

BIAS AND OBJECTIVITY IN THE COLD WAR REPORTING
OF MARGUERITE HIGGINS

By

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by

Michele Kathleen Jones

This thesis is dedicated to Madison and Dylan Allmon, that they will learn from both the successes and mistakes of great women in history, and in memory of Clara Brewer Compton, who was a great woman in my history.

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Though only one name graces the title page, no thesis is written alone. This one was no different.

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The purpose of this study is to examine the life and work of journalist Marguerite Higgins, foreign correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* and *Newsday* from 1944 to 1966, and to determine if she allowed her personal opposition to Communism to influence her reporting during the Cold War. Specifically, this study discusses Higgins' writing from Poland between December 1946 and February 1947, during the first national elections in that country after World War II.

In college and her early career, Higgins had left-leaning political beliefs. She was involved in campus activism while a student at the University of California at Berkeley and married a member of the Communist Party while a young reporter on the city desk of the *Herald Tribune*. In the early years of the Cold War, however, her views shifted and by the time she covered the Korean War, she was a staunch anti-Communist.

Higgins' reporting from Poland did not exhibit a consistent bias against Communism; however her style was not objective. Reports often lacked proper source

attribution and sometimes included personal opinions, interpretations, and predictions. Higgins sometimes sensationalized stories and provided unbalanced accounts of multi-sided issues. Additionally, she had two agendas in her writing: To convey to the American people the magnitude of the abuses committed by the dominant political parties against those who opposed them during the Polish election period and to portray Poland as a hopeful nation, effectively recovering from World War II.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THESIS

Marguerite Higgins was the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for foreign correspondence, but her significance as a reporter goes beyond the role of a “first woman.” While covering the Korean War, Higgins earned the respect of both her fellow reporters and the military officials who tried to keep her off the front lines. She competed fiercely for stories and refused to fill the traditional role of female journalists.

When the Army ordered all female reporters out of Korea, Higgins and her paper, the *New York Herald Tribune*, talked General Douglas MacArthur into allowing her to return. An Army officer once told fellow reporter Keyes Beech that the front line was no place for women. Beech agreed, but added that it was all right for Higgins (Beech, 1954).

As an international correspondent from 1945 to 1966, covering the end of World War II in Europe, the fall of Eastern Europe to Communism, the Korean War and the early years of the conflict in Vietnam, Higgins had a unique and well-informed perspective on the Cold War. Though she exhibited left-leaning tendencies while attending the University of California at Berkeley and married a member of the Communist Party, she became a staunch anti-Communist in later years.

This thesis examines Higgins’ views of Communism as exhibited in her writing.

Statement of Problem

When reporting in an era of high tension between two nations, such as in the Cold War, can an American correspondent report and write without personal or national bias? This broad question is the basis of an investigation into Marguerite Higgins’ writing.

This study will examine and analyze the writing of Marguerite Higgins to determine if any bias for or against Communism is evident in her work as a foreign correspondent. The study is limited to examining Marguerite Higgins' work covering Poland in late 1946 and early 1947.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because Marguerite Higgins is an important person in journalism history. She broke barriers for women and reported some of the most important stories of the 20th century. Her life, as well as her work, was complex and colorful. Most discussions of Higgins' life and work focus on her role as a woman in a male-dominated industry; however many other aspects are important and worthy of discussion. For example, Higgins was a fierce competitor and found rivals at each of her assignments. The Marguerite Higgins–Homer Bigart feud in Korea, in which Higgins and Bigart battled to scoop each other for the same paper, and the animosity between Higgins and reporter David Halberstam in Vietnam, which was fueled by ideological differences and generational rivalry, are significant to journalism history in conjunction with the theme of journalistic competition. Higgins' role as a celebrity, stemming from her expulsion from Korea and her fight to return, and how it related to her job as a reporter is another area for possible research. Most importantly, however, Higgins' ethical practices, for example, her product endorsements and colleagues' claims that she stole stories, frequently came under fire and further research into them would add important information to the body of knowledge about her and her place in journalism.

This study is original because it will examine Higgins' political views and the possibility of an agenda or bias in her writing.

Existing Literature

Several theses and dissertations have been written about Marguerite Higgins. Lisa D. Johnson (1983) of East Texas State University wrote *No Place for a Woman: A Biographical Study of War Correspondent Marguerite Higgins*. The work emphasized the problems she encountered as a woman in the field of war correspondence.

Kathleen Kearney (Lewis) Keeshen (1973, 1983) of the University of Maryland wrote a master's thesis and dissertation, both biographical, about Marguerite Higgins. The dissertation takes the angle of examining Higgins' contribution to American journalism. She discusses Higgins' role as a groundbreaker for women in the profession and writes about her lengthy career and the aspects of Higgins' personality, such as her willingness to take risks and her social skills, which helped her succeed. Keeshen emphasizes Higgins' refusal to fulfill stereotypes of women in journalism at the time and her ability to compete and thrive in the profession at the same level as her male colleagues.

Kim Bryce Landon of Syracuse University wrote the thesis *War Correspondent Marguerite Higgins: Conflict as Career* (1985), which focused on conflicts in Higgins' personal and professional life as a manifestation of personal insecurity. She discusses her tumultuous childhood home life, the Higgins-Bigart feud in Korea and other professional competitions, and her fierce desire to be in the midst of action and conflict as a war correspondent. Landon asserts that Higgins maintained a personal insecurity throughout her life that led her to be aggressive and competitive in her career.

Mary M. Cronin (1990), a doctoral student at the time at Michigan State University, presented a paper to the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, entitled "An Analysis of a Wartime Agenda:

The Korean War Reporting of Marguerite Higgins.” The paper asserts that Higgins had a three-part agenda in her reports from Korea. Cronin shows that Higgins wanted to communicate the problems of sending poorly trained troops to war, paint a vivid picture of the conflict, and show that Communism must be defeated by the United States. The author determined that Higgins did not allow her personal views to influence her reporting and that she sent objective communications from the front.

Numerous books about war reporting discuss Higgins’ life and work. Among them, *Once upon a Distant War* (1995), William Prochnau’s book about war reporting in Vietnam, includes a chapter titled “Maggie and the Rover Boys.” The chapter discusses Higgins’ work in the early 1960s, but mainly focuses on her reporting about the government of South Vietnam and the bitter feelings between her and David Halberstam and other younger members of the press corps in Vietnam who opposed her views.

Schilpp and Murphy wrote *Great Women of the Press* (1983), which includes a biographical chapter about Higgins. Julia Edwards’ *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents* (1988) includes the chapter “The Outrageous Marguerite Higgins.” Edwards was a classmate of Higgins at Columbia University from 1941 to 1942 and presents a rather negative account of her life.

An official biography of Marguerite Higgins was published in the general press in 1988. Antoinette May wrote *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, which incorporated numerous interviews with Higgins’ friends, family and associates. The book is sometimes overly flattering to Higgins, but also includes a fair discussion of her controversial reporting tactics and personal relationships.

Higgins herself published an autobiography in 1955 titled *News is a Singular Thing*. Three other works by her will provide important insights for this study: *War in Korea* (1951), *Red Plush and Black Bread* (1955), and *Our Vietnam Nightmare* (1965). Syracuse University also has a collection of Higgins' personal papers, photos, and mementos. Additionally, Higgins' colleague from Korea, Keyes Beech, included a chapter in his own memoirs about her.

Overview of Thesis

The thesis is separated into five chapters, including introduction and conclusion. Chapter 2 is a biography of Marguerite Higgins, as insight into and knowledge of her personal and professional life is integral to analyzing her writing for bias and objectivity. Themes in the chapter include challenges she faced as a female correspondent and conflicts in her personal life and with other correspondents, as well as her political views, which evolved from socialist leaning to strong anti-Communist.

Chapter 3 reviews literature concerning objectivity in reporting. It covers definitions of objectivity and bias, the historical evolution of the concept in the journalism profession and the debate that surrounds the idea of objectivity in terms of its usefulness and attainability. The chapter also looks at literature involving objectivity and bias in international reporting and provides a brief assessment of how objectivity, bias, and balance were addressed in journalism textbooks and by journalists of Marguerite Higgins' time.

Chapter 4 is the analysis of Marguerite Higgins' reporting from Poland. Any bias in her writing will be discussed. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis.

Method

Materials for this thesis were obtained in a variety of ways and several problems arose in obtaining them. The Marguerite Higgins Collection at Syracuse University contains a wealth of information concerning Higgins' life and work. The materials include book drafts, personal and business letters, photos, Higgins' Pulitzer Prize and other newspaper awards, as well as a variety of other personal mementos. Unfortunately, during the time this thesis was completed, the library closed the collection for reorganization and preservation purposes.

Thus, secondary sources and Higgins' own books and articles make up much of the research for chapter 2. May's *Witness to War* (1983), which includes many interviews with Higgins' friends, family and associates and Higgins' memoirs, *News is a Singular Thing* (1955) were invaluable.

Higgins' writing for the *New York Herald Tribune* comprises the bulk of her work and was necessary for the chapter 4 analysis. Thirty-nine articles from Higgins' time in Poland were obtained from microfilm at Florida State University in Tallahassee, as the University of Florida does not possess the *Herald Tribune* in its collection. Additionally, over two hundred other articles by Higgins were obtained from FSU and provided historical information and perspective on Higgins' career.

In analyzing Higgins' work for objectivity and bias (allowing personal opinions to influence reporting and writing), each article was examined and several forms of bias were sought. Use of "color" language (for example, strong adverbs and adjectives); lack of balance in reporting; lack of source attribution; use of opinion, assumption, and prediction as fact; sensationalizing stories; and distortion were the primary factors that might give evidence of a biased or subjective report. The texts were examined to

determine if any consistent agendas were present and, using the definitions of objectivity discussed in chapter 3, if Higgins generally reported objectively from Poland.

CHAPTER 2 BIOGRAPHY OF MARGUERITE HIGGINS

From her birth in China in 1920, Marguerite Higgins was on her way to a life of adventure, war and tumult. She was the daughter of an adventurer, raised for several years in Asia, and reared on stories of wartime glory and world travels.

Early Life

Marguerite was the daughter of Lawrence (Larry) Daniel Higgins, an Irish-American pilot, and Marguerite de Godard, a descendent of French aristocracy estranged from the wealthy side of the family. The two met in a bomb shelter in France during World War I and moved to Hong Kong after the war. Lawrence worked for a steamship company and daughter Marguerite was born there in 1920 (May, 1983).

When Marguerite was six months old she contracted malaria and was sent to Dalat, a resort in the mountains of Vietnam, to recuperate in a better climate. After her recovery, the family continued to live in China until 1925. There, Marguerite learned Chinese from her nurse and French from her mother. She later forgot most of the Chinese language, but remained fluent in French throughout her life (May, 1983).

That Marguerite's early life was spent in Asia is foretelling, as the most important years of her career would be in that region. It is ironic, however, that she recuperated in Vietnam from a deadly, tropical disease. Years later, she died of a tropical ailment contracted in that country.

The family moved to Oakland, California, in 1925. Larry worked as a stockbroker and the family's glamorous globetrotting ended, other than trips to France to visit family.

They set up residence in a middle class neighborhood called Chabot Court where Marguerite lived the remainder of her childhood.

Family Drama

Several aspects of Marguerite's life on Chabot Court helped shape her independent, determined personality and stood out in her later memories. In her autobiography, *News is a Singular Thing* (1955)(1955a), Marguerite wrote of her "family's tendency to make a crisis" (p. 30) which made them colorful characters on the quiet street of "genteel poverty" (p. 31). She described her father's Irish temper. On one occasion, Larry, clad only in his shorts, chased her down the street and another time threw a golf trophy at her. He missed and the trophy crashed through the house's front window.

Marguerite's mother was known on the block for dramatic episodes of fainting, usually following arguments with Larry. In her autobiography (1955a), Marguerite wrote about her mother:

Mother, being Latin and less inhibited than most of our neighbors, was frequently overcome by her desire for the center of the stage, a position attained by bursts of weeping, bursts of gaiety, flirtations (harmless), a volatile display of Gallic temper, a solo polka in the middle of the room, solo tangos in the middle of the room, landlord-disturbing flamenco stamps in the middle of the room, and occasional fainting fits, to mention a few items. (p. 31)

Marguerite attributed her ability to handle emotional trials in life to her family's dramas. As she became accustomed to her mother's fainting spells, she gained a reputation on the block for being an unaffected, cold child. She said, "To me the emotional crises were less diverting because they happened so often and because I was emotionally involved" (1955a, p. 31).

Social Isolation

Marguerite's time at the Anna Head School, where most of her classmates were wealthy girls from well-known families, was also instrumental in forming her independent spirit. Marguerite attended the school on a scholarship her mother secured by teaching French there. She had to study hard to maintain that scholarship, a diligence she said affected her social skills. She was already less popular at the school due to her family's eccentricities and their relative poverty.

Marguerite's differences made her the object of some childhood teasing. When the neighborhood children discovered she was born in China, they taunted her with the label "Chinaman" (Higgins, 1955a, p. 37).

Though Marguerite found herself on the outside of many social circles in her adolescence, she was not without friends. Several people from her childhood remained in her life throughout, including the organizer of the "Chinaman" taunt, Jean Craig, who served as Marguerite's maid of honor at her first wedding (May, 1983).

College

Marguerite spent four of her most formative years from 1937 to 1945 at the University of California at Berkeley. She began her time there the same way she spent much of her childhood – attempting to fit in, but not completely accepted. The sorority of her choice, Alpha Phi, blackballed her and she settled for a less social one, Gamma Phi Beta (May, 1983).

