seventeenth-century print news. Then too writers predicated the truthfulness of their news reports on factuality and the exactness of precise numbers. For example, we find such numerical exactitude in the following contents summary of a relation about a sea battle:

> *A true relation of a most worthy and notable Fight, performed the nineteenth day of Iune now last past, by two small Shippes of the Citie of London, the Vineyard of a hundred and twentie Tunnes, and the Vnicorne of a hundred and fourtie Tunnes, against Sixe great Gallies of Tunes, hauing in them a thousand and eight hundred men, of the Ile of Way-yorcke in the Straights: Our Shippes hauing in all, Mariners, Merchants, and Passengers fifty sixe men* (1616)

However, title pages do not just provide fact. Also found are those attributive adjectives which stimulate curiosity, interest and awe. This conative language is found, for example, in adjectives such as "dreadfull", "lamentable", "fearefull" (*A most true relation of a very dreadfull earth-quake* (1612)), "lamentable" and "wonderfull" (*Lamentable newes, shewing the wonderfull deliuerance of Maister Edmond Pet Sayler* (1613)), "prodigious", "monstrous", "wonderfull" (*A wonder woorth the reading* (1617)), "desperate" (*A true relation of a most desperate murder* (1617)), "maruellous" and "fearfull" (*Newes from France. Or a relation of a maruellous and fearfull accident of a disaster* (1618)). The title page, therefore, serves various functions. At the most basic level it informs the reader of the contents of the news pamphlet, but apart from that it can also help to authenticate the news content as well as entice and interest the reader through both visual illustration in the form of woodcuts and devices, and emotive, arresting language found in evocative attributive adjectives.

News pamphlets, especially those concerning domestic matters and hence not translated from foreign publications, not infrequently have either dedications or addresses to "the reader". These too have an important paratextual role in that they usually orient the reader as to how the news in the pamphlet should be read. This orientation can take various forms depending on both the pamphlet's subject matter and the author's own interpretation of its significance.

In *The araignement and execvtion of the late traytors* (1606) the "Gentle Reader" is given clear indications as to how the relation should be understood. On the one hand there are the "traytors" (those involved in the

conspiracy to blow up the Houses of Parliament), authors of "the horrible and abhominable Treason lately executed", "a treason, I say, so horrible and detestable in the sight of both God and man". As opposed to these perpetrators of "such wicked deeds" lie "All faithfull and obedient Subjects", who instead "may reioyce to see the cutting off, of all such accursed traytors, as entend the death of his Maiestie, and subuersion of the whole kingdome". In *Lamentable newes out of Monmouthshire in Wales* (1607) the reader is also provided with clear advice as to how the story of the flooding in Monmouthshire should be interpreted. Once again, the author offers a moral framework to the reception of news, telling the reader that the account should be read "with that good affection wherewith I doe present it, and I am sure, it both may and will profit thee by putting thee in remembrance why God doth punish others, that so thou maiest thy selfe in time looke unto thine own courses, least he proceed in the same or some more grieuous manner with thee." The author sees himself as spiritual guide and declares that the news, far from being written to excite idle curiosity, is instead published to provide moral instruction. As Raymond says, in news pamphlets prefaces were necessary to "reduce the risk of misreading" (2003: 95).

Interestingly, the author's attempt to direct the readers' response to the news through the use of the preface replicated what was also found in books of the period. In her study of framing strategies in printed books in early modern England, Brayman Hackel writes that paratextual features such as prefaces "predispose readers to a particular reading of a text" (2005: 91). Through prefaces authors or publishers "tried to shape and control the reception of their books" (2005: 116) and "construct a community of readers desired for a particular work" (2005: 86). This similarity of approach to the paratextual potential of a preface in both print news pamphlets and print books underlines the need to examine some aspects of seventeenth-century news within the broader context of contemporary print publication. Many of the discourse characteristics of print news can only be fully appreciated if we are aware of the general context involving both the production and reception of print texts generally in early modern England.[13]

[13] For further examples of dedications and addresses in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century occasional pamphlets, see Claridge (2000). Some of the burgeoning body of literature on print material in general in early modern England includes Spufford (1981), Reay (1985), Watt (1991), Wheale (1999), Sharpe (2000), Marotti and Bristol (2000), Fox (2000), Andersen and Sauer (2002), Sharpe and Zwicker (2003), Dobranski (2005), Brayman Hackel (2005) and Craik (2007).

