

Conditional Hospitality: Framing Dialogue on Poverty in Montréal Newspapers¹

Greg M. Nielsen
Concordia University

Abstract: A paradox of the mainstream press is that while the poor are represented regularly in supportive but conditional tones of hospitality in newspaper reports, journalists rarely address the poor as their imagined or implied audience. Not engaging the poor as an audience in a civic dialogue means that our understanding of poverty is diminished and remains conditional even when the press pleads for greater hospitality or refuge. Following Jacques Derrida, Mikhail Bakhtin and Robert Entman, I develop a dialogic framing analysis of the relations between journalists, their implied audiences, and the poor as subjects of the reports. Analysis of three online mainstream newspapers in Montréal illustrates how the conditional discourse of hospitality is established through particular forms of address.

Keywords: Poverty; Conditional hospitality; Journalism; Implied audience; Dialogic frames; Montréal

Résumé : C'est un paradoxe de la presse dominante que les reportages représentent les pauvres avec compassion à certaines conditions mais s'adressent rarement à eux comme faisant partie intégrante de leur public imaginé ou implicite. Les journaux, en négligeant d'inclure les pauvres dans le dialogue civique qu'ils entretiennent avec leurs publics cibles, diminuent notre compréhension de la pauvreté, même quand ils plaident pour une meilleure hospitalité ou un meilleur accueil à l'égard des pauvres. En m'inspirant de Jacques Derrida, Mikhail Bakhtin et Robert Entman, je développe dans cet article une analyse dialogique de l'encadrement des rapports entre les journalistes, leurs publics implicites et les pauvres en tant qu'objets de reportages. L'analyse de trois grands journaux montréalais en ligne illustre comment un discours de l'hospitalité conditionnelle se réalise à travers des formes d'adresse particulières.

Mots clés : Pauvreté; Hospitalité conditionnelle; Journalisme; Public implicite; Cadre dialogique; Montréal

A paradox of the mainstream press is that while the poor are represented regularly in supportive but conditional tones of hospitality in newspaper reports, journalists rarely address the poor as their imagined or implied audiences. A consequence of not engaging the poor as an audience in a civic dialogue is that the

Greg M. Nielsen is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre for Broadcasting Studies at Concordia University in Montréal, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W., Montréal, Québec. Email: nielsen@alcor.concordia.ca.

Canadian Journal of Communication, Vol 33 (2008) 605-619

©2008 Canadian Journal of Communication Corporation

understanding of poverty is diminished and remains conditional, even when the press pleads for greater hospitality and refuge for the poor. This article presents a critical theory and concrete illustration of how three online mainstream newspapers in Montréal from 2005 frame this conditional discourse of hospitality through an ongoing dialogue on poverty. Following Mikhail Bakhtin and Robert Entman, a dialogic framing analysis examines the discourse as it arises from relations between journalists, audiences generally implied by their address, and the poor who are the subjects of reports. I begin with a brief discussion on the key concepts of conditional hospitality, the implied audience, and dialogic framing below before explaining the press selection and presenting analysis of three strong themes found in reporting from *The Gazette*, *La Presse*, and *Le Devoir* that include: i) polemics against institutions or officials that impede or exploit the poor; ii) reports on poor people who critically assess the authenticity of other poor people; and iii) definitions from the press of the poorest of the poor.

Although the concept of hospitality is usually employed to explain an ethical or political approach toward the “foreigner” or “stranger,” it can also be used to describe orientations toward the poor. Social and political thought has long been divided over whether or not “hospitality” toward the “outsider” is a universal right or relative moral principal. Immanuel Kant (1983) argued famously that hospitality toward foreigners is never unconditional, but is rather an obligation of universal justice contingent on domestic law. Hermann Cohen, the neo-Kantian founder of the Marburg School and celebrated Judaic scholar, argued that “even more than the question of the stranger, the question of rich and poor is asked with regard to every man, with regard to every fellowman” (1972, p. 128). For Cohen, the most archaic sense of hospitality toward the “other” has its genesis in the opposition that monotheism establishes between “just the next man” (*gegenmensch*) and the “fellowman” (*mitmensch*) (p. 128). Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) extends a similar conditional imperative to the contemporary post-9/11 context, arguing that hospitality cannot be offered by just any of us to just any of them, rather, it is limited to those who would enter dialogue between cultures.

The scale of values and meanings that inform conditions required by the “host” in exchange for hospitality toward an impoverished or disenfranchised “outsider” is challenged most provocatively by Jacques Derrida (2001; 2002). While he recognizes the practical and legal difficulties of accepting the “other” without conditions, he argues that a politics that abandons the principle of unconditional hospitality toward the refugee, the homeless, or the outcast loses its relation to justice. For Derrida, the term “hospitality” also entails a contradictory sense of hostility toward the “other,” given the possibility of the other’s failure or refusal to meet the expectation of the condition. That is, unconditional hospitality should be offered to all those who need refuge, but those who accept hospitality are also bound by the condition that they respect the “right” local custom or conduct.