For awhile, Marguerite was a model sorority girl, hosting parties and attending socials, but she soon tired of the life and turned her attentions to the *Daily Californian*, the student-run newspaper, and campus radicalism (May, 1983).

French professor Haakon Chevalier took Marguerite under his wing, sharing his books and discussing his Communist views with her. He also introduced her to some of his liberal, intellectual friends, including famous muckraking journalist Lincoln Steffens (May, 1983).

Marguerite also met Stanley Moore, a teaching assistant in the philosophy department at Berkeley. Though from a wealthy family, Moore was a Communist. The two were attracted to each other, but no relationship formed at the time. A few years later, in New York, the two were reacquainted and married in November 1942.

While at Berkley, Marguerite had some involvement in the Young Communist League and opposed involvement in the war in Europe. In 1940, she spoke in opposition to the draft at a rally on campus. The crowd was unfriendly and some threw rotten tomatoes (May, 1983).

At the *Daily Californian*, Marguerite earned a reputation for being a bad team player. This reputation of stealing stories and playing “dirty tricks” to obtain stories would continue throughout her career (May, 1983).

In addition to being known as a campus radical and a competitive reporter, Marguerite also set herself apart in college as the object of many men’s attentions and by maintaining a strange appearance. Her roommate, Berdeen Frankel, described Marguerite as “Daisy May – the sloppy appearance, pretty face, long hair falling in waves about her shoulders” (May, 1983, p. 41). Marguerite could sometimes be found wearing mismatched socks or no shoes at all. Her appearance, political views and dating life made her sorority sisters uneasy. She eventually fell out of favor with the group and returned her sorority pin (May, 1983).

Starting Out

Marguerite graduated from Berkeley in 1941 with a degree in letters and science and headed to New York City in August of the same year after working briefly for the *Vallejo Times-Herald* ("Marguerite Higgins dies at 45," 1966). She allowed herself one year to get a job as a newspaper reporter. If she failed, she vowed to return to California and resign herself to the more secure profession of teaching French (Higgins, 1955a). The most positive response she received in her job hunt was from L.L. Engelking of the *New York Herald Tribune* who put her off with a "maybe later"(May, 1983).

At Columbia

In the mean time, Higgins decided to further her education by enrolling in the master's program at Columbia University's School of Journalism. Exhibiting a persistence that she would display many times in her career, Marguerite gained admission to the program four days before classes started. She arrived at Dean Carl Ackerman's office and requested to see him. Through his secretary, she learned that it was impossible to be admitted to the program, as all the spaces open to women were filled (May, 1983). In her autobiography, Higgins said about the situation, "[I]mpossible to a Frenchman merely means something that is just possible if one wants to make a really great effort to achieve it" (Higgins, 1955a, p. 23). She refused to leave until she met with Ackerman personally (May, 1983).

Ackerman sent her to the dean of women who also informed her that admission was improbable. She needed to submit her high school and college records as well as five letters of recommendation from professors, all within the four days before the term began. Then, she would be admitted only if another student dropped out. Through

numerous long-distance phone calls, airmail and telegram, the required materials arrived, a place opened in the program, and Marguerite was accepted (May, 1983).

Marguerite's reputation for fierce competition continued at Columbia. Flora Lewis, a classmate of Marguerite's who went on to become an international correspondent, bureau chief, and columnist for the *New York Times*, told of a time in which the class was given an assignment and Marguerite got to the library first and checked out all the information on the topic. According to May (1983), she said,

It was typical of her, yet I feel that people critical of Marguerite and her so-called dirty tricks forget just how hard it was in those days to be a woman in a man's world Ambition was a dirty word then. Careers were just something you fooled around with until the right man came along. Marguerite didn't know that game. She was earnest and played for keeps. (p. 51)

Another classmate was more critical. Remembering Higgins in her book *Women of the World* (1988), Julia Edwards described her as cold toward other women and said, "Big blue eyes, a high-pitched little girl's voice and sex appeal were part of her arsenal. As a last resort, she used her head" (p. 192).

Other classmates and faculty described Higgins in a combination of negative and positive ways. She was ambitious and competitive and willing to use almost any means to get a story, including blatant flirting. John Tebbel, a faculty member summed up many people's opinions of her: "She was charming but absolutely ruthless, a flawless combination of sex and brains" (May, 1983, p. 52).

Beginning at the *Herald Tribune*

Another student at Columbia worked as the campus stringer for the *New York Herald Tribune*, where Marguerite tried to get a job when she arrived in New York. When the student left the position, he recommended Marguerite for his replacement, but warned her that Engleking, the city editor, was reluctant to hire a woman. Nevertheless,

Marguerite exercised her usual persistence and landed the position (May, 1983). Years later, she would refer to herself as a “war profiteer” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 20) for getting a job because so many male reporters were being drafted into the war.

While working part-time in this position, Marguerite managed to get several exclusive stories, including a coveted interview with Madame Chiang Kai-shek. Shortly after that story and after her graduation from Columbia, Marguerite joined the *Herald-Tribune* full-time to work on the city desk (May, 1983).

Marguerite was known at the *Herald Tribune* as an excellent reporter, but a less than stellar writer. In his history of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Richard Kluger (1986) said Marguerite “was a human vacuum cleaner at sucking up intelligence about any subject she was assigned to,” but that “her only limitation was literacy” (p. 440). According to William Prochnau in his book about Vietnam reporting, *Once Upon a Distant War* (1995), her writing was improved when she dated men like John Watson, a “rewrite man who could turn the telephone book into poetry and was delighted to provide the service for the new young reporter” (p. 337).

During these early years at Columbia and the *Herald Tribune*, Marguerite dated, among other men, Stanley Moore, the radical philosophy student she met at Berkeley. He taught at Harvard at the time and made frequent trips to New York to visit her.

Marguerite wrote home to her parents about Stanley and mentioned his politics:

He is radical and incurably so. We agree on such principles as the best world is one where both Negro and Jew and Rockefeller and Roosevelt have a chance at enough to eat, a chance at assimilating culture and art and happiness or at least a fair share of them – a chance you don’t get when working ten hours a day for \$12 a week. (May, 1983, p. 55)

She married Moore in November 1942 and he was immediately drafted and sent to Europe. The marriage was short-lived, most of it spent apart from each other. While

Moore was gone, Marguerite allegedly maintained relationships with John Watson and other male members of the *Herald Tribune* staff. Prochnau (1995) referred to her string of boyfriends as “ a series of encounters with men whose importance seemed to escalate with her professional needs” (p. 336). Kluger (1986) said, “It all would have been nobody’s business except for one thing: A substantial body of evidence suggests that throughout her working life Maggie Higgins selected most if not all of her bedmates for intensely practical reasons, to add to her power or promote her career” (p. 441).

Marguerite’s primary career ambition was to become a foreign correspondent and she petitioned her editors for an assignment, emphasizing her ability to speak French fluently and her knowledge of German. When she was unsuccessful, she went over the editors’ heads to Helen Rogers Reid, the wife of the owner of the *Herald Tribune* who agreed to give Marguerite an overseas assignment (May, 1983).

In Europe

In August 1944, Marguerite Higgins went to London. She reunited with her husband briefly, but they soon separated and planned to divorce.

Higgins received an assignment in Paris, but was not to cover the war yet. Russell Hill, a fellow correspondent for the *Herald Tribune* informed her that the Paris bureau was short staffed and he would handle all the military stories while she did “everything else” (May, 1983, p. 75). That included stories about France’s role in international affairs (Higgins, 1945j), the conviction of French admiral Jean Pierre Esteva of treason (Higgins, 1945b), and the French economy (Higgins, 1945f). Hill’s coverage of the war from Paris earned him a regular byline on the front page, while Marguerite’s diplomatic stories generally ran inside the paper.

Though France was in near ruins with hunger and unemployment high and fuel and supplies low, the fashion industry was allowed to flourish to keep Paris afloat in the international scene. Marguerite covered the fashion shows for *Mademoiselle* while maintaining her place with the *Herald Tribune* (May, 1983). In addition to writing about fashion, Marguerite told about life in war-scarred Paris and Britain (Higgins, 1945e, 1945i), departing from her usual hard news reporting for the *Tribune* to a feature style aimed at an audience of young American women.

War Correspondent

Marguerite finally visited the war zones at the very end of the conflict, but only by default. A press junket was planned to heavily bombed areas in Germany, but the bureau chief, Geoffrey Parsons, assigned himself to the story. A last-minute problem in the bureau required he stay in Paris and he offered his open seat to Marguerite (May, 1983).

Finally a bona fide war correspondent, Marguerite covered the end of the war from Germany. She wrote of freed prisoners and refugees (Higgins, 1945g), the first publication of *Stars and Stripes* on German soil (Higgins, 1945d), the Allied occupation of German areas and the removal of Nazi officials from administrative posts (Higgins, 1945h).

Marguerite wrote her most important stories from Germany about the liberation of concentration camps. She interviewed prisoners and detailed evidence of the atrocities. Her report from Buchenwald told of the first tour of the facility by civilians of nearby Weimar. American officials forced the Germans to view the piles of dead bodies and the crematoriums that had functioned while the city's people lived nearby. The report was emotional, graphic, and ran on the front page (Higgins, 1945c).

Report from Dachau

Marguerite's brief tenure as a World War II correspondent was highlighted by one particular story about the liberation of Dachau because she and *Stars and Stripes* correspondent Sergeant Peter Furst claimed to have participated in the liberation.

According to her autobiography, when Marguerite and Furst heard that American troops were headed toward Dachau, they were only about 11 kilometers away from the prison. However, Allied forces had not yet secured those 11 kilometers and it was possible that the German people would be hostile, though most Germans were surrendering at this time. The two weighed the risk against the opportunity to be the first correspondents on the scene of Dachau's liberation and decided to make the trip (Higgins, 1955a).

The risk proved to be a good one, as Marguerite said the two met only white flags and surrendering Germans along the way. When they arrived in the town of Dachau, townspeople informed them that, though the Americans were still fighting nearby and had not yet liberated the camp, white flags hung outside one side of the enormous camp. Marguerite and Furst drove to that side of the prison, avoiding the fighting. They met two SS officers at the main administrative building who were willing to surrender. The two reporters wanted most to get inside the camp where the prisoners were. Sergeant Furst asked for an SS officer to accompany them because he was afraid the gates were electric and wanted someone familiar with the camp to open them safely (Higgins, 1955a).

The next obstacle was to get past the watchtowers, not knowing if the guards were ready to surrender. (The SS officer with them was not sure either.) They drove toward the watchtower area, but decided to stop and proceed on foot. Marguerite left the jeep first

and headed out of the shadow of a building when Furst yelled to her to return – 22 SS officers in the tower had their guns pointed at her (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite wrote, “God knows what prompted me, other than the instinctive feeling that there was absolutely no point in running. Instead of heeding the frantic sergeant, I addressed myself to the SS guards” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 91).

“Kommen Sie her, bitte. Wir sind Amerikaner,” she said, meaning “Come here please, we’re Americans” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 91).

All 22 guards surrendered and the two journalists went on through the gates to be met by the “wild joy and pandemonium” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 92) of the prisoners who had been awaiting the liberation. Marguerite reported that the prisoners had “taken over control of their inclosure [sic] the night before, refusing to obey any further orders from the German guards, who had retreated to the outside” (Higgins, 1945a). The prisoners embraced them and attempted to carry them around on their shoulders. Some kissed the ground in front of Marguerite, which made her very uncomfortable (Higgins, 1955a).

Though Marguerite said her story from Dachau was not as strong as it should have been due to the fact that she did not allow enough time to write it before deadline, she received the New York Newspaper Women’s Club prize the best foreign correspondence of 1945. Additionally, the Army awarded both her and Peter Furst the campaign ribbon for outstanding service with the armed forces under difficult circumstances (Higgins, 1955a).

In Love

In spring of 1945, Marguerite was 24 years old, had been married once and been involved in several relationships with men. In spite of this, she admitted in her autobiography that she had never been in love until she met George Reid Millar, a British

reporter for the *Daily Express*. Marguerite devoted an entire chapter in *News is a Singular Thing* to a discussion of their relationship, which lasted less than two months.

Millar was 11 years Marguerite's senior and a hero of the war. He fought in North Africa, was imprisoned by the Germans, escaped from captivity, and fought with the French resistance. He was an English aristocrat who opened up new worlds of adventure for Marguerite. Unfortunately, he also possessed a temper as volatile as Marguerite's and one insurmountable flaw – he hated Americans and often stated his opinion that they were “cheap and vulgar” (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite mourned the ending of her relationship with Millar for many years, even taking trips to places he had talked of and seeking out a sandal maker he had raved about (Higgins, 1955a).

Though Marguerite was heartbroken when Millar returned to London and married someone else, it may be said that it was that breakup that spurred her into greater success as a foreign correspondent. Following George's departure, Marguerite threw herself into her work “with all the need, intensity, and determination of an alcoholic turning to a bottle” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 113).

The Cold War

Marguerite covered the aftermath of the war and the beginning of the Cold War with the Berlin bureau of the *New York Herald Tribune* as her home base. With Russell Hill, her colleague from Paris, as bureau chief, Marguerite covered the Nuremberg trials of top Nazi officials (Higgins, 1955a).

Soon after, Marguerite went on assignments behind the newly forming Iron Curtain. Her experiences in Eastern Europe were fundamental in changing her political attitudes from her leanings toward socialism to a staunch anti-Communist perspective.

Marguerite's introduction to Czechoslovakia in April 1946, for example, involved being awakened on her first day in the country at 5 a.m. by the Czechoslovakian security police who broke into her room, demanding to see her passport. They also looked through her notebook and papers (Higgins, 1955a).