As with *The araignement and execvtion of the late traytors* (1606), the author in *Lamentable newes out of Monmouthshire in Wales* (1607) adopts a confidential tone with the reader, a fact which is underlined in the author's use of the 'thou/thee' personal pronoun as opposed to formal 'you'. Throughout the first half of the seventeenth century the T/V distinction (that is, the difference in usage between the 2nd person singular pronouns 'thou/thee/thy' and 'you') was a recognized style marker, with 'thou' and 'thee' adopted in familiar, intimate contexts and 'you' in either formal situations or when the addresser wished to indicate respect towards a social superior.[14] The fact that in the above two pamphlets the author addresses the reader with the T form shows that in his narration of news he wishes to present a more personal framework to the news.[15] As we shall see, this familiarity of tone is very unlike the totally impersonal mode of much news reporting of the 1620s and 1630s. However, as Brayman Hackel says in relation to the construction of a 'gentle reader' in early modern print books, the author also had an ulterior motive in the construction of intimacy between writer and reader since such familiarity and mutual respect was also designed to "shape each unknown reader into a receptive, pleasant reader" (2005: 117). This kind of reader would read and appreciate the text, be it a book, or news pamphlet (as in our case), in a friendly, collaborative spirit, very willing to make the effort to interpret the text in the way it had been intended by the author.[16]

In contrast to the admonitory tones of the addresses to the reader in *The araignement and execvtion of the late traytors* (1606) and *Lamentable*

[14] For studies on pronominal usage in early modern English, see Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1995), Busse (2003), Mazzon (2003), Nevala (2004) and Walker (2007). See Chapter 6 for an examination of pronominal usage in the Civil War newsbooks *Mercurius Aulicus* and *Mercurius Britanicus*.

[15] As the world of early seventeenth-century English news writing was peopled by the male sex, my use of the third-person male pronoun extends generically to news writers as a whole at that time.

[16] Although the use of the T pronoun was standard practice in these early seventeenth-century addresses to the reader, there are also occasional instances of the reader being addressed by 'you' (e.g. *Newes from France* (1616)). In *The wonderfull yeare* (1603) Thomas Dekker amusingly satirises those authors of books who followed fashion and referred to their readers as being friendly and courteous. In the satire he indicates that such complementary attributes might not reflect reality: [the reader] "must be honyed, and come-ouer with *Gentle Reader*, *Courteous Reader*, and *Learned Reader*, though he haue no more *Gentilitie* in him than *Adam* had (that was but a gardener) no more *Civility* than a *Tartar*, and no more *Learning* than the most errand *Stinkard*, that (except his owne name) could neuer finde any thing in the Horne-booke."

newes out of Monmouthshire in Wales (1607), one finds an altogether different style in *A wonder woorth the reading* (1617). In the opening address to the reader, the writer playfully invites the reader to accept that the relation is a true and faithful account of what actually occurred to a "woman now dwelling in Kent Street". Writing in simple rhyming couplets, the author contrasts the fantastic, groundless stories of the unnatural found in other pamphlets with the truth of the present publication. What the author is therefore underlining here is the authenticity of the news.

> I bring no newes here of some hideous Dragon
> Nor tell I of Charles Starre-bestudded Waggon[17]
> […]
> Nor of strange Earthquakes swallowing worlds of people:
> Nor Prophecie, found in some ruind Steeple:
> But here I bring (in a new true-borne Storie)
> A monstrous Message sent from the King of Glorie.