In what follows, I argue that a similar scale of contradictory values and meanings can be observed to inform conditions that mainstream newspaper reporting place on hospitality toward urban poverty, using Montréal as a case. From the outset, it is important to keep in mind that the dialogic frame analysis

described below is meant to illustrate these conditions, rather than to provide statistically or ethnographically reliable explanations of the actual event of poverty. This symbolic aspect of social division is difficult to analyze in communication studies, and comparing the relation between the journalist, the implied audience, and the subjects of the reports across different framing devices permits a dynamic illustration and confirmation of this everyday mediated practice.

Implied audiences and dialogic frames

Frame analysis is traced back to Bateson (1972) and Goffman (1974), and over time it has shifted from ethnographic application to news studies (Tuchman, 1978) toward cognitive, constructivist, or critical analysis of media texts (D'Angelo, 2002). Critical framing analysis illustrates the participatory orientation of journalism by showing how the news involves actively "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and solution" (Entman, 2004, p. 5). Analysis is carried out at the substantive level, where analysts look to establish whether the emotional-volitional tones or moral terms in articles support the status quo, provide an alternative, or are critical of the events, issues, and agents that are the focus of the story. At the procedural level, analysis shows that when newspapers seek authority, the debate turns around a judgment about the justice or legitimacy of cases.

The addition of a dialogic approach is taken from the Russian culturologist Mikhail Bakhtin (1981; 1984) and has several advantages for the proposed analysis. Bakhtin defines the dialogic as the active process that takes place in the imagination of the writer, whose idea is drawn from multivoiced contexts and then shared through an implied address about the hero or subject of the story toward a broader audience. Participation in dialogue means that words and phrases anticipate rejoinders from an animated other. A dialogic framing approach locates the author's axiological position in the tonality of the utterance, over and against, or in solidarity with, moral terms addressed to the implied audience.

In her study of exclusion in French press coverage of immigration in the 1970s and 80s, Simone Bonnafous follows the tradition of critical discourse analysis in a way that echoes the active dialogical framing Bakhtin describes. She argues that "the word discourse is opposed to the naïvely formulated definition of communication according to which the task of the informer is simply to make a referent known to an addressee, a referent which is independent of the process of communication, including the relation between sender and receiver" (Bonnafous, 1991, p. 17). Critical discourse analysts (Butler, 2004; Henry, 2006; Santa Ana, 2002), as well as governmentality (Dean, 1991) and labelling theorists (Gans, 1995), demonstrate how entire segments of populations become controlled or stigmatized through normalizing discourse or naming practices. I add the concept of the implied audience to this literature in order to better illustrate how the media actively create conditions and gaps between the referents they report on and the audiences implied by their address.

The dialogic approach to framing thus provides a method for thinking about a triangular relation inside and outside the newspaper utterance. The relation is

between the author/journalist/commentator, the hero or referent of the story (the poor, in this case), and the implied audience. Emotional-volitional sincerity or moral terms frame an implied audience for each case. Both an internal and an external triangulation can be distinguished. For example, a polemic in a newspaper may be addressed directly against a city official or office named in the article. This is the interior audience. The exterior audience is implied through the emotional-volitional tone or moral terms used in the article; it is defined as the audience beyond any audience that might be addressed directly within the article. Uniting dialogic and frame analysis thus has the advantage of tracing the general implied audience through i) external referents that legitimate or animate stories; ii) the intensity of emotional-volitional tones or moral terms; and iii) modes of address that exclude subjects of poverty as the addressees for stories that are told about them.

The selection of newspaper articles I examined was limited necessarily to the most recent year of available archive material during the research period. Search engines using keyword selections from Biblio Branché, Factiva, and ProQuest in 2005 generated materials for analysis of poverty in the newspapers. The keywords were “poverty” (*pauvreté*) and “poor” (*pauvre*). Only articles from columns, editorials and op-eds, news reports, and feature articles were selected. The search was done in a way that insured results that contain both Montréal and one of the keywords in the same paragraph so as to focus the selection on the city. It was found that over a 10-year period, the average flow of stories on the theme of poverty in Montréal for the three newspapers combined was 382 articles per year. Each of the 343 articles from 2005 was first examined for relevance, and 112 articles were selected as best suited to the more limited dialogical frame analysis with a focus on the Montréal context. From this group of articles, 20 are cited and grouped below as examples of the three strong themes that are submitted to further analysis.

In the following three sections of this paper, I discuss how mainstream newspapers in Montréal frame the topic of poverty in the context of conventional journalistic operations that include various levels of commitment to “balance, accuracy, accountability, checks on profit motives, and editorial separation” (Entman, 2005, p. 54). I do not have the space here to present an in-depth historical analysis of the “operational contexts,” “discourse genres,” or cultures of reception for each of the Montréal newspapers. Instead, I have prepared a limited number of examples to illustrate the strong themes in the news discourse in ways that show the symmetry between implied audiences and the conditional hospitality expressed toward the poor. The strong themes are derived from the most advanced illustrations of emotional intensity, moral expression, or extreme cases of injustice.