At the time Marguerite was in Czechoslovakia, the world had positive view of the fate of Eastern Europe. The Czechs believed they would be allowed to maintain their nationality, in spite of the Russian presence in the country (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite interviewed the Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, Jan Masaryk and also spoke with him about her experience on her first day in the country. His response was typical of the attitude Marguerite found and believed at this time: Such occurrences were "just isolated mishaps" (Higgins, 1955a, p. 119) and the Czechoslovakian people were very different from the Russians and could never give in to the regimentation of Russian Communism.

When asked if he was concerned about the presence of Communists in the Czech government, he replied, "I'm not worried about the Communist officials in our government. There is a fundamental point that you must understand. Here, in our country, even the Communists are Czechs first and Communists second" (Higgins, 1955a, p.119).

In 1948, Masaryk fell from the window of his apartment and died. It was never determined whether he jumped or was pushed. Marguerite referred to his death as part of the "salami technique" of eliminating opposition by the Communists. In this plan, the opposition is eliminated, or "lopped-off" beginning with those viewed to be most opposed to the government and moving toward the more moderate of the opposition (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite's next assignment reinforced her forming opposition to Communism. In Poland she covered elections in which the Communists won a false victory achieved through brutality and fraud. Marguerite said that in Krakow, 46 members of the Peasant Party, which opposed the Communist-dominated slate, were arrested or beaten. She also saw voters in Warsaw given ballots pre-marked for the Communists. The police then escorted the people to the voting polls (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite's time in Poland from December 1946 to February 1947 was significant as it introduced her to the tactics of a forming Communist police state. She wrote of driving through Poland with an American flag affixed to her car. The sight of an American drew the attention of the Polish people who were quick to tell Marguerite stories of "kidnapping, threatening, or beating those suspected of political opposition" (Higgins, 1955a, p. 136).

In her autobiography, Marguerite wrote much about a colleague she called Stefan Morawski. (She implied this was not his real name.) He was a Pole who had spent most of his life in the United States, graduated from Harvard, and become an officer of Chase National Bank. He felt guilty about not helping Poland during World War II and returned to his country after the war to be a part of the reforming nation. Morawski was convinced that Poland would be allowed by the Russians to form its own government and a "kind of semi-socialism" would emerge (Higgins, 1955a, p. 135).

Marguerite told Morawski of an interview with an old gentleman who reported the arrest and beating of his son, an anti-Communist. The man spoke of the fear caused by the police and asked when America would liberate Poland. When Morawski heard the story, he dismissed the man as "a reactionary, a hangover from the old regime" (Higgins,

1955a, p.138). He called the incidents of brutality “imperfections in our system” caused by a new government in a country “menaced by civil war” (p.138).

Morawski received a position in the new government just before Marguerite left the country. The Polish saw this appointment of an Americanized banker, in the words of Victor Grosz, a Polish official, as a “clear refutation of the lying contentions of the capitalist press about the Bolshevization of Poland” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 140).

Marguerite saw Morawski only one more time, on a return trip to Poland. She said he avoided her, but later sent an unsigned note, apologizing for his rudeness and telling of his life of fear under Communism. He said he had been beaten and threatened and resigned himself to becoming a student of Marxism in an attempt to protect himself and his new wife. Years later, in Korea, Marguerite heard from a Pole at the peace talks that Morawski had “got what he deserved” from the Communists (Higgins, 1955a, p. 144).

Marguerite experienced much self-doubt as well as professional criticism from more liberal journalists for her reports from Poland. She questioned her judgment and wondered if she was unfair to the new government. Her anxiety manifested itself as a skin rash, a physical reaction to the stress of her situation (Higgins, 1955a).

One incident ended what Marguerite referred to as indecision about the future of Poland and led her to the conclusion that a police state in Poland was to be permanent. She interviewed a member of the Polish Peasant Party, the party that had lost the election to the Communists, who had been terrorized by the police. He wanted to tell his story in hopes of swaying public opinion outside Poland. Instead, after Marguerite’s story was published, he was rearrested. Marguerite blamed herself (Higgins, 1955a).

In Berlin

In 1947 Marguerite made her first trip home to the States in almost three years. She met with Stanley Moore for what would be the last time to discuss their divorce proceedings and to attend a speech by presidential candidate Henry Wallace (Higgins, 1955a).

Upon her return to Europe in July 1947 after two months absence, Marguerite ended a period of living out of a suitcase and became the Berlin bureau chief for the *New York Herald Tribune*. The combination of her youth – she was only 26 and looked even younger – and the fact that she was a woman who “still had the voice and appearance that are apparently the opposite of what is expected in career women” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 159) caused Marguerite problems when trying to be taken seriously in her profession. She hoped her new position at the paper would lend her more credibility with sources and officials.

As bureau chief, Marguerite’s chief competitor was Drew Middleton of the *New York Times*. From her autobiography, it was apparent that Marguerite respected Middleton but was determined to provide a fierce competition, particularly when she learned through the press corps grapevine that Middleton did not think her to be much of a threat (Higgins, 1955a).

A few months after she became bureau chief, the story of the Berlin blockade and subsequent airlift broke and Marguerite turned her already diligent work ethic up to the level of workaholic. She routinely clocked 12 to 18 hour workdays, often writing and researching past midnight (Higgins, 1955a). She also proved Middleton wrong by continuing her fierce determination and competitiveness when it came to scooping other reporters. A friend and colleague in Berlin, James P. O’Donnell said that Marguerite

“seemed to have three elbows” (O’Donnell, 1978, p. 373) when competing to gain access to a story.

While in Berlin, Marguerite had further interactions with Communist Russians and with fellow Americans that reinforced her growing anti-Communist sentiments. In her autobiography, she lauded General Lucius D. Clay’s decision to keep American dependents in the city during the blockade. She called him the most courageous public man she had met in the European arena. Marguerite attributed America’s ability to hold their position in the city to daily decisions such as these, which she said prevented the U.S. from losing international face. Though Clay was under pressure from Washington to evacuate Americans during an incredibly tense situation, he refused to yield, which Marguerite admired (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite also wrote of several incidents and experiences that may have contributed to her conversion to anti-Communism. The Communists arrested one of her secretaries and a stringer she had hired. The former was held briefly in a Soviet jail, but released within a day. Marguerite attributed the woman’s release to the fact that she, though a German citizen, was with American journalists who were also arrested. The stringer was less fortunate. The first German journalist to be arrested by the Communists, he was sentenced to 25 years of hard labor (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite herself was involved in an explosion of the anti-Russian tension that hung over the city. A freedom rally she covered broke into a riot when a Russian soldier opened fire on the crowd. Later in the day, another surge of panic rose out of the crowd and Marguerite was pushed down into rubble. She sustained lacerations on her arms and

legs which, combined with unattended skin ailments from the summer, led her to be hospitalized in Switzerland (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite had put off seeing a doctor about her skin rash prior to her injuries because of her hectic work life. Her workaholic tendencies also cut her treatment short. While in the hospital, she received word from a colleague in Berlin that Steve White, her temporary replacement, sent a letter to her editors in Paris suggesting she be permanently reassigned to Paris. He felt the job was too much for her to handle and she made unnecessary problems for herself by competing so hard with Drew Middleton. Though Marguerite later determined that White believed he was acting in her best interest and thought she would be happier in Paris, when she first heard of the letter, she was very angry and left the hospital early to return to Berlin. She took back responsibility for the bureau and decided not to comment on the letter to her editors unless they brought up the subject. It was never an issue and Marguerite remained at her post until she was assigned to Tokyo (Higgins, 1955a).

White later expressed the belief that he was not just acting in Marguerite's interest, but in the interest of the paper. He believed Marguerite was too competitive and not a team player, a belief held by many of her colleagues since the beginning of her career. He said, "She was alienating everyone and running herself ragged with that dogged sense of competition" (May, 1983, p. 126). In defense of his attempt to send her back to Paris, he said, "We'd all have been better off if she'd been there covering fashions" (p. 126).

Though Steve White did not get his wish of banishing Marguerite to Paris, she was removed from her beloved Berlin assignment soon after. In May 1949, the Berlin

blockade ended, but new stories developed outside the city. Unfortunately for Marguerite, the *Herald Tribune* sent another reporter, Don Cook, to cover these stories and instructed her to remain in Berlin. Cook, who was willing to share the stories, saying there was “plenty to keep us both busy” (May, 1983, p. 127), offered a perspective on the situation. He said that by keeping Marguerite in Berlin and away from the complicated, diplomatic issues, they were sending the message that she could cover a “cops and robbers” story such as the Berlin airlift, but was to “stay out of the mainstream”(p. 127).

The paper solidified Marguerite’s position outside the mainstream of reporting when her editors transferred her to Tokyo. According to Marguerite’s biography, she was transferred because Joe Newman, the paper’s Moscow correspondent requested a position in Berlin and possessed seniority. Also, she said her editors wanted to freshen her perspective with a new location. Regardless, Marguerite was unhappy with the assignment and fought the move. She lost (Higgins, 1955a).

Leaving Berlin meant leaving more than her job. Though intensely dedicated to her work, Marguerite had found time to begin a relationship with General William Hall who worked under General Clay and was involved in the logistics of the Berlin airlift. The relationship was complicated because Hall was married and had four children. They still corresponded, spoke by telephone, and managed a brief visit when he came to Tokyo on military business during the Korean conflict (May, 1983).

Tokyo and Beyond

Marguerite arrived in Tokyo in April 1950 and made no secret of the fact that she was unhappy about it. She missed Berlin and its luxuries, including her house, housekeeper and secretary. In Tokyo, she took up residence in the “small, humid rooms of the Tokyo Press Club” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 205). Additionally, she had taken a survey

of recent editions of the *Herald Tribune* and discovered her predecessor usually had only one major story per week that was often relegated to the inside pages. Marguerite was used to making the front-page regularly (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite's distaste for her new job made her unpopular with the other members of the press corps. Keyes Beech, who would later become Marguerite's closest friend and ally in Korea, remarked that after Berlin, Higgins found the Far East assignment "about as exciting as a duck pond. It might not have been much of a story, but it was the only story we had, and we didn't like outsiders knocking it down" (Beech, 1954, p. 169).

A newly published novel, *Shriek With Pleasure* (Howard, 1950), further hindered Marguerite's popularity with the Tokyo press corps. Written by a colleague of Marguerite's from Berlin, the book, which Keyes Beech (1954) referred to as "a bitchy little story" (p. 168) told of a ruthless, female reporter in post-war Germany who stole stories and bed-hopped her way to journalistic glory. Within the journalism community, gossip indicated that the character was based on Marguerite.

With this novel reaching Tokyo before her, Marguerite faced the hostility and suspicion of fellow reporters who believed her to be a vicious shrew and reporters' wives who feared she would try to seduce their husbands. Conversations would hush when she approached and colleagues treated her in an abrupt, aggressive manner, attempting what they believed to be a preemptive strike on her malicious, competitive tactics (Beech, 1954; Higgins, 1955a).

In her autobiography, Marguerite writes of the situation lightly, saying that she found it common that works of fiction be tied to real people via gossip, particularly when characters were female professionals (Higgins, 1955a).

In and Out of Korea

Marguerite's fortuitous tendency to fall into major news stories may be attributed to a keen nose for news, coincidental happenstances, or just dumb luck. Whatever the cause, that tendency managed to turn an undesirable assignment in the Far East into the pinnacle of Marguerite's career.

Shortly after arriving in Tokyo, Marguerite discovered that national elections were to take place in Korea for the first time in history. The country already intrigued her because it "seemed more of a front-line assignment than Japan" (Higgins, 1955a, p. 208) and was situated next to a Communist country. She filed her story from Kaesong and held a positive outlook on the future of South Korea. The elections had gone well, or at least were less of a travesty than what she had witnessed in Poland. Less than a month later, however, the North Koreans invaded the South and civil war began. Marguerite transitioned from foreign correspondent back into the fatigues of a war reporter (May, 1983).

The details of Marguerite's adventures in Korea are her most famous and are detailed in her book, *War in Korea* (1951). It is not the purpose of this chapter to retell all her war stories, but rather to highlight those instances that are significant to her life and career in general.

Interestingly, among the many military battles that Marguerite covered in the Korean War, she also fought battles for the right to do her job.

Shortly after the war broke out in June 1950, though her paper seemed pleased with her work, the *Herald Tribune* decided to send in a more experienced war correspondent. Homer Bigart was well known for his work covering the Pacific theater in World War II. He informed Marguerite that he was taking over the Korean story and

instructed her to return to the Tokyo bureau. She had faced this kind of news when Don Cook came to Germany and the paper ordered her to remain in Berlin, but this time the stakes were higher and Marguerite was more determined to stay in the action. With the encouragement of other colleagues at the front, Marguerite defied Bigart and remained in Korea (Higgins, 1955a). She could have been fired, but instead the paper allowed her to stay and, with Marguerite and Bigart pitted against each other in a fierce rivalry that spurred them both on, the *Herald Tribune* published some of the best reporting of the Korean War (Kluger, 1986; May, 1983).

Shortly after the arrival of Bigart, in the middle of a battle, Marguerite received a message that she was to leave Korea immediately. Not knowing why, she feared she had been fired. She soon learned, however, that General Walton W. Walker had decided to expel female reporters from the country. "This is just not the type of war where women ought to be running around the front lines," he said (Kluger, 1986, p. 446; May, 1983, p. 153).

