ABSTRACT: This paper examines how educational texts contribute to the formation of professional bodies. Following Freadman (2002) it argues that early journalism textbooks served as uptake texts, translating discourses of professionalism into the classroom. News reporting was an emerging occupation. Efforts to professionalize journalism were also efforts to stabilize occupational roles and activities. The text offers an image of a stable reportorial identity, as well as a stable editorial room hierarchy within which the reporter was situated in order to enable recreation of those roles and relationships within the classroom space. The paper concludes by considering the role of education in the formation of professions.

KEYWORDS: Uptake; professionalization; workplace genre; workplace writing, journalism, news writing

1. Introduction

Through an examination of nineteenth century journalism textbooks, this paper examines the settings in which workplace genres are taught and considers the significant politics of translating professional genres into the classroom. One consequence of the reconceptualization of genre as a rhetorical action, articulated by Miller (1994) and elaborated on several continents from many theoretical perspectives, has been awakened interest in how genres are learned and should be taught. If genres are typified rhetorical actions that emerge in response to situations perceived as recurring, how can they be taught outside of those situations? Freedman (1999) poses the question in its full complexity. Describing genres as “dynamic, fluid, and blurred,” she asks, “is it possible to extrapolate rules and regularities from one context (or situation type) to another? Even more significantly, can the complex web of social, cultural, and rhetorical features to which genres respond be explicated at all or in a way that can be useful to learners?” (pg. 764).

Edwin Shuman’s 1894 textbook Steps Into Journalism was one of the first textbooks used in American college courses for journalism. In it, he attempts to extract the most salient social and cultural features of the workplace in order to translate them into the space of the classroom. Approaching the textbook from a genre perspective allows us to examine how it structured classroom relationships and imaginatively positioned students within the professional communities to which they aspired. Following Freadman (2002), I argue that the book served as an uptake text, mediating relationships between the classroom and the editorial news room. Freadman’s elaborated concept of the Austinian notion of uptake invites us to interrogate text genres as sites for cultural inquiry and critique and thus provides a theoretical framework for examining the relationships among texts and bodies.

My primary interest is in elaborating the role of texts in the production of professionalized bodies. The first part of my paper defines the classroom and the editorial room as ceremonial spaces in order to examine how the text orders relationships among bodies. I argue that Shuman’s text isolates the editorial room as the site of textual production and orders the relationships among workers in it in order to enable reenactment of those relationships in the classroom. The second part of my paper examines how the textbook elicits

1 For the sake of clarity and brevity, I’ve chosen to focus on Shuman’s book. Journalism historians have cited it as the “first practical textbook” because it was the first written by a teacher specifically for a course rather than for the amateur or free-lance journalist (MIRANDO, 1993, pg. 8). However, Thomas Campbell-Copeland’s (1889) The Ladder of Journalism (How to Climb It) is very similar in content and form, and I will refer to it occasionally as well.
further uptakes in the form of professional behaviors and patterns of thought by discursively situating the student in the role of a novice reporter.

Furthermore, the book takes up the aspirations of those who saw higher education as a means to elevate journalism from a trade to a profession. A crucial difference between Freadman and Austin’s conception of uptake is that Freadman recognizes the importance of translation, “the step in which our uptake selects, defines, or represents its object” (2002, pg. 48). Throughout the paper, I will be considering the selections involved in translating discourses of professionalism into the educational space. Textbook authors must necessarily select the most salient elements of workplace knowledge and experience to present according to their perception of the classroom’s needs. The text captures and makes available for critique the values underlying those selection. Rather than simply supporting the cultural authority of an already established profession, journalism programs actively worked to establish the stability and credibility of the profession, to establish the profession as a profession. A secondary aim of my paper is to consider how the texts that shape classroom instruction may, in fact, be imbricated not only in the formation of students’ professional identities, but also in the formation of professions as sites of authority.

2. The Classroom as Ceremonial Space

Genres are developed by users in order to accomplish specific goals within the social contexts in which they are used. Freadman (1994) conceptualizes genres in terms of “play,” arguing that they comprise a minimum of two texts in dialog with each other either within the same ceremonial or in different ones (pg. 48). In part, this paper examines the play between two genres, the news story and the journalism textbook. Freadman describes ceremonials as rules which determine a set of allowable positions and responses from which one genre can tactically “play” off the other (1994). They are not the rules of the game, but rather the rules for the game, determining who can play and framing the playing of the game in space and time (FREADMAN, 1994, pg. 47, 60). Conceptualizing the writing classroom as a ceremonial space gives us a framework for analyzing the relationships that inhere among its participants, the positions they are able to occupy, and the genres they are able to deploy in pursuit of their tactical and strategic goals.