Examples from the newspaper articles are selected for their exemplary, rather than representative, qualities. The extracts are chosen to illustrate the way the implied audiences are framed within the texts or programs and the broader cultural contexts to which they refer. The benefits of this strategy outweigh the risk of a skewed explanation, provided that analysis can illustrate the coherence in the argument that each extract imposes conditions on hospitality toward the poor and

excludes them as implied audiences. I conclude that the symmetry found in the conditional forms of hospitality and dialogic framing of implied audiences across each discourse confirms the validity of the claim. In the process of analysis, I examine the unique qualities of each example, while also illustrating how each one can be seen as an extension of the others.

Polemics against officials, police, and developers

Exclusion of the poor from the implied audience has never been ethically or politically problematic for mainstream journalism, as it has long been embedded in the normative postulate that news stories should be addressed to the interest of the majority readership (Retief, 2002; Ward, 2006). Traditionally, the first responsibility of the journalist, and of news editors, is to examine and judge the newsworthiness of the story for this marketable audience. This postulate is so basic to the industry that it raises the question of whether journalism itself is a monologic rather than dialogic form of address. Does the news industry systematically overlook how marginalized groups become subjects of news reports and yet keep them strikingly distant from the audience journalists imagine they are addressing?

Although the latter question is in part answered in the following discussion, any complete response is beyond the scope of the present paper. The former question can be answered more directly. Whereas newspapers do appear to be monologic, in the sense that their empirical audiences are not engaged in any direct question-and-answer exchange (with the exception of select letters to the editor), the fact that journalists anticipate a response from an imagined, but not fictional, audience suggests a dialogic relationship. The purpose of dialogic frame analysis, as defined so far, is exemplary rather than representative. Each of the following examples referring to poverty in Montréal is framed through a polemical response to the external “expert” who speaks in the official voice of the politician, police authority, or developer. Polemics are made in an ironic doubling mode giving two sets of meaning to each utterance. The doubling mode uses sarcasm and ridicule to cast a knowing sideward glance toward the implied audience.

The first example of this is the following quote from *Gazette* journalist Bill Brownstein, who ridicules a downtown borough councillor from Ville Marie for proposing to increase a tax on buskers by more than 800%:

Surely the councilors have more pressing matters to contend with in the downtown borough like littered sidewalks and busted recycling receptacles and the homeless. . . . Seems the borough mayor feels Place Jacques Cartier gets too jammed. Hello! Isn't it a good thing to have people pack the place in the summer? (Brownstein, 2005, p. D1)

Alexander Popovic from *La Presse* challenges the arrogance of the police, who announce a new “*plan d'action*” against the homeless:

But why the homeless? What have they done? Have they become a new danger to public security? To national security? No. The mortal sin of the homeless is that they exist and give the city and the neighbourhood a bad image. Police tell us citizens no longer want to see them. So the police give themselves the noble mandate to clear the homeless out and provide

a more agreeable urban aesthetics for the city. Should we applaud them . . . or vomit on them. . . ? A society that encourages or tolerates the persecution of the homeless by the police is not civilized or guided by humanist values. No, it is a society of neglect, founded in egocentric values of the maximum accumulation of everyone for themselves. (Popovic, 2005, p. A11)

Two other sample articles in *La Presse* are not by journalists, but by regular commentators: an opinion from Marcel Sevigny, an activist and former municipal councillor, and another by Rima Elkouri ridicule the coalition of developers that promotes a version of commercial citizenship that would ostensibly revitalize a run-down neighbourhood. The coalition's plan (supported by a promise of investment from Loto-Québec and Cirque du Soleil) is to move a casino from its out-of-the-way location on Île Notre Dame on the Saint Lawrence seaway to the historically working-poor neighbourhood of Pointe-Saint-Charles, situated just south of the downtown area. Sevigny recalls that the casino was put out of the way in the first place in order to protect communities from risks associated with gambling. Loto-Québec includes the casino as part of a plan for a massive shopping centre. Sevigny writes:

What a great societal project! Not only would the casino come and empty the pockets of the community's new gamblers from the Point and other Montréalers, but [Loto-Québec] also proposes a wasteful anti-ecological development organized around the use of automobiles . . . at the same time the City of Montréal has just announced its strategic plan for sustainable development (Sevigny, 2005, p. A23).

Rima Elkouri is also pointedly sarcastic about the plan to move the casino into the Point area but is much more ironic in her utterance:

Far be it from me to not celebrate or to turn my back on international development for Montréal, or to turn my nose up to the hordes of tourists who will descend on the futuristic entertainment complex costing 1.2 billion dollars.

Far be it from me to spit on the 6450 jobs. . . .