Marguerite went to Gen. Walker's headquarters in Taegu in an attempt to persuade him to allow her to stay. Instead two soldiers escorted her onto a plane bound for Tokyo. Upon landing, Marguerite headed straight for General Douglas MacArthur. Helen Rogers Reid had already cabled him in an effort to have Marguerite allowed back into Korea. After some convincing, Gen. Walker's orders were rescinded and MacArthur wired the *Herald Tribune* this message: "Ban on women in Korea has been lifted. Marguerite Higgins held in highest esteem by everyone" (Higgins, 1951, p. 109; Kluger, 1986, p. 446; May, 1983, p. 155).

Marguerite's expulsion from Korea made headlines in the U.S. and abroad. Her message to the *Herald Tribune* of her intentions to go to Gen. Walker and try to convince him to allow her to return to the front was published and carried over the wires (May, 1983). The paper published statements of support for her and of opposition to Gen. Walker's decision. The Soviet magazine, *New Times*, published an article and cartoon that accused MacArthur of trying to silence critics by censoring the press. The cartoon showed American soldiers marching Marguerite out of the country at bayonet point. The caption read, "The First Victory for MacArthur; the enemy surrounded – one fountain pen seized" ("Reds call reporters bullied in Korea," 1950).

By the time Marguerite reported from Korea, her previously held political beliefs were effectively converted to a staunch anti-Communist attitude. In *War in Korea* (1951), Marguerite exhibited clearly formed opinions of opposition to Communism. She made statements such as: "The Third World War is on. It began in Korea, and I'm glad the first battles I covered were so far way from San Francisco and New York" (p. 17). Such ideas were in line with what would later become known as the "domino theory" which asserted that the loss of one country to Communism would lead to others and eventually threaten the United States directly. She said, "In a matter of minutes New York could become a more ghastly deathtrap than a front-line regimental command post" (p. 223).

In *War in Korea*, Marguerite advocated a larger show of military might against what she perceived to be a worldwide Communist threat. She saw the Communists as more willing to sacrifice individually and collectively in war and said they "will resort to force of arms whenever and wherever they think the non-Communist world is an easy

mark” (p. 223). She called Truman’s claim that an army of 3.5 million soldiers was enough to protect the nation a “mockery” (p. 222). She advocated one of 14 million.

From Reporter to Celebrity

The Higgins-Bigart feud, Marguerite’s expulsion from and readmission to Korea, and the general fascination with a woman covering war at the front lines made Marguerite a celebrity (Beech, 1954). Carl Mydans of *Life* published a feature story, “Girl War Correspondent” in October 1950. Headlines and subheads in the paper included Marguerite as part of the story. One such story ran on page one and proclaimed, “Marguerite Higgins tells of 12-day battle without retreat” (Higgins, 1950).

Though Marguerite’s editors were not hesitant to include her in headlines and Marguerite was not above putting herself into an article, she was always more focused on the story she told than her role in it.

In her autobiography, Marguerite wrote about one of her pet peeves in journalism. She called it the “look here, I’m only a girl but look where I am” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 213) story, such as the one in which a female correspondent spent the majority of a story about a tank patrol detailing her experience steering the vehicle. Marguerite criticized her and said, “Her story never did mention whether the patrol accomplished its mission or who else was in the tank” (p. 213).

On that topic, Keyes Beech (1954) wrote,

Despite her success, Higgins never gave her readers what they really wanted. What they wanted was the “woman’s angle” on war. To her credit, Higgins never stooped to that. Any one of her dispatches might have been written by a man. (p. 183)

A Woman in War

Marguerite’s readmission to the country did not end the problems of being a woman in a traditionally male occupation. At the Inchon invasion, she initially was to be

sequestered on a hospital ship outside the action. A mistake in orders, however, allowed her to board a transport ship and go ashore with the fifth wave of Marines. After the battle, she returned with the other correspondents to the flagship *McKinley* and filed her story. Unfortunately, the captain who tried to relegate her to the hospital ship was there and banned her from the *McKinley* the next day. After that, she slept on the dock and relied on Keyes Beech to file her stories for her. Her male colleagues remained on the ship at night, enjoying hot showers and hot food (Beech, 1954; Higgins, 1955a; May, 1983).

As a woman, Marguerite was also victim to age-old double standards to which she had already become accustomed. While a city reporter, she had sat with a group of male reporters in a New York restaurant and later wrote in her personal diary:

From what I heard tonight at Chumley's, a woman reporter is "temperamental" if she objects to five night assignments in a row. But a man who objects to five night assignments in a row is "standing up for his rights." A woman who gets a scoop by sticking by an assignment after the other reporters go back to their offices is "tricky." Further, she "takes unfair advantage." A man who stays on an assignment after all the other reporters go back to their offices is "a go-getter." And if ever there is a controversy between a woman reporter and male colleague on the same paper or a woman reporter and an editor, the woman is sure to be at fault because as every newspaperman knows "woman are hard to get along with," et cetera. (Higgins, 1955a, p. 204)

Marguerite faced these attitudes again in Korea. Her male colleagues resented her presence at the front. According to Carl Mydans of *Life*, men expressed their resentment by gossiping and conjecturing about her sex life, both real and fabricated (May, 1983). The sexual double standards by which men may sleep around without raising an eyebrow while a woman who does the same is roundly criticized was alive and well in the Tokyo press corps and in Korea.

In addition to general gossip about Marguerite's relationships with other correspondents, she was rumored to have slept with many high-ranking officers in exchange for stories. Her alleged conquests were to have included Douglas MacArthur, but the men involved in the rumors, as well as other correspondents in the field who knew of war's conditions and circumstances, dismissed the stories as concoctions of jealous male colleagues (May, 1983).

Though stories about her relationships may or may not have been true, Keyes Beech (1954) stated that Marguerite sometimes "traded on her sex" (p. 182) to get stories male reporters could not, in the sense that being an attractive woman compelled some men to confide in her. He said, "General Douglas MacArthur, whose age had not dimmed his eye for a pretty face nor withered his old-fashioned gallantry, was no exception" (p. 182).

Though she may have taken advantage of being a woman to get stories, Marguerite wanted none of the special accommodations that were often offered to her at the front. She lived like her male colleagues, and according to Keyes Beech (1954), "So far as her trade was concerned, she had more guts, more staying power, and more resourcefulness than 90 percent of her detractors. She was a good newspaperman" (p. 183).

Stateside

Marguerite finally returned to the United States in 1951 for a six-month leave, during which she started collecting awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for overseas reporting. Six reporters, including Marguerite, Keyes Beech and Homer Bigart, shared the overseas award that year and Marguerite was the first woman to ever win it.

Unfortunately, her return to the States included heartbreak as well as triumph. Her relationship with Bill Hall, whom she loved and referred to as “the first, since the other enchantment so long ago (George Millar), with whom I’d thought I’d be able to live happily ever after” (Higgins, 1955a, p. 241), was over. He was still married, but also involved with someone else.

Marguerite became physically ill, as she had done before when faced with great mental or emotional stress. In addition to her romantic trauma, her illness might have been attributed to a year’s worth of hard work in a war zone. She was admitted to the hospital with bronchitis, sinusitis, malaria, dysentery, jaundice, and nervous tension (Higgins, 1955a).

Marguerite returned to work, but without a regular assignment. She interviewed President Harry Truman. She traveled the world doing a series on world leaders that included interviews with major heads of state such as Generalissimo Francisco Franco of Spain and Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia. She also published her first book, *War in Korea* (1951), and made rounds on the book tour and lecture circuit. Though she remained busy, friends found her depressed and generally unhappy. She missed Bill Hall very much (May, 1983).

She returned home to visit her family in California and give a lecture in Oakland. There she reunited with Hall who was stationed in San Francisco. He convinced her to remain in the state and they rekindled their relationship. In April 1952, Hall received a divorce from his first wife and married Marguerite in Reno, Nevada (May, 1983).

Marguerite settled in San Francisco temporarily. As a happy newlywed, she enjoyed some measure of domestication and did a short series of television news

commentaries for the local CBS affiliate. The couple's financial circumstances were bad, however. Hall's divorce left him with large alimony payments and Marguerite wrote to the *Herald Tribune's* owner, Helen Rogers Reid, "Even if I wanted to stop being a reporter – which I don't – I couldn't" (May, 1983, p. 194).

Marguerite returned to her world travels and made several trips back to Korea, including a trip to cover the truce talks in Panmunjom.

In addition to her reporting job, lectures, and book sales, Marguerite brought money in through product endorsements. She appeared in ads for Camel cigarettes and Hermes typewriters. Over the years, she would also promote toothpaste¹ and American Airlines (May, 1983).

Marguerite was happy in her new marriage, writing articles for both the *Herald Tribune* and magazines such as *Mademoiselle* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. In 1953, at age 33, she became pregnant, but did not change her work habits.

She was forced to slow down, however, in October when she was admitted to the hospital and delivered her daughter, Sharon Lee, prematurely. The infant died five days later. In an article for *Good Housekeeping* entitled "Thoughts on the death of a five-day-old child" (Higgins, 1954) the following year, Marguerite reflected on her experiences with death in the Nazi concentration camps and the battles in Korea. She said,

In the moments of Sharon's dying, I thought inevitably of how familiar – and yet unfamiliar – death had been to me. . . . And yet, as Sharon died, I made the discovery that I had seen death, yet I had not known it. Certainly, I had been sorry for the thousands I had seen dead and dying – so sadly, wearily many

¹ In 1957, a toothpaste endorsement that ran in Reader's Digest caused problems. The Committee of Correspondents Governing Capital Press Gallery Membership contacted Marguerite to remind her of the committee's rule prohibiting correspondents from doing paid publicity or endorsement work. Marguerite responded by ending her membership and commented to the organization on what she perceived to be hypocrisy by allowing correspondents, including herself and those who had voted to take action against her, to appear on commercially sponsored television shows (May, 1983).

thousands. But sorry in a detached sort of way. . . . I did not fully comprehend the tears of the bereaved. I had not known how the death of another could be the death of a part of yourself. I had not known many things, for I had never understood the meaning of compassion.

After Sharon's death and a lengthy recovery period, Marguerite wrote her memoirs and undertook a new project: She was granted a visa to visit Russia and would be the first American correspondent to tour the country since Stalin's death. On her trip around the country which covered 13,500 miles, Marguerite was arrested 16 times, usually after taking pictures, but was always treated well and released within hours. The trip resulted in her third book, *Red Plush and Black Bread* (Higgins, 1955b). In the book, Marguerite echoed the beliefs she set forth *War in Korea*. She believed that America was not properly heeding warnings that the Soviets aimed to spread Communism throughout the world and that the more welcoming attitude she saw developing behind the Iron Curtain was a tactic by the Soviets in which they were "widening and smoothing this highway to Communism so that their prospective traffic can get to its Communist destination all the more quickly" (p. 256). She alluded to her belief that, in spite of her firsthand experiences with the horrors of war, war was still preferable to living in a Communist police state, such as the ones she witnessed in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the late 1940s (p. 24).

During the mid- and late 1950s, Marguerite worked from the Washington bureau of the *Herald Tribune*, traveling frequently and covering many diplomatic stories, including the Nixon-Khrushchev meeting in Russia. When not circling the globe on assignments, she and Bill lived in Georgetown and associated with many up and coming Washington

leaders, including Robert and John Kennedy.² She hosted dinner parties at her home and networked her various acquaintances.

In 1958, Marguerite gave birth to a son, Lawrence O'Higgins Hall, named after her father, using the family's original surname. A year later, Linda Marguerite Hall was born.

Marguerite's pace did not slow much with the births of her children. Even while eight months pregnant with Linda, she covered the Nixon-Khrushchev story in Russia and in response to a congratulatory letter after the birth, she asked Robert M. White, president and editor of the *Herald Tribune*, if she could cover the upcoming Eisenhower-Khrushchev summit (May, 1983).

In the early 1960s Marguerite's relationship with the *New York Herald Tribune* deteriorated. Conflicts regarding her expense account and a disagreement over a pulled story led Marguerite to leave the paper and sign with the Long Island publication, *Newsday*. She remained based in Washington and did three columns a week about international affairs. She was excited about this job and the opportunity to move away from hard news into a genre that allowed her to provide interpretation and analysis of events (May, 1983).

Maggie's Final War

In several of Marguerite's post-Korea travels, she went to Vietnam. As early as 1953, even while pregnant with Sharon, Marguerite traveled to the country to interview new leader Ngo Dinh Diem. She made five more trips there before 1963 when she was

² Marguerite grew close to the Kennedy family, doing a profile on Robert and Ethel for *McCall's* and beginning work on a biography of John, which was never completed after his assassination. She was also asked to ghostwrite Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy's autobiography after another *McCall's* profile on her, but the project never came to fruition as the Vietnam conflict escalated and Marguerite became more involved in covering it (May, 1983).

sent again to cover a growing religious conflict. Buddhist monks were practicing self-immolation, setting themselves on fire in the streets to protest the rule of President Diem. At the same time, South Vietnam was fighting Communist forces from the North and American involvement in the conflict was escalating. Vietnam's problems were many and complex, and the situation was only to get worse.

From Marguerite's interviews and observations during the four-week trip, she came to believe that the Buddhist protests to be carefully orchestrated displays and not representative of the views of the general Buddhist population in Vietnam. She reported that the peasants in the 42 hamlets she visited were fairing well under Diem's government and they did not feel victim to any religious persecution (Elwood-Akers, 1988; May, 1983; Prochnau, 1995).

American opinion seemed to sympathize with the Buddhist monks, however. That view, combined with other problems the Kennedy administration had with Diem, led to an order to oust him. Though the extent to which the United States was involved in the coup was not fully revealed and confirmed until the publication of *The Pentagon Papers* in 1971, Marguerite knew at the time there was American involvement and believed the overthrow would be detrimental to the situation in South Vietnam. The Vietnamese president and his brother were killed. A military junta took over control of the country and more suicides and protests took place. The war against the Communists intensified and Marguerite returned to Vietnam for the eighth time (Elwood-Akers, 1988; May, 1983; Prochnau, 1995).