Unlike the above addresses to the reader, the author's preface in *A true relation of a most worthy and notable fight* (1616) consists of a dedication to "my esteemed good Friend M^{r} Gylbert Robartes". However, here too, the reader receives orientation as to how the following relation should be understood in that not only does the author extend his best wishes to his friend but he also explains why he is commending the relation. Through these words to the friend, the pamphlet readers are hence themselves indirectly told that they should read the relation in a spirit of "ioy":

> I haue made bold to commende vnto you, the hardy and most dangerous Aduenture of two worthy Shippes of *London*, and their Companies in their last Voyage for the *Straights*, made this passed Sommer, against Six great Gallies of the *Turkes*: wherein they shewed true volour, and gallant resolution, gaining fame to them-selues, been a terrour to the enemie, and giuen a most worthy example for all of their coates: A pattorne worth recording for others to follow, a comfort to Owners, and Marchantes, that commit their Shippes and goods to such mens gouernment, and a ioy to all those that heare their deserued commendations

Thus, with the exception of the dedication in *Englands farewell to Christian the fourth* (1606), where in the dedicatory preface the author merely states that what had inspired him to write the pamphlet was the

[17] This could be a reference to contemporary astrological predictions about Prince Charles, later king Charles I.

realization that some people had not been able to see for themselves the grand pageantry and spectacle surrounding the king of Denmark's visit to England, the prefatory content in these occasional news pamphlets offers orientation as to how the pamphet should be read. In Genette's words, such paratextual material "controls one's whole reading of the text" (1997: 2).

1.2 Content

The news texts themselves, that is, what is found within the body of the news story beyond the paratext, foreground one overriding function of news discourse at that time. This function can be clearly seen in the following introductory paragraphs in *A trve relation of two most strange and fearfull accidents, lately happening* (1618).

> The anger and terrible countenance of God, of late shewed in this Land here amongst vs, may awaken vs from the fast sleepes of security, and turne vs to the Lord by true repentance. Therefore least his heauy Judgments in like manner come vpon vs at unawares, and we be taken sodainely sleeping, let vs with the wise Virgins in the Gospell kindle our Lampes, that we may be found ready when our Bridegroome commeth in great glory, to giue euery one as his works shall be.
> For we are to acknowledge and consider, that the Lord hath not ceased from time to time, at his good will and pleasure, to send prodigies and wonders in euery age, to forewarne and forearme vs of his Judgements hanging ouer our heads for sin: as appeareth by the late examples declared amongst vs.
> In the County of Stafford in the parish of Burton vpon Trent, dwelled of late a free houlder of good lands & means, named Thomas Henworth, as well stored with money and other houshold goods, as any of his rancke and calling in that Countrey […]

What we therefore see is that news is understood and recounted within a religious framework. In the vast majority of pamphlets between 1600 and 1620 news stories are not conceived of as being important in themselves, as a stand alone feature of human existence worthy of expression, but rather as a manifestation of God's will. Even those pamphlets which thematically would seem to bear little on God's omnipotence are read and narrated through that light. Thus, the pamphlet about the birth of the child monster in Kent Street, London is also predicated on what such an event signifies for us, wretched sinners forever exasperating God's patience and grace.

> O remember, that God is said, to haue feete of Lead, and hands of Iron, he is slow to wrath; but when he strikes, he paies home and heauie. Therefore abuse not thou Gods patience.
> How many warning peeces of his displeasure hath he discharged vpon thee (O England) and yet, thou takest no warning
> (*A wonder woorth the reading*, 1617)[18]

There are few examples of simple, straightforward reportage where the reader is simply provided with unmediated facts and information about a certain event. The examples that one does find concern foreign affairs and are translations of continental news reports which privileged an unadorned factual presentation of news. The following, for example, is the first part of a one-page report of a fire in Constantinople:

> By letters sent from Constantinople bearing date the 14 of Iune, it is certified for truth, that in the said Citty, there are, by casualty of fire that hapned therein, at least fiue thousand houses burnt, and that the great losse thereby sustained, amounteth vnto more than a Million of Gold: and that the said fire was the cause of a great tumult and borore[19] made therein
> (*A wonderfull and most lamentable declaration*, 1613)[20]

However, as said above, in the vast majority of cases this kind of reportage is eschewed in favour of a much more discursive style. News is narrated in relation to something else, most often society's sinfulness in the eyes of God, though one also finds instances of events being contextualized within a historical framework. Thus, in *A true relation of a most worthy and notable fight* (1616) a report of a hard fought and courageously undertaken sea battle only commences after the writer has first indicated how Roman and Greek society honoured their own military heroes.