How could I possibly doubt the genius of Cirque du Soleil? Far be it from me to ever question its capacity to get Montréal to prosper like no other city. (Elkouri, 2005, p. A5)

The sarcasm in these polemical rants lends the voices a doubled and contradictory quality through both internal (direct address to someone within the article) and external implied audiences. The external implied audience takes the same form in each example, even though the journalists and commentators are talking about different issues. Each of the examples charges that the poor and homeless are victims of political and economic incompetence, greed, or plain stupidity. Charging buskers an outrageous tax, using the police to eliminate the homeless, and moving the city's only casino into a poor neighbourhood are ultimate violations of the common good. Each of the rants claims superior reasoning through this ultimate argument about the common good as if to speak in the name

of the least well-off. Each author directs the polemic against a single internal addressee; at the same time, they all pretend they are in some way inadequate judges of their adversaries. The internal sarcastic reversal of utterances distorts literal meanings for the external implied audience: when Sevigny writes “What a great societal project,” he means that moving the casino is the worst possible plan for the neighbourhood. When Elkouri exclaims “How could I possibly doubt the genius of Cirque du Soleil?” she means that Cirque is acting out of self-interest, which counters its legendary status as an international entertainment enterprise with strong community consciousness. When Popovic asks why the police target the homeless, he is ironically reversing the question into a charge against the police.

Are these kinds of polemics good examples of advocacy for unconditional hospitality toward the poor? In each of the above examples, the rights of the poor are defended, and yet in each case, the references to the poor are of secondary importance compared with the references to agencies that claim to work for the common good and are the objects of attack. Although the direct address of a moral and emotional outrage toward the interior audience in these examples appears to define an unconditional hospitality toward the poor, note that the audience addressed within the text, or the person or institution toward whom the outrage is directed, is not the poor. This seems banal and without consequence at first glance. After all, when we speak sarcastically and angrily to someone about our support for someone else they are harming, we are not addressing the individual being harmed, but rather the individual to whom we speak. But the sideward glance that the polemic mode generates is not toward the poor, but toward a different implied audience. The poor are in fact used in each of these examples as moral referents in a manner that frames their “otherness,” an “otherness” implied in the assumed moral condition of hospitality.

Indirect talk: Journalistic accounts of the poor reporting on the poor

Journalistic transgressions such as bias, slander, plagiarism, and conflicts of interest are most often governed in-house, but they can erupt occasionally into public issues when submitted as complaints to local press councils. More embedded constitutional rights legitimate everyday issues such as journalists’ access to information, freedom of expression, and protection of sources (Russell, 2006). Neither press councils nor codes of conduct that govern journalistic ethics take into consideration the problem of the gap between the subject being reported on and the audiences to whom the reports are addressed. In this section, I address examples of how this gap permits a second type of conditional hospitality by dialogically framing indirect criticisms of poverty without drawing attention to any ethical violation or legal sanction.

No direct negative images of or polemics against poverty and homelessness are found within the articles examined from 2005. Two kinds of negative images of the poor, however, are derived indirectly: one by arguing for the gentrification of neighbourhoods to eliminate poverty, and the other through the more common theme of comparing the “authentic” homeless with the “inauthentic” homeless. In both cases, journalists indirectly critique poverty and the poor.

A good example of an indirect negative image of poverty as a value is the critique by *Le Devoir's* Stephan Baillargeon of government inertia regarding the plan to develop the "Quartier du spectacle" (Arts Quarter) located in the heart of Montréal's festival life. Note that the point in this example is not simply to illustrate a polemic against official agents (as in the last section), but also to probe an indirect discourse that dismisses poverty outright as a value. Framed through the citation of the specialist Jacques Primeau, the vice-president of the *Partenariat du Quartier des Spectacles* is quoted as saying: "[T]he entrance to the sector is especially pitiful. Bleury Street is still scarred by vacant lots with dilapidated buildings housing homeless squatters. This is a very troubling situation for a great city like Montréal" (Baillargeon, 2005, p. B2). Primeau suggests that the ideal development for the neighbourhood would resemble the International Quarter plan for Old Montréal, which created *Le Palais de Congrès*, *La Caisse de Dépôt*, and the offices of International Civil Aviation Association from vacant lots and abandoned buildings. "These places have become prestigious addresses in Montréal," says Baillargeon. No fewer than 17 prizes have been awarded for the development. The general director of the project states: "Planning a city is a great cultural gesture, and vice versa. It is a fundamental choice to propose a negative or positive plan, and when people came into the no-man's land of vacant lots and abandoned buildings that were there before it presented the negative image of poverty" (Baillargeon, 2005, p. B2).

A second image of poverty as a negative value can be seen in examples in which the poor are reported to have negative images of other poor people, especially the poor's sense of poor people from other cities, regions, and generations. Montréal is something of a magnet for migrant homeless youth from across Québec, the rest of Canada, and the United States, who drop into the city during the summer festival season. According to Hugo Meunier, some estimates put the influx of people sleeping outdoors on any given night during this period at up to 40,000 extra people, whereas the local homeless population ranges between 20,000 and 30,000. Some leave jobs and home to party in the city for a while and live in the streets before returning back to their lives. According to Meunier, "[T]he locals call them 'shrimps.'" They are temporary homeless who come in and make good money off the street then leave. André, a local for the last eight years, is quoted as saying, "[I]t really pisses me off when I see those imbeciles from Ontario, Manitoba, and Vancouver do their squeegee number." André claims, "[T]he visitors are mainly junkies and see us locals as bums, so we have to be aggressive sometimes just to protect our space. The streets have really changed since the squeegees invaded us" (Meunier, 2005, p. A2).