By the time Marguerite covered Vietnam her anti-Communist sentiments were solidified. She believed the Buddhist protests against Diem to be orchestrated by the

Communists and that American success in Vietnam was imperative to stopping the worldwide spread of Communism (Elwood-Akers, 1988).

Battling Halberstam

Though a hard-working foreign correspondent for over two decades, Marguerite never lost her fierce competitiveness. Just as she had Homer Bigart in Korea and Drew Middleton in Berlin, in Vietnam, Marguerite found a rival in David Halberstam, a young correspondent from *The New York Times*. This time, however, the battle was not for scoops or headlines. It was a conflict of experience versus youth as well as ideological differences and ego (Prochnau, 1995).

Marguerite was a veteran of two major wars, other lesser conflicts, and the Cold War. She was internationally renowned and often treated as a celebrity. Though she visited Vietnam frequently, she was not a permanently assigned correspondent like Halberstam and other members of the press corps. Marguerite regarded the young reporters as green and without real understanding of the conflict or of war corresponding in general. She contemptuously called them Rover Boys while they saw her as a past-her-prime sell-out whose anti-Communist views rose to the level of propaganda (Prochnau, 1995).

Many of the young journalists opposed the Diem regime and held a dismal view of the war's outlook. Marguerite, however, reported as the government did that the war was going well. She contradicted a lot of what Halberstam and other reporters sent back to the United States, and they hated her for it. She accused them of staying holed up in Saigon, away from the battles, while Halberstam said she made only a short visit to the country to take the military's guided tour. It was a bitter feud that never really ended, for

even after Marguerite's death, Halberstam would criticize her in books and articles (Elwood-Akers, 1988; May, 1983; Prochnau, 1995).

Working to the End

Between her trips to Vietnam, Puerto Rico and other destinations of political importance, Marguerite worked from her home in Washington. Though her *Newsday* column was syndicated in 70 newspapers around the country, it was a particular bother to her that the *Washington Evening Star*, the leading paper for the nation's capital during that time, refused to regularly run her column in the editorial section. She sent numerous letters to the editors of the paper in hopes of persuading them to give her a regular slot. Eventually, they did (May, 1983).

The news of the *Star's* decision came at the same time as some less desirable events, however. Returning from a long trip that began with a family vacation to France to visit distant relatives and ending with another venture to Vietnam, Marguerite became very ill with a high fever (May, 1983).

She also returned to financial disagreements with *Newsday* and an IRS audit of her personal finances. Her illness made it difficult to work and she was frequently in bed. She had to cancel a major interview and was not able to help promote her new book, *Our Vietnam Nightmare* (1965). She called on friends in the newspaper business to help produce her column three times a week. Eventually, her illness sent her to the hospital (May, 1983).

Even while in the hospital, Marguerite would not completely rest. Though she had to rely on wheelchairs, she insisted on leaving for a day to appear on the *Today* show in New York to promote her book. Her colleagues who had helped her write her column had

now taken it over completely, ghostwriting under her byline. Her mother flew in from California to help take care of the house and children (May, 1983).

It took some time for the doctors to form a clear diagnosis. At one point, it was believed that Marguerite had a form of malaria that was resistant to drugs. Then, it was thought to be cancer. Marguerite got worse and began to hemorrhage internally. She was in great pain. Finally, the doctors determined she had contracted a rare disease called leishmaniasis. Protozoa from a sand fly's bite entered the bloodstream and the disease affected the spleen and liver. The disease was most likely contracted on her most recent trip to Vietnam. Her kidneys failed and she came to the realization that she was to die. She made her final arrangements and saw her children for the final time (May, 1983).

Marguerite entered a coma and died on January 3, 1966. She was 45 years old.

CHAPTER 3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Definitions of Objectivity

Scholars and journalists claim several different definitions of objectivity, some of which conflict. The most basic of these is the separation of facts from values. The other two most common definitions involve the idea of balance and fairness, accuracy, and non-distortion of reality. Another frequently cited aspect of objective journalism is the quality of detachment or disinterestedness. Many also assert that objectivity is a process or a set of practices in gathering and presenting information. While most authors accept objectivity as a major component of modern news writing, some go so far as to assert it is a moral norm in journalism. This section examines all of these definitions and includes the concept of bias, which many authors regard as objectivity's accepted opposite.

Separation of Facts and Values

Objectivity involves the separation of values from fact (DeFleur & Dennis, 1991 as cited in Donsbach & Klett, 1993; Durham, 1998; Hackett, 1984; Ognianova & Endersby, 1996; Schudson, 1978; Schudson, 2001). This involves the removal of personal opinion from reporting (Glaberson, 1994; Hackett, 1984; Ward, 1998). Reciprocally, the inclusion of the reporter or news organization's opinions biases a news account (Hackett, 1984; McQuail, 1977 as cited in Hackett, 1984; Russo, 1971-1972).

Hackett (1984) defines news bias as "the intrusion of subjective 'opinion' by the reporter or news organization, into what is purportedly a 'factual' account" (p. 230)

Ward (1998) uses the term “neutrality” as a near synonym for objective reporting. He writes, “Neutrality means approaching an issue or dispute without allowing passions, interests or preconceptions to influence (or bias) one’s reports” (p. 122)

Durham (1998) states the fundamental principles of objectivity are the “separation of facts from values and opinions, with the journalists functioning as the impartial relayer of those facts” and that objectivity is based in the concept of “value-free facticity” (p. 119).

This definition of objectivity as the separation of values from fact assumes the existence of a factual truth and the “possibility of a zero-degree unbiased or objective account of events” (Hackett, 1984, p. 232).

McQuail (1977 as cited in Hackett, 1984) states that bias can be presented by “the use of language which colors an otherwise factual report and conveys an implicit but clear value judgment” (p. 232).

Disinterestedness, Detachment, and Nonpartisanship

The ideas of disinterest, detachment and nonpartisanship relate to the concept of value-free reporting (DeFleur & Dennis, 1991 as cited in Donsbach & Klett, 1993; Ryan, 2001; Selznick, 1957 as cited Sigelman, 1973; Ward, 1998). Whereas the separation of values and opinion from fact implies that an individual reporter has opinions that she acknowledges and keeps out of her stories, the concept of disinterestedness and detachment implies that a reporter has no opinion and is an uninvolved storyteller.

Disinterestedness and detachment are widely debated facets of objectivity. They are criticized by many media scholars and defended by others who claim they are misunderstood. This chapter addresses the debate in a later section.

Fairness and Balance

Balance and fairness are the next two aspects of objective reporting (DeFleur & Dennis, 1991 as cited in Donsbach & Klett, 1993; Drew, 1975; Durham, 1998; Glaberson, 1994; Hackett, 1984; McQuail, 1977 as cited in Hackett, 1984; Ognianova & Endersby, 1996; Ryan, 2001; Selznick, 1957 as cited in Sigleman, 1973; Ward, 1998).

These aspects of objectivity can involve what Drew (1975) calls “a quantitatively balanced story containing both negative and positive information about the source” (p. 219). Durham (1998) claims that balanced reporting is pluralistic in that an objective news story will include “a multiplicity of viewpoints” (p. 119).

McQuail (1977 as cited in Hackett, 1984) asserts several ways in which bias is evident in non-objective reporting. These include “explicit argument and compilation of evidence favoring one view” and “the omission of points favoring one side” (p. 232).

In short, the ideas of fairness and balance as tenets of objective reporting involve including the perspectives of all parties to an event or issue without injecting a preference for one above others.

Non-distortion, Accuracy, and Completeness

Many aspects of objective reporting intertwine. The concepts of distortion, accuracy and completeness are inextricably linked, as inaccurate or incomplete reports result in the distortion of the reality of situation. In this aspect of objectivity, an accurate representation of reality is called for in news reporting (Ognianova & Endersby, 1996; Ryan, 2001; Ward, 1998).

Ryan (2001) writes, “The overarching value for the objective journalist is the collection and dissemination of information that describes reality as accurately as possible” (p.3) and that one of the philosophical constructs of objective journalism is

“accuracy, completeness, precision, and clarity in information collection and dissemination” (p. 4).

McQuail (1977 as cited in Hackett, 1984) includes “a tendentious use of facts and comments without any explicit statement of preference” (p. 232) in a list of ways bias can manifest itself in news reporting. This use of facts and comments can distort a story if a reporter selects those that represent his or her views or otherwise bias the report.

Schudson (2001) supports the idea that a factually accurate report can still be biased through distortion. He says, “Partisan journalists, like objective journalists, typically reject inaccuracy, lying and misinformation, but partisan journalists do not hesitate to present information from the perspective of a particular party or faction” (p. 150).

This aspect of objectivity is more complicated than the previous two as the gray area of “reality” and “truth” comes into discussion. Lawrence & Grey (1969) state that there are cases in which no argument can be made as to the truth of a situation. The authors write:

But in many other cases, an outside standard of the reality (or truth) is lacking or only minimally present In such situations . . . the reporter must try to approximate the reality. And because his approximation may differ from his news source and readers, complaints about the accuracy of his reporting frequently arise. (p. 753)

To deal with this shifting concept of reality, Ryan (2001) says, “Objective journalists gather facts and opinions that conflict, verify information carefully, seek to determine why accounts conflict and which most accurately reflect reality, and evaluate and fully identify sources” (p. 5).

Balance and Distortion in Conflict

In some cases, the idea of not distorting news stories comes into conflict with the ideal of providing a balanced account of a situation. Hackett (1984) shows that, in some cases, a balanced representation may distort reality. The author gives the example of the 1972 presidential election, in which George McGovern's campaign included more public appearances than incumbent, Richard Nixon. Covering public appearances equally would have implied that an equal number occurred for each candidate, thus distorting the reality of the campaign.

DeFleur & Dennis (1991, p. 388 as cited in Donsbach & Klett, 1993, p. 55) characterize objectivity with three aims: 1) separating facts from opinion, 2) presenting an emotionally detached view of the news, and 3) striving for fairness and balance, giving both sides an opportunity to reply in a way that provides full information to the audience."

Objectivity as a Set of Practices

While authors identify characteristics of an objective news story, such as balance, fairness, and freedom from opinion, all of which are apparent in the final product of a news report, many also state that objectivity is a method or a set of profession practices conducted by a journalist (Glasser, 1984; Ognianova & Endersby, 1996; Ryan, 2001; Schudson, 2001; Ward, 1998). This concept of objectivity is most commonly tied back to the ideas of Walter Lippmann (1920; 1922), who advocated a scientific approach to reporting. Lippmann believed that humans were naturally in possession personal prejudices and biases and thus, needed a set of standards to guide them in reporting.

Lippmann's ideas remain in current authors' writings. Ryan (2001) asserts, "Objective journalists share the core values of the scientific method" (p. 1) and that

objectivity itself means that journalists use a systematic approach or make “strategic decisions (that) are not based on a reporter’s personal preference, but on professional norms” (p. 4).

Likewise, Ognianova & Endersby (1996) called objectivity an “empirical method” (p. 10) and Glasser (1984) said it is “a set of routine procedures” (p. 14).

Evolution of the Objectivity Concept

The concept of objectivity, while strongly embedded in the accepted ethical fiber of the journalism profession, is a relatively new idea. Scholars debate how the notion of objectivity evolved into what Schudson (2001) refers to as “moral ideal” (p. 149) within the profession. Several theories exist, and many authors subscribe to a combination of them to explain how objectivity came to be in journalism.

Economic Theory

A number of authors argue that objectivity came into general use due to economic motivations. The most common idea is that the emergence of the penny press in the mid-19th century and newspapers’ break from political ties around the same time led editors and owners to adopt an early form of objectivity to help sell papers to a mass market (Donsbach & Klett, 1993; Glasser, 1984; Mott, 1964 as cited in Stoker, 1995; Ognianova & Endersby, 1996).

Additionally, the Associated Press emerged as an economic factor. The AP wanted to distribute nonpartisan stories that could run in any newspaper, regardless of party affiliation (Ognianova & Endersby, 1996).

Streckfuss (1990) asserts that the economic motivation came later when a trend of newspaper mergers in the 1920s led to many cities having only one major paper. The

traditional system of a paper for each political party faded and owners wanted to appeal to a general market with nonpartisan reporting.

Schudson (2001) disputes the economic theory. He says that newspapers were economically successful during the era of sensationalism and yellow journalism, which proved that bias sold papers as well, if not better, than objective reporting.

Efficiency and Technology Theory

Several of the same scholars who believe that objectivity evolved from economic need also assert that the concept came into practice due to technological advances, such as the telegraph. With time and expense limiting the usage of the telegraph, the inverted pyramid style of writing and “just the facts” reports came into use (Glasser, 1984; Ognianova & Endersby, 1996; Stoker, 1995).

Additionally, objectivity provided the growing business of journalism a way to regulate itself. Schudson (2001) cited the American Society of Newspaper Editors’ “Canons of Journalism” which was adopted in 1922-1923 and said, “This newly articulate fairness doctrine was related to the sheer growth in newsgathering; rules of objectivity enabled editors to keep lowly reporters in check” (p. 162).

Professionalism Theory

Next, several scholars propose that the emergence of journalism as a profession caused the evolution of the objectivity norm (Schudson, 2001; Stoker, 1995; Streckfuss, 1990). Prior to the 20th century, journalists did not form a cohesive professional unit. Often, Washington journalists clerked for the congressional members they covered and frequently lived in the same boarding houses as members of the government (Schudson, 2001).