The discursive mode of narration is frequently punctuated by an exclamatory, invocatory tone typical of public preaching or even theatre. In the pamphlet about the child monster (*A wonder woorth the reading*, 1617), the anguished writer rhetorically cries, "O England, England, delude not thy selfe with these golden dreames?", in *A true relation of a*

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[18] See Raymond (2003: 118-122) for further analysis of the "soteriological concerns" (2003: 121) of pre-Civil War occasional news pamphlets.

[19] As I have not been able to trace the meaning of this word, it may be a misspelling of 'horore' or modern-day 'horror'.

[20] For another example of reportage about Constantinople, see *Newes from Turkie* (1618). This mode of factual news reporting will be examined in more detail in Chapters 2 and 4 in relation to corantos.

most desperate murder (1617) high drama is found in the exclamatory accusation "Oh bloudy Hand! To snatch vp Vengeance when it was not thine", whilst in *A most true relation of a very dreadfull earth-quake* (1612) the writer histrionically thunders "No, no, It is an extraordinarie finger, that points out where such Tempests shall fall. The Lord of Hostes hath some great Battle to bee fought, and he doeth now but leuie his forces: The Judge of all kingdomes is to arraigne the sinnes of some one people, and these are now but the summons sent from his court to warne their appearance."[21]

A common feature of the discursive style, which is more often found in those texts first written in English rather than those translated into English, is the use of parenthesis. Sometimes the parenthesis is used sparingly and appropriately, thereby providing the text with that intimate spontaneity that the writer was no doubt seeking. Elsewhere, as below, the parenthetic comment is so exaggerated that it loses all functional justification

> For the iniurie that we daily offer to so infinite a Maiesty, in so opprobrious and despitefull manner (being so farre inferiour, and so highly beholding vnto him) that (as much as in vs lieth) wee quite defeate God of his honour, and yeild it to that wherein wee sinne against him. This iniury (I say) is so great […]
> (*The Windie Yeare*, 1613)

In many pamphlets the author's highly personalized mode of news narration is found throughout the pamphlet whilst in other publications the narration is divided into two distinct parts. In the first part we find the narrator's voice as it self-assuredly, often stridently explains and contextualizes the news, whereas in the second part the reader is instead presented with a much more factual account of what happened, and here the narrator's *persona* is much less intrusive. Whilst this latter form of news discourse does not often reach the same level of factuality as what is found in many of the news reports of the post-1620 periodical news, it does nevertheless underline the informative component of news as opposed to much of the quasi-religious rhetoric present in the narrator's more personalized presentation of the event.

[21] Similarly histrionic is the following outpouring of anguish in *Wofvll newes from the west-parts of England* (1612) "Oh losse without recouerie! Oh griefe without comfort! Oh dole without end! How dost thou breede the owners cares and miseries?"

2. Letters of Newes

"I haue with the first conueniency sent ouer vnto you, the newest, and (heere) most knowne newes […]": these words introduce a letter which was published in an English pamphlet of 1616.[22] The English gentleman's desire to inform his friend of the most up-to-date news as quickly as possible reflects the role of news in early seventeenth-century English society. News was a commodity of high value. Those people who had important news would indeed wish to communicate it to their preferred addressee with the utmost speed. Directly or indirectly, the supplier of news (providing, of course, the news was reliable) could only but gain from its transmission. The benefit could range from financial advantage, in that the news writer could be involved in the commercial transmission of news, to an increase in personal status—that is, the fact that you were a potential source of important news enhanced your social standing in the eyes of the recipient of that news. This latter aspect is for example seen in the following words written by Thomas Kery to Lord Talbot in 1590: "I cannot write to your Lordship of the truth of the news that be here at this time: and yet I do adventure to write to your Lordship such as rumoured, be they true or false, for that I would very fain do your Lordship all the service I were able" (Lodge 1969 [1838]: 415). What Kery, the writer of the letter, is doing is offering his services as a provider of news to his social superior Lord Talbot. He provides the news, though disclaiming responsibility for its reliability or otherwise, in return for implicit acknowledgment on the part of Lord Talbot of Kery's usefulness in society's hierarchical network of social relations.