The sense of authentic street value has its own version in the straight world, as can be seen in stories from *The Gazette*. Ann Sutherland writes on the front page about an out-of-town visitor who had his possessions stolen from his car, including his much-valued inline skates. He noticed a homeless shelter nearby and went in to ask the nun at the desk for help and posted a reward. Apparently the skates and most of his possessions appeared at the front desk anonymously a little while later, demonstrating an unexpected moral code between the shelter and the street (Sutherland, 2005, p. A1).

Another cover story on the theme of codes of honour is about an apparently wealthy Toronto panhandler (a certain Ms. Hebert) selling happy-face stickers in Montréal streets. According to journalist Catherine Solyom, the woman was previously reported to have been seen selling stickers in front of the Eaton Centre in Toronto and to have commuted from Hamilton to Toronto in a Volkswagen Jetta. The story illustrates the value of “real street people” versus ordinary thieves masquerading as poor in order to profit. “I don’t make much money,” says Hebert, “and I’m just one person trying to live.” She goes on to say that she budgets to make about \$75 a day—which fluctuates according to the weather. “She paid \$300 in taxes last year, she says proudly. And she insists she is always honest with potential benefactors about what the money is for: to feed and clothe her two children. Never mind one of her two children is twenty-five years old and apparently living on her own in Toronto” (Solyom, 2005, p. A1).

Distinguishing “real” poor and homeless from “pretend” poor and homeless frames a conditional hospitality in two ways. First, it confirms a shared-value judgment that fraud carried out in the name of the poor is among the lowest transgressions. The fake panhandler and squeegee punks are the most fraudulent and the least valued, respectively. The poor in the shelter are “authentic” and deserve a measure of forgiveness for sharing a moral reference, as seen in the return of the stolen goods through the medium of the nun. The seemingly wealthy panhandler from Toronto has no credibility and is universally condemned. The seasoned regulars on the street are given a significant edge in value over the ephemeral suburban or out-of-town street youth, who are seen as less credible.

The doubling of discourse carries a scale of values that create a conditional hospitality toward the poor and homeless. In the case of the regular “down and out,” the otherness of the poor is secured in the internal understanding offered them through the press, while the articles’ implied audience is encouraged to reject a second group of “others” as inauthentic and as having violated the conditions set for hospitality. The second group of outsiders does not take responsibility for their disregard of the territory of the city’s “authentic poor.” Through their actions, the outsiders degrade the common good and transgress against the existing conditions for hospitality.

Direct talk in the press: “The poorest of the poor”

The World Bank’s definition of “extreme poverty” is limited to the more than 20% of the global population with incomes of less than \$1.00 a day, while “moderate poverty” includes another 20% of the world’s population, who live with less than \$2.00 a day (Davis, 2006; Sachs, 2005). Neither group is reached easily by social assistance, unlike the relative poor who earn incomes below an established poverty line in an industrialized country. Given these definitions, it may not be appropriate to calculate either extreme or moderate poverty for the poor who reportedly live in similar conditions in Montréal, but may also have access to First World social services, food, and shelter. Nonetheless, images of “the poorest of the poor” in the city are reported and framed in storytelling by journalists.

How did the press define the poorest of the poor in Montréal in 2005? When journalists refer to macro aggregate data to legitimate reports, the stories frame

questions about policy in a politics of naming poverty through social facts. Who are the poor? How have they been counted and by whom? How many people are homeless? Why is poverty persistent? How can poverty be eradicated? What are the global causes? How are the homeless mistreated? Emotional-volitional tones and moral terms of hospitality frame implied audiences in these articles by the shock effect of the data itself. Each article invites its implied audience to question just how prevalent poverty has become. For example, one article in this genre claims that Montréal had 10% unemployment, among the highest levels in Canada (Ste Pierre, 2005, p. A6), in 2005. In the Province of Québec, 40% of salaries were less than \$20,000, which hovers around the official definition of poverty levels for families of four in Canadian society. In the same year, it was reported that 340,000 people received social assistance, or “*Bien-être social*” (Courchesne, 2005, p. A6). Articles report on estimates of hundreds of thousands of meals served to the poor in the city over the year (Block, 2005, A8; Petits frères des pauvres, 2005, p. ACTUEL 6) and often debate the relative size of the homeless population (Sutherland, 2005, p. A11). Between 1994 and 2004, the homeless accounted for more than 90% of charges by police for public-nuisance misdemeanours. We are told that the data for 2004 represents a fourfold increase in infractions, with an average fine ranging from \$102 to \$371 if prison time is served (Cauchy, 2005, p. A1).