Schudson (2001) claims an “occupational culture” (p. 156) began to emerge in the 1870s and 1880s, and the reporting technique of interviewing came into play around the same time. While political partisanship still existed, journalists began to group together as a more unified profession, thus laying the foundation for the adoption of professional norms, including objectivity. Schudson (2001) said, “Analytical fairness had no secure place until journalists as an occupational group developed loyalties more to their audiences and to themselves as an occupational community than to their publishers or their publishers’ favored political parties” (p. 161).

Election reform during the late 19th and early 20th centuries also pushed the previously partisan press into a more prestigious profession. Elections changed with new styles of ballots and the emergence of a type of informational campaigning, as opposed to the old-fashioned pomp and parades. Newspapers followed suit and began to separate themselves from strict party loyalty (Schudson, 2001).

The emergence of public relations professionals and press agents also helped push journalism into becoming a profession with an objectivity norm. World War I brought in an era of propaganda and journalists sought to separate themselves from the growing legions of publicity agents (Schudson, 1978; Schudson, 2001; Stoker, 1995; Streckfuss, 1990) and “to affiliate with the prestige of science efficiency” (Schudson, 2001, p. 162). Additionally, journalists needed a method to evaluate the information they received from public relations officials and determine its validity.

Journalists feared the manipulation of information and sought refuge in objectivity. Streckfuss said, “Objectivity was an antidote to what liberals saw as newspaper emotionalism and sensationalism” (p. 976).

Natural Science Philosophy Theory

While journalists were seeking to disassociate themselves from the public relations agents during post-WWI times, they also sought to associate themselves with the newly emerging fields of social and natural sciences. Media critics and commentators, such as Walter Lippmann and Nelson Crawford, advocated empirical methods of data collection and reporting, similar to the newly forming scientific method (Stoker, 1995).

The move toward a scientific objectivity in journalism stemmed from new ideas of the time in philosophy and social science. Previously, journalists and others held a belief of “naïve empiricism” in which “facts are not human statements about the world, but aspects of the world itself” (Schudson, 1978, p. 6). Propaganda of WWI and the realization after that war that the world was increasingly complex led to the belief that naïve empiricism did not serve the profession effectively.

Streckfuss (1990) asserted, “Objectivity was founded not on a naïve idea that humans could be objective, but on a realization that they could NOT. To compensate for this innate weakness, advocates in the 1920s proposed a journalistic system that subjected itself to the rigors of the scientific method” (p. 974).

Objectivity became a way to deal with the fact that, as scholars and journalists alike were coming to understand, news stories could not accurately represent a single reality or truth. Multiple truths and perspectives of reality existed and the new methods of social science research were used in an attempt to provide an objective representation of the world (Donsbach & Klett, 1993).

Thus, the concept of objectivity, as described by those in the 1920s who advocated a scientific approach, is different from the idea of disinterested neutrality that is often associated with objectivity. In fact, the aim of Lippmann and others was not

detachment, but “severe social change through the power of the objective fact” (Donsbach & Klett, 1993, p. 55).

The State of Objectivity, Before 1950

Theoretical definitions of objectivity and its evolution as a concept are important to an understanding a reporter’s work when evaluating it for objectivity and bias, but it is also important to understand how objectivity was used in the profession and in the education of journalists during that reporter’s time. Thus, this section looks at how objectivity was addressed in the profession in the first half of the 20th century.

In Journalism Education

In an analysis of journalism and writing textbooks from the 19th century, Mirando (2001) showed that the ideas of value-free reporting and neutrality were present before the 1920s when the term ‘objectivity’ came into general use. The author found that textbook authors considered unbiased reporting an ideal for journalists as well as a routine for the profession. A textbook from 1890 stated an idea that is still echoed by journalists today: “The facts, when concisely written, speak for themselves” (Nevins as cited in Mirando, 2001, p. 11).

Glasser (1984) points to the 1920s as the time in which objectivity came to be an ethic taught in journalism courses. During that time, journalism ethics, in general, were receiving more attention and objectivity was one aspect of ethical discussions (Mirando, 1998).

Streckfuss (1990), however, asserts that once the concept of objectivity made it into journalism textbooks at this time and in the early 1930s, the meaning was altered from its concept of a scientific method to the more basic idea of keeping values and facts separate.

Though journalism ethics received attention in the 1920s and early 1930s, the interest seemed to fade by the late 1930s. Mirando (2001) found that only 7 out of 90 textbooks published between the late 1930s and the early 1970s included “substantive discussions on journalism ethics” (p. 33).

An informal survey of textbooks from the 1930s and 1940s reveals an emphasis on objectivity in the sense of nonpartisanship, balance, and the separation of facts from opinions. For example, Porter and Luxon (1935) advocate the use of qualification and attribution of statements and sources, so as to effectively communicate that the reporter is not involved and not stating his own belief. They also stress the importance of representing both sides of an issue and “presenting claims just for what they are – unsupported statements” (p. 119).

Neal (1949) advocates the use of balance and fairness when dealing with people who have an overt agenda, regardless of how unpopular or extreme. The author writes, “If Mr. Deems truly is a crackpot, that fact will be undeniable apparent when presented in fair and neutral writing” (p. 131). The author also stresses the importance of avoiding “color phrasings” (p. 133), including necessity attributions, particularly in controversial topics, and the need for giving equal treatment to both sides of an issue.

Curtis MacDougall authored several popular textbooks in the 1930s and later. *Newsroom Problems and Policies* (1949) includes a discussion of objectivity in comparison to what the author terms “interpretive reporting.” The author defines objectivity as the dry retelling of facts, without elaboration. MacDougall says interpretive reporting allows the reporter to bring in their own understanding of the situation and add

details they consider to be relevant. Interpretive writing, however, does not allow for the blatant statement of opinion or biased adjectives.

MacDougall advocates the interpretive form of journalism, saying that the objective idea does not work, particularly in foreign reporting which he says requires a certain amount of interpretation and elaboration to make it understandable to the average reader.

MacDougall calls for accuracy in reporting and cites several factors that might undermine it, including “faulty observation” (p. 179), which means that any number of reporters might view the same event in different ways, given their perspectives and the information available to them. Other factors are incompetence of a reporter, exaggerations to sensationalize a story, and the unconscious bias of a reporter.

In the Profession

Within the working world of journalism, the objectivity norm evolved in the same way and at the same time as was reflected in journalism textbooks, but it was subjected to more day-to-day tests and criticisms in this setting which dealt more with realism and pragmatism than with academic ideals.

Streckfuss (1990) states that the word “objectivity” was not in use in journalism prior to the 1920s, but terms like “unbiased” or “uncolored” were.

When Carr Van Anda became editor of the *New York Times* under Adolph Ochs in 1904, he “applied an empirical, scientific approach to news gathering and reporting” (Streckfuss, p. 7). Eight years earlier, when Ochs took over the paper, he said the *Times* would present the news “impartially, without fear or favor, regardless of any party, sect or interest involved” (Schudson, 2001, p. 156), but he also stated that he was committed

to tariff reform, lower taxes and small government. Thus, though objectivity and nonpartisanship were emerging, political agendas remained at the turn of the 20th century.

A study by Stensaas (1986-1987 as cited in Stoker, 1995, p. 7) supports the idea that elements of the objectivity norm began in the late 19th century, but that the concept came into general use in the 1920s. The author sampled city newspapers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and found that in the late 1800s, about one third of stories could be considered objective. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, that number had grown to about 80 percent.

In 1922-1923, the American Society of Newspaper Editors adopted its “Canons of Journalism” which were reprinted in journalism textbooks such as Yost’s *The Principles of Journalism* (1924). The canons included, among others, these principles:

- Independence – Freedom from all obligations except that of fidelity to the public interest is vital.
- Sincerity, truthfulness, accuracy – Good faith with the reader is the foundation of all journalism worthy of the name.
- Impartiality – Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expression of opinion. News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind. This rule does not apply to so-called special articles unmistakably devoted to advocacy or characterized by a signature authorizing the writer’s own conclusion and interpretations. (Yost, pp. 162-163)

Stanley Walker (1934), city editor of the *New York Herald Tribune* from 1928 to 1935 wrote in his memoirs about the “Canons of Journalism” and other ideals of journalism ethics.³ He believed that the standards were laudable, but unrealistic. He thought ethics were best left uncodified, as the day-to-day challenges of the newspaper business left too many uncertain areas between right and wrong. He wrote:

³ Marguerite Higgins would work for the same paper for 20 years, beginning six years later. Walker’s ideas about ethics are significant to this study, as they represent what might have been common thought among editors at the *Herald Tribune*, where Higgins received much of her early newspaper training.

There has long been, in the curious business of journalism, a yearning for respectability, a pathetic hankering for righteousness. There have been solemn meetings at which pious tenets have been set forth as guiding principles for working newspapermen. Somewhat in the fashion of sentimental madams who obtain an inner glow from attending early Sunday mass, the editors feel better for a few hours after such sessions. Then they return to the job of getting out a newspaper, there to find what they knew all along – that it is a business of imponderables, of hairline decision, where right and wrong seem inextricably mixed up with that even more nebulous thing called Good Taste. (p. 167)

It seems that as soon as the objectivity norm came into general acceptance in the profession, critics and working journalists opened fire on it. Schudson (1978) said, “In the 1930s, even journalists committed to objectivity acknowledged that objective reporting was ultimately a goal beyond reach – the perils of subjectivity were well recognized” (p. 155).

Thus, interpretive reporting soon countered objective reporting. Ten years after adopting the *Canons of Journalism*, the ASNE issued another statement:

Whereas, The procession of national and international events, significant, complex and colorful, is moving more rapidly than at any other period in the recent history of the world; and Whereas, There is new evidence that men and women in every walk of life are taking a deeper interest in public affairs, RESOLVED, That it be the consensus of this Society that editors should devote a larger amount of attention and space to explanatory and interpretative news and to presenting a background of information which will enable the average reader more adequately to understand the movement and the significance of events. (Schudson, 1978, p. 148)

Objectivity: The Debate

Proponents of objectivity may have argued that interpretive reporting was really objectivity. The debate about objectivity, its definitions, its usefulness and the probability of achieving it began in the 1930s and continue today.

Journalists consider objectivity an integral, professional norm and U.S. journalists in particular say objectivity is very significant to their work (Donsbach & Klett, 1993).

Despite this, the concept of objectivity is widely criticized. Many believe that its

emphasis on detachment and neutrality results in a form of “bystander’s journalism” (Bell, 1998, p. 102). Journalists become moral observers or spectators who are detached from society (Stoker, 1995). Glasser (1984) even asserts that objectivity strips journalists of their citizenship.

Other critics say that objectivity is merely a tool or a “strategic ritual” (Tuchman, 1972) used by journalists to avoid criticism. Media critic Jay Rosen claims, “The root of objectivity is the wish to be free of the results of what you do” (Glaberson, 1994). Stoker (1995) and Glasser (1984) also agree that the tenets of objectivity allow journalists to report the news without being responsible for what is reported, because the reporter adopts a position of neutrality and removes herself from the source’s opinions.

Building on Tuchman’s idea of “strategic ritual” and applying it to an economic realm, Ognianova & Endersby (1996) argue that objectivity is used as a way of not alienating markets, thus increasing the media companies’ profits.

Others criticize the objectivity norm and say it conflicts with the press’s role of watchdog by supporting and perpetuating society’s status quo and reinforcing elite positions. Hackett (1984) and Stoker (1995) assert that objectivity is biased in favor of establishment sources and serves as a vehicle for the distribution of bureaucratic information because reporters relate source information without evaluating it. Durham (1998) supports this, saying that elite sources are perceived as more credible when presented uncritically. Glasser (1984) states that the objectivity norm counters the “important democratic assumption that statements made by ordinary citizens are as valuable as statements made by the prominent and the elite” (p. 15).

Authors also argue that the detached neutrality concepts robs journalists of the ability to be creative and turns them from their original role of independent-thinking storytellers into the role of news packagers and distributors (Glasser, 1984; Rosen, 1993).

Finally, some critics see objectivity as a myth or an unachievable goal. They argue that human beings cannot depict reality accurately, nor be completely neutral and it is wrong to claim they can (Glasser, 1984; Rosen, 1993). Tuchman (1978) states that there is a discrepancy between what objective journalists aim to achieve and what is actually produced.

Proponents of objectivity argue that those who criticize it have adopted a narrow definition of the concept and that true objective reporting is in line with the role of the press as a watchdog and can most accurately reflect reality. Ryan (2001) says that objective journalists “do not guarantee their descriptions are accurate in every respect, only that they have followed a process that allows them to produce a description that is more accurate than any other process allows” (p. 5).

Ward (1998) attacks the criticism that objectivity encourages cold detachment and a removal from participation in society. He says, “It does demand that reporters subject their reports to objective controls, such as the careful presentation of facts, reliable and varied sources, expert opinion, supporting documentation, accurate quotations, and a fair representation of major viewpoints” (p. 122).

Objectivity, Bias, and International Reporting

In the area of international reporting, two major issues exist. The first is a discussion of whether the rule of objectivity should or does apply to foreign reporting and the other involves research that illustrates American reporters tend to report international affairs in a way that reflects U.S. foreign policy.