News was, therefore, a highly-valued commodity, and much news transmission was in the form of epistolary news. Such news could be both in manuscript and printed form.[23] Although the former remained the more common throughout the seventeenth century, the role of epistolary print

[22] *The copie of a letter, sent from Paris by an English gentleman to his friend in England* (1616).

[23] For historical studies of manuscript and print newsletters in early modern England, see Raymond (1996a: 141-144; 2003: 198, 214-218), Atherton (1999), Baron (2001), Peacey (2004: 237-271), Schneider (2005: 143-182, 201-221), Greenspan (2005), Randall (2008). For linguistic studies of manuscript news see Nevalainen (2002), where the author compares linguistic features in private manuscript newsletters to similar linguistic traits in periodical news of the 1670s, and Brownlees (forthcoming), where structural and stylistic features of English and Italian diplomatic newsletters (respectively sent in 1703 and 1690) are analysed and compared.

news was highly significant too. Indeed, in the first two decades of the seventeenth century, prior to the beginning of periodical news publications in the 1620s, epistolary print news closely followed 'newes' and 'relation' pamphlets as the most common form of framing news.

A survey of extant epistolary news pamphlets between 1600-1620 shows that the content of epistolary print news was highly varied. Subject matter ranged from the landing and repulse of Spaniards in Ireland, shipping news sent from Amsterdam, the "good successe" of English military forces in Holland, the voyage of the "East Indian fleete", the defeat of the Spanish by the Dutch at a battle in Holland, a sea fight between the Dutch and Spanish fleets off Gibraltar, "late newes out of Barbary", "occurrences which lately fel out in *Paris*", and "the circumstances, of that horrible murther committed by Iohn Bartram".[24]

Nevertheless, whilst the news is varied, what is common to all the pamphlets is the underlying premise that what was published was the version in print of the original letter. Sometimes this fact is explicitly stated on the title page, where the reader is informed that what is contained in the pamphlet is the copy of a letter, while in other pamphlets the authenticity of the epistolary text is underlined by the presence of standard epistolary conventions such as opening salutation and closing subscription.[25] As Dossena (2006: 175) writes, "a sense of identity is conveyed by the choice of the forms of address in the salutation and closing greetings". Thus, some print letters begin with courtesy titles such as "Right Worshipful my dutie remembred", "Right honourable, my louing and dutifull seruice remembred vnto your good honour", or more prosaically "Good Sir" and "Sir" and finish with subscriptions ranging from the elaborate ("Thus my humble dutie remembred, I humbly take my leaue […] Your Honours euer to commaund to his power or seruice, W.G") to the more essential "Resting yours most assured, R.M".[26] The presence of

[24] See respectively, *The coppie of a letter sent from M. Rider* (1601), *The copie of a letter, lately sent to an honourable person in England* (1602), *A true and perfect relation of the newes sent from Amsterdam* (1603), *A letter written to the right worshipfvll the Governovrs* (1603), *A true reporte of the great ouerthrowe* (1605), *The sea fight in the road of Gibraltar* (1607), *Late newes out of Barbary* (1613), *The copie of a Letter, sent from Paris* (1616), *A true relation of* […] *that horrible murther* (1616). As seen above, epistolary news pamphlets sometimes contain the words 'news' or 'relation' in their title.

[25] For examples of the latter, see *The coppie of a letter sent from M. Rider* (1601), *The copie of a letter, lately sent to an honourable person in England* (1602), *The copie of a Letter, sent from Paris* (1616).

[26] For salutations see respectively, *A letter written to the right worshipfvll the Governovrs* (1603), *The copie of a letter, lately sent to an honourable person in*