When newspapers frame their address about the poorest of the poor to their implied audience through a more ethnographic reference to authority, the emotional and moral tones are derived from local voices and immediate contexts, as well as from more individual cases. Dialogic frames written in ethnographic style include official and non-official voices that talk about the poor or homeless. Some stories frame poverty as voiced by the poor themselves. When voices of the poor are portrayed, there is almost always an attempt to depict their deplorable conditions and to put pressure on government against negligence such as underfunding for social housing or shelters.

Four articles out of the 112 most relevant to the analysis address their implied audiences by framing ethnographic images of “the most poor” in Montréal in 2005. The purpose of presenting these examples is to pinpoint the image author’s frame in their dialogue with implied audiences and to illustrate how the poor themselves are included or excluded from the address. *La Presse* reports on a day in the life of around 20 homeless people who continue to sleep outdoors on the coldest day of the year, at -34 degrees Celsius. Alain, who is 50 and has AIDS, has lived on the street for 14 years. He lost his will to survive in the shelters and says, “I am like a dog, and I always want to be outside.” Two young men, Simon and Donald, avoid shelters because their pet dogs are not allowed. As Simon says, “I live in the street to keep my future open. In a house you only see your future through a window” (Touzin, 2005, p. A8).

Three other highly compelling reports by Brian Myles for *Le Devoir* are about an estimated 350 homeless Aboriginals (Myles, 2005, p. A1; Sansfaçon, 2005, p. A6) who are presented to the anticipated reader as “the poorest of the poor in Montréal” (Myles, 2005, p. A1; Myles, 2005, p. A4). Myles reports on the perspective of an amateur anthropologist, Emmanuel Morin, who first met Inuit

street people while still a student and developed a lifelong compassionate relationship with them as an activist and social worker. We are told First Nations males have no shelter or treatment centre of their own in Montréal, and there is one small shelter for females—even though more than 10,000 First Nations people live in the city. We learn that Aboriginals prefer not to go to shelters run by Whites due to their experience of racism. Even if they did want to live at the shelters, many would not be eligible, as the facilities require constant sobriety. As a result, they sleep outside, and as Morin says,

[T]he violence is there, the alcohol is there. And when it explodes it really explodes. . . . It is so disappointing, Morin says, that whites have written off the Inuit who are living in the harshest of third world conditions. Sometimes it gives me the shivers, says Morin, these are the most messed up people you can find. They are at the bottom of the bottom and live in the hour not the everyday. (Myles, 2005, A4)

Myles is among a minority of journalists who have attempted (with limited success) interviews with Aboriginal homeless in an effort to portray them in their own voice. He explains that there are multiple reasons Natives become homeless in the city. Causes are rooted in “a corrosive cocktail of racism, bureaucracy and ignorance. For the poor it is difficult to find housing. For a poor aboriginal it is almost impossible” (Myles, 2005, p. A1). While the Inuit constitute 10% of the Native population in Montréal, “they account for 43% of the aboriginal homeless in the City.” He situates the high rate of homelessness for Inuit in the context of their migration from Nunavut, where “the suicide rate is six times higher than the Canadian average . . . and where 40% of Inuit children are victims of sexual assault. Inuit are drawn to the city because of phenomenal demographic growth while employment opportunities remain non existent.” Violence, abuse, and exclusion increase as Inuit pour into the city. “Through a cruel stroke of destiny the Inuit who live in the street live in the violence they thought they were free from . . . a violence that is especially brutal on women” (Myles, 2005, p. A1).

In the first article of the series, Myles tells the story of a group of Aboriginals living in Montréal. It is Valentine’s Day. We are first introduced to Hank, who is waiting for a band of Natives from the West to come and “take revenge” on the Whites, and for a young Inuit woman who is looking for her friend Sebastian to go to a party. Hank eats sandwiches distributed by the *Ka’wahse* (Mohawk for “where are you going?”) Street Patrol in Atwater Park next to the Metro. Later they both try to find a place to sleep for Annie, a friend who is always drunk. All of them are nervous that Greg is going to come. Greg is a Métis “that the Inuits instinctively mistrust,” Myles tells us, and they are right! “Greg just served eight years in prison for having raped a seventeen-year-old girl in front of her mother, who was tied-up. . . . This evening, fortunately, Greg is not there” (Myles, 2005, p. A1).

It is important to recall that the dialogue framed in these articles is not a simple conversation between the journalist and actual readers, but a more implicit exchange that takes place in the anticipation of an audience’s imagined interest in the subject. Journalists frame their texts to meet that anticipation, and in the process, they look to describe some element of the maximum level of poverty in the city. The triangular relationship is framed at the substantive level through

emotional expressions that arise from voices in the streets. These voices are situated against the procedural aligning of background facts on circumstances in the North and racism in the South that lend legitimacy to the plea for a much greater hospitality, with fewer conditions. Descriptions of having AIDS and living almost entirely outside in the dead of winter, or of coming from Northern poverty and descending even further into its degradation in a Southern city, also suppose that the implied audience has no immediate experience of this kind of poverty.