Some scholars agree that the rules of objectivity are different in international reporting than domestic. Hackett (1984) suggests that the criterion of balance is not appropriate in evaluating international affairs reporting. The author said:

Journalists are not expected to balance their presentation between pro-and anti-American (especially Communist) viewpoints. Only when foreign policy (e.g., the Vietnam war after 1968) generates sufficient division within legitimate political circles must the media take balance into account. More normally, foreign affairs coverage would be considered biased only if it *distorts* reality in a politically motivated direction. (p. 231)

Schudson (2001) asserted that it is simply easier to violate objectivity rules in international reporting:

Foreign correspondents are treated more as independent experts, free to make judgments, less as dependent and supervisable employees. In truth, they cannot be supervised nor do editors very often have the knowledge to second-guess them. For that matter, readers do not normally have the background to fill in a context to make bare facts comprehensible. (p. 164)

MacDougall (1949) and others who advocated interpretive reporting in the mid-20th century did so in part because of the need to understand international affairs in a way that objectivity (as they defined it) did not allow. Likewise, the ASNE's 1935 call for more interpretive and explanatory news cited the increasingly complex state of world affairs as a reason to make exceptions to the objectivity rule (Schudson, 1978). Thus, it seems since early on, the objectivity norm has been more flexible in the realm of international reporting than in domestic news.

Many researchers have examined the idea that journalists generally report international affairs in a manner that is consistent with their home country's foreign policy. Rachlin (1988 as cited in Kim, 2000) argued that journalists portray world events and their significance in line with their country's national interests and accepted cultural views. Fishman (1982 as cited in Kim, 2000) goes a step further and states that the media

help shape the public's perception of international reality by conforming to the government's perspectives and interpretation of events.

Goldfarb (2001) asserts the idea that a nation's history, popular ideas, and local events infuse its journalists' reports from other parts of the world. He cites differences in American and British coverage of the Middle East and says:

For those of us who grow up with the principle that journalism is an objective, impartial enterprise, it can be quite a shock to the system to live overseas and read the coverage of events in a different nation's press: Same events, same facts, different picture. (p. 111)

Kim (2000) found that two major newspapers (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*) reported two similar political movements in Asia – the Kwangju in South Korea and the Tiananmen in China – in ways that were consistent with U.S. foreign policy. The American press hardly reported the Kwangju pro-democracy movement while wide coverage of the Tiananmen Square demonstration conveyed a sense of outrage about the Chinese soldiers' violent methods of quelling the demonstration. This coverage reflected the U.S. government's response to the incidents.

Gans (1979 as cited in Demertzis, et al., 1999) asserted “ethnocentrism forms one of the main and durable journalistic values through which the news is selected and presented” (p. 27). Demertzis, et al. also stated that the “media may generate a climate of moral-national panic by defining the national ‘other’” (p. 29). Likewise, Tehranian (2002) supports this idea that the media help create an “us versus them” version of reality.

Weis (1997) studied press coverage of the Brazilian coup of 1964 and found evidence of such a dichotomy. The author showed that American reports about the coup were “simplistic and one-dimensional” (para. 5) in that they portrayed the political

upheaval as an issue of a leader leading the country toward Communism and dictatorship. The author asserts that the media “ignored the complexities of the Brazilian political system, the economic crisis, the politicized military, and the basic inequities in Brazilian society” (para. 4).

Furthermore, Weis states that the objectivity norm, dependence on U.S. government sources, and the press’s willingness to report American foreign policy uncritically have produced biased reports in international affairs and such reporting is prevalent in American journalism. The fact that, overseas, diplomats and foreign correspondents often live and work close together in “American ghettos” (Chittick, 1970, p. 182-199 as cited in Weis, 1997, para. 18) perpetuates a reliance on government sources.

Malinkina & McLeod (2000) studied *The New York Times*’ coverage of Russian intervention in two conflicts, one during the Cold War (Afghanistan) and one after (Chechnya). The researchers determined that, despite a shift in U.S. foreign policy toward Russia after the end of the Cold War, the lens through which the U.S. media showed Russian affairs remained constant. This may suggest less strength in the argument that newspapers’ coverage reflects their country’s foreign policy.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF MARGUERITE HIGGINS' REPORTING FROM POLAND

Marguerite Higgins reported from Poland between December 1946 and February 1947 and according to her autobiography, the time she spent in that country was fundamental in the formation of her strong anti-Communist views, but did those views permeate her reporting or did she report objectively about the politics of Poland?

This analysis of Higgins' reporting from Poland, specifically her coverage of the Polish national elections and the rebuilding of the country after World War II, reveals that she was inconsistent in her ability to remain objective in a variety of ways. Reports often lacked adequate source attribution, included unsubstantiated predictions and assumptions, overly dramatized or sensationalized stories, included Higgins' personal opinions, or included subjective interpretations. Individual stories were not always balanced, but Higgins tended to achieve this tenet of objectivity overall by writing single-perspective stories from both sides of the political spectrum in Poland.

Additionally, Higgins had two separate agendas in her writing. Prior to and immediately after the Polish elections, Higgins was critical of the tactics of the Left-Wing, government-supported bloc of political parties to ensure its victory. After the elections, Higgins became less critical of the government and conveyed an optimistic view of the fate of Poland in post-war Europe. In spite of these two agendas, Higgins did not have an overreaching, anti-Communist bias evident in her writing at this time.

This chapter examines Higgins' writing and reporting style, the ways in which she achieved and did not achieve objectivity, and discusses the overall views conveyed in her writing.

Attribution

Higgins did not often include specific source attribution in the stories analyzed. She frequently cites unnamed "experts," "observers" and "officials." This was and is a common practice when dealing with official sources that request not to be named, but Higgins was particularly vague when referring to "observers," not stating if these people were independent political experts, American or Polish officials, Polish citizens, or press correspondents. She also made vague and broad statements such as "it is believed here" without stating who exactly believed what she reported. For example, prior to the elections in Poland, Higgins wrote,

It is said in Warsaw that the elections will be "fixed," and that it has already been decided that the government bloc will win between 85 and 90 percent of the total votes, while Mikołajczyk's party will be permitted from 10 to 15 percent of the votes. (Higgins, 1946b)

She did not give any indication of where those numbers were found or how many people were interviewed to determine that a fixed election was generally believed to be eminent. Likewise, in a later article, Higgins asserted, "almost everyone is agreed in Poland" (Higgins, 1947b) that the government controlled bloc of political parties would sweep the election. Again, she did not back up the statement with any information that might validate such a broad assertion.

Higgins also used this technique of general, broad attribution to add interpretation to her stories. A story about the dominant political bloc's pledge to allow religious rights to the Catholic Church included this paragraph:

The conciliatory gesture toward the Church, with which the Left has previously been at bitter odds, is interpreted here as a Left Wing bloc attempt to swing away from the opposition Polish Peasant party (P.S.L.) voters motivated by religious reasons. (Higgins, 1947c)

She does not indicate who, other than herself, interpreted the situation that way.

Similarly, after the election, she reports that the government would allow a peasant party (not the Peasant Party headed by Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, but one affiliated with the government bloc) to hold a number of seats in the Parliament. She said, “This is interpreted as an obvious desire on the part of the government to placate the peasantry who form 70 percent of Poland’s population” (Higgins, 1947g). This technique of general attribution made many of Higgins’ reports subjective and unclear and left the reader with too many questions. Without citing sources more specifically or indicating who interpreted events in the ways she indicated, the possibility that Higgins was interjecting her own opinions or impressions and masking them with generalized attribution arises.

Predicting

Higgins also projected and presumed future events in many of her articles. She opened a Christmas story with this lead: “The holiday season comes to Poland as a breathing space in what will be with certainty an election campaign accompanied by violence, bloodshed and fratricidal warfare” (Higgins, 1946g). This prediction was hers, not attributed or quoted from any source and she seems to base this assertion on the reports of two Peasant Party members who reported being victims of torture tactics. Certainly the reports of torture and coercion are significant and newsworthy, but, as Higgins notes in the report, such stories were not widespread or on a large scale. Given the facts of the report, a prediction of “fratricidal warfare” is unwarranted. As it

happened, the elections were marred by a few instances of violence, but were generally peaceful around the country (Higgins, 1947f).

Other, less extreme instances of prediction occurred in Higgins' writing. For example, she states that the election "will be a mere formality" (Higgins, 1947a) and that "a Leftist victory [is] assured" (Higgins, 1947d). While these predictions were correct, she did not effectively substantiate her assertions with facts or quote from sources. Such predictions are better suited to political analysis or commentary than straight news reports.

Assuming

In a few instances, Higgins seems to assume what others are thinking. For example, she wrote, "Most Polish politicians, including some P.S. L. leaders, undoubtedly believe Mikolajczyk is finished, at least for the foreseeable future" (Higgins, 1947e). She does not quote or name any of the politicians or groups who have stated they believe as such. In another article she wrote, "The fact that twenty voted against the P.S.L. leader apparently confirms...that there is a sizable segment of his party which believes Mikolajczyk has erred in not agreeing to join the Left-Wing bloc" (Higgins, 1947i). Though twenty members voting against their leader is reasonable evidence a division in the party exists, Higgins states a reason for the division – Mikolajczyk's refusal to join the bloc – without providing any substantiating information. In the next day's story, Higgins again interprets meanings and motivations behind government members' actions. Of the Parliament's choice of speaker, she said, "The choice was significant, perhaps, of the government's desire to placate the peasants" (Higgins, 1947j). In this statement, at least, she includes the qualifier "perhaps," which indicates that her interpretation is merely a possibility and not an absolute.

Sensationalizing

Higgins was not above “overdramatizing her copy” (Kluger, 1986, pp. 442) and colleague Stephen White said she would get annoyed with him for not building up his stories the same way. Certainly, several of her stories of this time illustrate her tendency to build up or sensationalize reports with colorful writing and her editors sometimes helped with sensationalized headlines.

The previously mentioned prediction of “violence, bloodshed, and fratricidal warfare” (Higgins, 1946g) falls into this category as even the information Higgins presented in the same story proved such charged language unfounded. She also punched up a story about an amnesty for political prisoners with the opinion that “on the success or failure of this amnesty hangs not only Poland’s internal peace but the problem of reconstruction, which unity would greatly speed” (Higgins, 1947n). Though the amnesty was undeniably important, asserting that Poland’s internal stability was entirely or largely dependent upon this single decision is an exaggeration.

Higgins sprinkled other instances of “colored language” throughout her writing. For example, she refers to the reduction of Soviet troops in Poland as “an important phenomenon” (Higgins, 1947l) which is an inaccurate description, as writers generally use the word “phenomenon” to describe an unexplainable, natural occurrence. The deliberate reduction of troops of a foreign army from the Polish territory is not a phenomenon. She also described the transition of the Jewish population in Lower Silesia, Poland from being comprised predominantly of professionals and merchants to including an increasing number of industrial workers and farmers as a “sociological revolution” (Higgins, 1947o). In a following article, she again uses a similar description and calls the

same transition “a sociological phenomenon” (Higgins, 1947p). Such language seems to be an attempt to boost the importance of the story.

Higgins also used adjectives, adverbs, and charged verbs more liberally than objective journalism usually encourages. In describing an improved attitude toward America by the Polish government after the elections, Higgins said the U.S. ambassador “was received with exceptional enthusiasm and attention” and that the attitude toward the ambassador “was particularly striking” (Higgins, 1947m). She described Jewish leaders in Lower Silesia as having “considerable elation” (Higgins, 1947o) over the fact that 15,000 Jewish residents of the area were working in industrial jobs. She described the distribution of political pamphlets to Polish soldiers as the “plunging of the 155,000 Polish regular troops into one-sided politics” (Higgins, 1946a).

Subtle uses of language such as these were effectively used by Higgins to build up or sensationalize some of her reports from Poland. In some cases, the *Herald Tribune*'s headline writers aided Higgins in playing up her reports. Higgins wrote an article detailing the stories of two Peasant Party members who claimed to have been tortured by Polish secret police and compared the torture techniques used to those employed by the Nazis under Hitler. The headline read, “Poland’s police ape Gestapo in election drive” (Higgins, 1946g). Such a comparison is emotionally charged and the headline was designed to grab attention and evoke strong memories of the atrocities of Nazi Germany. Once the story was sufficiently built up however, Higgins included a paragraph to point out, “in all fairness” as she said, that there were several differences between what was happening in Poland and what occurred in Germany under Hitler and that it was “too early to tell” if such abuses were isolated incidents or to become common practice.

Opinion

Statements of opinion and subjective judgments permeated several of Higgins' reports. In one story, she interjected a judgment about a diplomatic note from Poland to Britain, saying it "is unusually sharp and is sarcastic to a point that rarely occurs in diplomatic exchanges" (Higgins, 1946d). She refers to the Polish government's denial of involvement in a propaganda campaign as "a mockery" (Higgins, 1946f). She labeled accusations from the Left Wing bloc of political parties against the opposition party "sensational" (Higgins, 1947d).

In other cases, stories closely resemble opinion columns or news commentary, but ran in the paper as regular news reports. A report published on February 12, 1947, for example, could have run on the editorial page. The story asserted that the Polish regime was becoming friendlier toward the United States. Higgins wrote:

Whatever the world may think of the method used, it would seem unquestionable that the Left-Wing bloc has insured its continued reign by the recent elections. Thus, with its loyalty to the Soviet Union demonstrated and its own position assured, the Left-Wing governments [sic] can afford to relax its attitude toward America, particularly since its economic relations with America are all to the advantage of Poland. (Higgins, 1947m)

In the same case, she relayed anecdotal personal experience as facts sufficient to back up her arguments when she wrote:

In the past these press attacks were so steady that it became the custom for an American staying a long time in Warsaw to save Polish acquaintances trouble by jokingly referring to himself as "one of the black reactionaries," "one of the dollar imperialists" and so on . . . American correspondents, with a few exceptions such as Elliott Roosevelt and Ralph Ingersoll, were automatically labeled slaves of the "dirty capitalist press." (Higgins, 1947m)

This casual, almost tongue-in-cheek retelling of the personal experiences of press corps members tends to undermine the position of the story as an objective news report. Such

writing might have been appropriate had the article been labeled as a column or an analysis.