These mainly secondary ethnographic reports shine a powerful light of hospitality and dignity on the most poor through contextual analyses. In some cases, they establish moving emotional-volitional tones through direct quotes from people on the street and from the best expert on the street (in the case of the ethnographer). The poorest of the poor in Montréal are presented as “others” who also have basic rights to shelter, food, warmth, and medical care. Does this mean that these reports offer a model for an unconditional journalistic hospitality toward the poor?

In this type of dialogic frame, the journalists are making claims for the rights of these “others,” but the poorest of the poor are also among the furthest away from the implied audiences of *Le Devoir* or *La Presse*. On the one hand, this distance suggests that poverty can only be made known through reference to an external or expert authority. Even the most direct ethnographic descriptions or quotes rely on sociological facts to provide context and expand the sense of hospitality for the implied audience. On the other hand, if the truth about poverty resides within the actual event of poverty, does not even the most empathetic descriptive journalism compromise unconditional hospitality because it looks to understand poverty as a symptom of some other unifying structure or relationship, such as class, ethnicity, or racism? In other words, does naming the cause of poverty establish conditional hospitality even when the discourse defends the unconditional right of the poor to have rights?

Conclusion

The articles exhibiting the strong themes discussed in this paper addressed their implied audiences either by appealing for greater hospitality for the poorest of the poor, by drawing attention to the conditions of authenticity that should be placed on any hospitality offered toward the poor, or by critiquing institutions that should take better care of the excluded. Comparisons of the three themes reveal several striking symmetries in conditional hospitality offered toward the poor and the poor’s separation from the implied audience: 1) to lesser or greater extents, each example pleads for the rights of the poor, while at the same time separating the implied audience from the poor through frames of address; 2) each strong theme argues against official institutions and at the same time frames the poor as moral referents across a scale of values expressed by a range of emotional-volitional tones; and 3) each, at some point, situates a scale of values that places conditions that defines those who are the authentic or legitimate poor (or the poorest of the poor) against those who are not. The tie between the themes suggests that the implied audience is not constructed from a common class or category of tastes shared among the empirical audience, but rather from an imagined, though not fictional, audience implied by the institution of news reporting itself.

I began the dialogic frame analysis by introducing the internal and external triangular relationship between the author, the referent of the report, and the implied audience. The first examples were double-voiced polemics against organizations that support or should better support the poor, and I discussed how they used accentuated moral terms and irony to plead for a reduction of conditions placed on hospitality toward the poor. Unlike the articles from the ethnographic genre, the polemics do not report the voices of the poor themselves. At the same time, the comparison provides another example of ways in which the implied audience is framed by their difference from the poor. The poor themselves are framed in each discourse as a moral referent used to debate official institutions or the attitudes of officials. While the context of the theme is an image of poverty, the polemic is framed as a refusal of the system.

The second strong theme sets out a series of conditions placed on hospitality toward the poor that arise from the distinction between authentic and inauthentic poverty. In these articles, a scale of values imposes conditions through indirect discourse against the poor, reported through arguments in favour of gentrification or through interviews with poor people who criticize other poor people. Each discourse distinguishes the poor from the implied audience through the moral terms of authenticity.

In defining the poorest of the poor at the macro level, journalistic discussion is framed in the political or moral terms of naming poverty. In the ethnographic narrative, the implied audience for the newspaper is framed by the emotional-volitional tones drawn from the poor, who are quoted directly and then placed into the more macro context of naming poverty. Only four articles could be identified that defined the poorest of the poor in the city through this framing. Together these articles make a strong claim for the rights of this group of the poor, but they also distinguish the implied audience sharply from one with any direct experience of this level of poverty.

Recall the introduction to the paper and the conceptual definition of hospitality as the tension between universal justice and domestic law. For Derrida (2002), this is why hospitality contains an opposite element of hostility. He coins the term "hostipality" to capture the contradictory meaning between unconditional hospitality and the conditional requirements that the host expects from the "other." The press analysis above illustrates how this contradictory sense operates in mainstream media, where different symbolic levels of hospitality toward the poor are offered while juxtaposed against their exclusion as implied audiences of the stories. Each section of analysis depicted the journalist or commentator addressing an implied audience that is hospitable toward the poor, but that also imposes or assumes conditions in exchange. The juxtaposition of the stories that address poverty in newspapers in Montréal also illustrates the unique qualities of each discourse, as well as the way in which each can be seen to exclude the poor as the generally implied audience of the discourse. Out of the tension between justice and the law, the media reproduce the paradox in which media claim the rights of the poor through direct or indirect discussion about "have-not" citizens with their implied "have" audiences, all the while excluding the "have-nots" as audiences. A consequence of this paradox is that our understanding of poverty is diminished

and remains conditional, even when the press inspires us with the most impassioned pleas for greater hospitality and refuge for the least well off.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the Canada–U.S. Fulbright Visiting Chair program and especially to the many welcoming colleagues and students from the Department of Journalism at New York University, where I was able to conduct the research for this article. Also thanks to Yon Hsu, Dominique Legros, Kim Sawchuk and Jane Gabriels for their many helpful comments and criticisms of this and several previous drafts. All translations from the French-language newspapers in this article are mine.

Note

1. This is the first article in a series on how journalism frames dialogue on different forms of social and cultural exclusion. See also Nielsen (in press).

References

- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. (2006). *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a world of strangers*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Baillargeon, Stéphane (2005, October 21). Le Quartier des spectacles critique l'inaction des gouvernements. *Le Devoir*, p. B2.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. (1981). *The dialogic imagination* (Caryl Emerson, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (Caryl Emerson, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bateson, Gregory. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind: Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology*. San Francisco, CA: Chandler Publishing.
- Block, Irwin (2005, November 24). Quebec food bank use second-highest in Canada: Province has anti-poverty law; 50% increase in number of working people needing help, Harvest Montreal says, *The Gazette*, p. A8.
- Bonnafous, Simone. (1991). *L'immigration prise aux mots: Les immigrés dans la presse au tournant des années 80*. Paris, France: Éditions Kimé.
- Brownstein, Bill (2005, May 11). Philistines would dim music in the streets. *The Gazette*, p. D1.
- Butler, Judith. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cauchy, Clairandrée (2005, May 4). Contraventions et prison pour les itinérants, *Le Devoir*, p. A1.
- Cohen, Hermann. (1972). *Religion of reason: Out of the sources of Judaism* (Simon Kaplan, Trans.). New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing.
- Courchesne, Michelle. (2005, December 14). Lutter contre la pauvreté. *Le Devoir*, p. A6.
- D'Angelo, Paul. (2002). News framing as a multiparadigmatic research program: A response to Entman. *Journal of Communication*, 52(4), 870-888.
- Davis, Mike. (2006). *Planet of slums*. London, UK: Verso.
- Dean, Mitchell. (1991). *The constitution of poverty: Toward a genealogy of liberal governance*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Derrida, Jacques. (2001). *On cosmopolitanism and forgiveness*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Derrida, Jacques. (2002). *Acts of religion* (G. Anidjar, Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Elkouri, Rima. (2005, June 23). Le cadeau de Grec. *La Presse*, p. A5.

- Entman, Robert. (2004). *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Entman, Robert. (2005). The nature and sources of news. In G. Overholser & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The press* (pp. 48-65). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gans, Herbert. (1995). *The war against the poor: The underclass and antipoverty policy*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Goffman, Erving. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Henry, Frances. (2006). Understanding racist discourse in the media through critical discourse analysis. In J.-A. Lee & J. Lutz (Eds.), *Situating race and racism in time, space, and theory*, pp. 161-178. Montréal, QC: McGill-Queens University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. (1983). *Perpetual peace and other essays* (Ted Humphrey, Trans.). Cambridge MA: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Meunier, Hugo. (2005, July 18). Le festival de la "crevette." *La Presse*, p. A2.
- Myles, Brian. (2005, February 26). Le Tiers-Monde au bout de la rue, *Le Devoir*, p. A1.
- Myles, Brian. (2005, February 28). Les autochtones laissés à eux-mêmes, *Le Devoir*, p. A1.
- Myles, Brian. (2005, February 28). Un Blanc parmi les Inuits, *Le Devoir*, p. A4.
- Nielsen, Greg M. (in press). Framing dialogue on immigration in the New York Times. *Aether: The Journal of Media Geography*. URL: <http://geogdata.csun.edu/~aether>.
- Petits frères des pauvres. (2005, March 29). *La Presse*, p. ACTUEL 6.
- Popovic, Alexandre. (2005, June 5). Pourquoi les sans-abri? *La Presse*, p. A11.
- Retief, Johan. (2002). *Media ethics: An introduction to responsible journalism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Russell, Nick. (2006). *Morals and the media: Ethics in Canadian journalism*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Sachs, Jeffrey. (2005). *The end of poverty: Economic possibilities in our time*. New York, NY: Penguin.
- Sansfaçon, Jean-Robert. (2005, March 1). Une grande détresse, *Le Devoir*, p. A6.
- Santa Ana, Otto. (2002). *Brown tide rising: Metaphors of Latinos in contemporary public discourse*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Sevigny, Marcel. (2005, June 16). NON: Ce serait une "aubaine" pour le crime organisé. *La Presse*, p. A23.
- Solyom, Catherine. (2005, January 22). Sticker Lady hits streets of Montreal: Ontario Panhandler has nice home, car. *The Gazette*, p. A1.
- St Pierre, Nicolas. (2005, October 9). Elections a Montreal. *La Presse*, p. A6.
- Sutherland, Anne. (2005, September 12). Stolen skates returned-too late. *The Gazette*, p. A1.
- Sutherland, Anne. (2005, October 20). First Stop targets vulnerable runaways: Booth at bus station offers advice, contacts, *The Gazette*, p. A11.
- Touzin, Caroline. (2005, January 19). Sans abri, la journée la plus froide depuis le début de l'année, *La Presse*, p. A8.
- Tuchman, Gaye. (1978). *Making the news*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Ward, Stephan. (2006). *The invention of journalism ethics: The path to objectivity and beyond*. Montréal, QC: McGill-Queens University Press.