In another article, Higgins reports the announcement of an amnesty for Polish political prisoners and interjects her opinion this way:

There is no doubt that if the amnesty can persuade the underground to give up armed political opposition, it will be the greatest boon Poland can have at this time. For on the success or failure of this amnesty hangs not only Poland's internal peace but the problem of reconstruction, which unity would greatly speed. (Higgins, 1947n)

Such a report too closely resembles commentary. Phrases such as “there is no doubt” and “it will be the greatest boon” are subjective and disputable unless substantiated by information from sources.

Interpretation

Higgins' pieces that resembled opinion columns did not dominate her reporting from Poland. In fact, her style was rather inconsistent. On any given day, a report could have been a multi-sourced, objective, third-person news report, an opinion-charged, subjective commentary, or might have fallen into a third, less easily defined category that is best described as factual, but interpretive.

A story headlined “Jews in Poland find life good, want to remain” (Higgins, 1947o) illustrated this style well. Higgins traveled to Lower Silesia, Poland, and interviewed Jewish leaders and community members to ascertain the mood of the area regarding anti-Semitism and their overall quality of life. She cited community statistics and quoted a local official, but moved into first-person voice when she related a previous experience of interviewing other Polish Jews in Berlin the previous year. She drew a comparison between the attitudes of the two groups. No blatant statements of opinion are made, but the overall tone of the article was optimistic and positive, as Higgins seemed to

want to paint a picture of Poland in state of rebuilding and hope. This interpretive style is similar to a feature style and Higgins used it in stories she wrote while traveling around the country, outside the political centers. A story similar to that told of Dzierzoniow, a village of about 15,000 in which a large Jewish population was prospering (Higgins, 1947p). The following day's report discussed the colonization of territory previously held by Germany. Both stories followed the same, interpretive, feature style of the previous article and echoed the optimistic tone regarding Poland's future.

Balance and Fairness

Higgins achieved balance and fairness in her reporting overall, but not always in individual stories. For example, one story reported that the government distributed pre-election propaganda pamphlets that criticized the United States and Great Britain to Polish soldiers in order for the army to take part in political persuasion. The article includes only a brief quote by an official denying any government involvement in the distribution of the pamphlets (which may have been all that was issued at the time), but a great deal of information about accusations against the government (Higgins, 1946a). Two days later, however, Higgins wrote a story that elaborates on the government's position (Higgins, 1946c). Thus, between the two stories, she reported both sides of the issue and achieved balance.

Higgins could only achieve this type of balance in stories that involved follow-ups and updates. In terms of stand-alone reports, Higgins' tendency toward balance and fairness was inconsistent. She often wrote single-source stories, relaying the views of only one person or organization. Reports from press conferences, official announcements, or interviews often excluded outside information or responses from an opposing side. For example, a story about the announcement of a campaign platform by the Left Wing bloc

of political parties included only information provided by the bloc and did not mention any response or attempt to obtain a response from the opposing Peasant Party (Higgins, 1947c). No follow up story was written. Likewise, another report detailed a threat by Peasant Party leader Stanislaw Mikolajczyk to boycott the elections because of an order issued by the government regarding poll watchers (Higgins, 1947d). No government response was included.

Though these stories were not balanced individually and the perspectives of the two sides on specific issues not equally represented, it is interesting to note that Higgins wrote about the same number of stories for each side. That is, for every story representing only the Left-Wing bloc's perspective on one issue or topic, there was a story representing only the Peasant Party's view on another issue. Whether this balance was deliberate or coincidental is unclear.

Two Agendas in Higgins' Reporting

Higgins' reporting from Poland cannot be labeled objective. However, no consistent, overreaching bias in favor of or against Communism or the left-leaning government in Poland exists. Higgins did not have a specific, anti-Communist bias or agenda at this point in her career, but she frequently allowed her personal impressions and opinions of situations to permeate her writing and two general agendas are evident in her reports.

First, in reports regarding the Polish elections, she was very critical of the tactics of the Left-Wing bloc of political parties and of the government's handling of the election process and supportive of Stanislaw Mikolajczyk's Peasant Party. This support was reflective of American sentiments, as illustrated by a diplomatic note sent to Poland

criticizing the handling of the election and in Stanislaw Mikolajczyk's previous relationship with the Western Allies during World War II.

Of 23 election-related stories by Higgins, only five were mostly objective and balanced. All of those were published on or after election day. Six reports represented the government-sponsored bloc's perspective. The stories were not necessarily favorable to or critical of the government but were all single-source reports from official announcements, interviews, or press conferences. Three other stories were favorable to Stanislaw Mikolajczyk and the Peasant Party, and Higgins wrote the remaining nine from a perspective that was critical of the government. She wanted to communicate to the American people the various abuses by the Polish government concerning the elections and Mikolajczyk's dedication to being an active political opposition.

After the election, Higgins' writing shifted, not to support the government, but to provide a more optimistic view of the fate of the country in general. She also became slightly more critical of Mikolajczyk and the Peasant Party. With the elections finished, more stories focused on the future of the country. Higgins gave space to several conciliatory statements by the Polish government. She interviewed a Polish Communist official and focused on his statement that Poland would not become a single-party, Communist state (Higgins, 1947h). She reported the opinion of the Minister of Repatriation that most of the Polish citizens in exile since the war wanted to and would return to help rebuild the country (Higgins, 1946e). She implied that the government was attempting to "placate the peasantry" by granting a peasant party 106 seats in Parliament (Higgins, 1947g). She also complimented Polish President Boleslaw Bierut, calling him

“a quiet, hard-working man who won renown during World War II for his part in the anti-German underground” (Higgins, 1947k).

As part of Higgins’ optimistic portrayal of post-election Poland, she emphasized the lessening influence of the Soviet Union in the country. One story detailed the diminishing number of Soviet troops remaining in Poland and commented on the Soviet Army’s “impressive decorum and good behavior” (Higgins, 1947l). She stated:

Whatever the Soviet Army’s performance in the early months of Poland’s liberation – and no one maintains it was gentlemanly – no Pole with whom I have talked had any complaint about Soviet troops in the last six months, or even the last year. (Higgins, 1947p)

Another story reported that the Polish minister of industry encouraged “certain types of foreign investments in Poland by private American capitalists” (Higgins, 1947r). Higgins further asserts:

The entry of foreign capital into this country, subject as it would be to control by the government is not inconsistent with the situation in Poland. Contrary to reports, the country at its present stage is by no means sovietized. (Higgins, 1947r)

In both these articles, Higgins sought to portray Poland as emerging from post-war occupation and establishing a state that would be friendly to Western nations.

Higgins’ piece, “Polish regime showing more amity for U.S.” (Higgins, 1947m) best illustrates her desire to portray an optimistic view of Poland’s relationship with the West. The report was full of personal opinion and interpretation. Higgins relayed personal experience in telling of prior encounters with Polish officials and from previously reported information drew generalizations about the attitude of the Polish government toward the United States.

Finally, Higgins portrayed an optimistic view of the future of Poland with her reports about peasant life in Lower Silesia. Two stories near the end of her time in Poland

detail opportunities for Jews in industry and farming as well as a lack of anti-Semitism in the area (Higgins, 1947o; Higgns, 1947p). She also reported work by Poles in former German territories to colonize the area and put it to good use, in an effort to prevent the territory from returning to Germany in future diplomatic negotiations (Higgins, 1947q).

Discussion

As previously stated, Marguerite Higgins' work from Poland did not convey an overall bias in favor of or against Communism. Though few stories from this period were truly objective, the others usually contained small amounts of the above-mentioned elements that led them to be labeled subjective, interpretive, or opinionated. Of the 39 reports Higgins sent from Poland, four could have been labeled as news analysis or commentary. Others were non-objective, feature-style stories or interpretive reporting. Still others were attempts at objective reports that failed to meet the accepted standards of objectivity.

Higgins' lack of objectivity was not necessarily unacceptable given the circumstances under which she reported. Higgins was her paper's primary source of information regarding the events in Poland, and it is possible she was given greater leeway for interpreting and commenting. Editors often supplement her stories with smaller Associated Press or United Press wire reports that were strictly factual and provided objective information she did not report. Perhaps she was even encouraged by her editors to provide readers with greater perspective and interpretation. As noted in Chapter 3 of this thesis, several authors assert that in international reporting, the rules of objectivity are less strict and a paper may even want the reporter to function as an expert and provide interpretation.

Furthermore, Higgins' criticisms of the Polish government's election tactics were in line with America's official position on Poland. Thus, it is unlikely that she based her criticism of the Left-Wing bloc of political parties solely on her personal views, but developed it as a result of her being an American reporter writing for an American audience. Studies indicate that American news organizations often report from the perspective of American foreign policy, particularly during the Cold War when an "us vs. them" dichotomy was prevalent.

Still another possibility exists for Higgins' deviation from objectivity into vigorous criticism of the government's behavior during the election period. The facts of the matter did indicate that the government was using its power to intimidate the Peasant Party. Political arrests occurred and Higgins interviewed several people who claimed to have been tortured. Having covered the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps, where atrocities occurred that went largely unrecognized by the international community, as well as the recent Nuremberg trials, Higgins might have been motivated by a desire to not allow history to repeat itself.

In her autobiography, Higgins wrote much about her experiences in Poland. By 1955, when the book was published, she had determined that communism was inextricably linked to police state tactics and terror. At the time, however, Higgins said she was indecisive about the fate of Poland. About her reporting, she said, "The facts were evident. It was the interpretation that counted" (Higgins, 1955, p. 138).

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Marguerite Higgins' life and work is significant to the history of journalism on several levels. As most often noted, she was a groundbreaker for women in the profession. She did not allow the obstacles of tradition and social barriers to prevent her from achieving her dream of becoming a foreign correspondent. She became the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for international reporting.

More than just a "first woman," however, Higgins was a formidable competitor in journalism and had an impressive career that spanned more than 20 years. She covered three major conflicts, interviewed numerous world leaders, and reported on many fronts of the Cold War. She never slowed down or lost her drive and only death could stop her, as her life was cut short in 1966 by a disease she contracted while on assignment in Vietnam.

Higgins became a celebrity with her exciting tales of war and her refusal to be kept off the front lines in Korea. Within the journalism community, Higgins was a colorful and controversial character. Her ethics were often questioned and she made many enemies among her competitors for her aggressive tactics.

Early in her life, Higgins appeared to be receptive to the ideas of communism and socialism. She was a campus radical in college and married a member of the Communist Party. Later in her career, however, after reporting from behind the Iron Curtain in the early years of the Cold War, Higgins became convinced that communism could not be separated from the brutality of a police state and became a staunch anti-Communist. For

this, more liberal members of the press again criticized her reporting, particularly in Vietnam.

This study examined Higgins' life and discussed the objectivity norm in journalism and used it to evaluate Higgins' work from her time in Poland – a period she later said was the most influential in forming her views of opposition to Communism. This analysis determined that, though her writing did not conform to the tenets of objectivity, she did not exhibit an anti-Communist bias in her reporting at this time. She did convey a critical attitude toward the left-wing Polish government and the political parties affiliated with it during the first Polish elections after World War II. Despite such criticism, Higgins also expressed an optimistic outlook for Poland's future. She described what she perceived to be a lessening Soviet presence in the country and an improvement in the government's attitude toward the United States.

For Marguerite Higgins, reporting was life. It is no wonder, then that her life was fully intertwined with her work. Research into Marguerite Higgins' life has been done in depth, but less work exists that examines her actual reporting. Many possibilities exist for future research into Higgins' writing. Further analysis of her Cold War reporting would contribute greatly to an understanding of her political views. Such research might include analyses of her post-Korean War reporting, specifically her work from Vietnam, which was probably the most controversial of her career. Her reports conflicted with those of her colleagues, several of whom believed her to possess a strong anti-Communist bias. An analysis of her writing, in comparison to that of her peers, could address these issues.

Further, Marguerite Higgins' life and work can be examined as part of studies addressing broader themes in journalism and journalism history. For example, a study

about journalistic competition could include discussions of Higgins' many rivalries throughout her career. Her competition with Homer Bigart was particularly unusual, as the two reporters worked for the same newspaper. More interestingly, however, would be a study about the role of journalists who receive celebrity status in popular culture. In the television age, this is very common for broadcast news professionals, but many print journalists, such as Hunter Thompson, Bob Woodward, and Carl Bernstein also have been elevated to celebrity or icon status by admirers, critics, and the media in general. Marguerite Higgins was a celebrity in her time, sought for product endorsements and movie rights and her story could be an important part of such a study.

Marguerite Higgins is a part of journalism history that, though not entirely forgotten, has been relegated a lesser position in the industry's collective memory. However, her work was significant as she covered many important stories of the 20th century, broke new ground for women in journalism, and provides an excellent example of how a reporter with strong political convictions of her own covered controversial events in international affairs.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A native Floridian, Michele Kathleen Jones was born on April 19, 1979, and raised in Pensacola. She graduated from the University of West Florida in 2001 with a degree in international studies and entered the master's program at the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications in August of the same year.

Michele has written for *The (Pensacola) Real Paper*, *The Independent Florida Alligator*, and *The Pensacola News Journal*. Additionally, she worked as an online producer for *The Gainesville Sun* and as a freelance Web designer. Upon completion of her degree, she hopes to obtain a full-time position in the online department of a daily newspaper while continuing to design Web sites and write on a freelance basis.