Genres are constituted by place, and the “functions and roles entailed by place determine the interlocutory structure of” those genres (FREADMAN, 1994, pg. 60). But they are also constitutive of those places. Thus an article written in an editorial room is work, while an article written in the classroom is homework. At the same time, we recognize an editorial room not only by the arrangement of objects and individuals—the rows of people seated at desks—but also by the activity performed there, including the types of texts that are produced. Thus, genres—and their instantiation in individual texts such as textbooks—capture and make available for analysis not only the activities and goals of those acting within the ceremonial space, but also the rules constituting the formation of that ceremonial in relation to others.

In these terms, the text can be understood as constituted by and constituting the ceremonial space of the classroom. It helps regulate the activities of the classroom and structure the relationship between teacher and student. It also translates the knowledge or values of other ceremonial spaces into educational discourse. These points of translation across ceremonial boundaries, which Freadman (2002) describes as “intergeneric,” are the points at which translation is “least automatic and most open to mistake or even to abuse” (pg. 44). Reading early journalism textbooks as uptakes of journalist’s efforts to attain professional status draws our attention to the “significant politics” involved in the translation of these professional (and professionalizing) discourse into the educational discourse of the classroom.
Freadman draws uptake out of speech act theory by drawing in the Peircean notion of
signification as a sequence of signs translating one into another in infinite semiosis, which
allows us to account for the effects of language to do things, to have material affects on

These textbooks were produced in a period when news reporting was relatively new as
a full-time occupation. Moreover, the editorial room was still emerging as a dedicated,
recognizable site of occupational activity and the processes of gathering and reporting the
news were undergoing rapid technological and social changes. Reporting was very much an
occupation in flux. Yet, textbooks present the image of journalism as a stable profession and
of news reporting as an established occupational category into which the aspirant could enter
with confidence given the right formal training and disposition.

In the next section, I will discuss the texts’ construction of the editorial room as a
stable occupational space. This construction served two tactical purposes: First, it validated
journalism’s claim to professionalism by presenting occupational roles and behaviors as
rational and well organized. Second, it created a template upon which classroom relations
could be organized and into which students could imaginatively project themselves.

3. The Editorial Room in the Classroom

This section describes how Shuman’s text presented an image of the metropolitan
daily editorial room as a stable site of occupational activity. It first drew on spatial metaphors
to delimit realms of occupational activity, thus distinguishing writing occupations from
business and production. And then it organized occupations within the writing space along
hierarchies of knowledge and authority. The following section describes how texts
appropriated the role of the city editor as the sole source of discipline and authority over the
reporter. Finally, I consider how this positioning enabled the creation of an artificial
professional space within the classroom which subordinated the student to the role of novice
reporter beholden to the knowledge and authority of textbook and instructor.

Nerone and Barnhurst describe the editorial room today as “an inscribed space” in
which reporters exercise some professional autonomy, but in frequent interaction and under
the surveillance of editors (2003, pg. 435). Their research suggests that this space did not
begin to emerge in metropolitan newspapers as a physical space completely separate from
printing or business activities until mid-century, and then only at larger newspapers (pg. 438).
Yet Shuman describes the editorial room as an established space for the production of news
texts. In fact, he organizes a description of the various employees at a newspaper in terms of
the space in which they work, to which they belong: "The counting room has its business
manager, the editorial room its editor-in-chief and its managing editor, the composing room
its foreman and compositors and proof-readers, the stereotype and press rooms their
respective craftsmen…” (SHUMAN, pg. 19). The status and class implications of these
descriptions—for example in denoting press room employees as “craftsmen”—serve to
underscore the special status of journalism as a profession, as opposed to a business or trade.
The physical separation of their occupational spaces is even underscored in the arrangement
of text: business and trade are described together in a single paragraph; the editorial room
staff is described in a separate one. After thus situating news professionals in opposition to the
other occupational groups comprising the newspaper’s workforce, Shuman then moves to the
editorial room.

The term used in Nerone and Banhurst is “newsroom.” However, as they note, that term was not in popular use
in the time period being discussed here (2003, pg. 441). To avoid confusion, I have used the term “editorial
room” throughout to describe what would today be known as a “newsroom,” a space in which newspaper
reporters and editors worked to gather and report news.
This shift in emphasis is accomplished grammatically by shifting into a present tense narrative. Shuman literally and grammatically commands the reader’s attention: “Now, notice how the editorial room is organized…” (pg. 19). He then takes the reader on an imaginary tour of the editorial room, describing its occupational hierarchy in terms of position, in descending order, from the editorial head. “At the head stands the editor-in-chief who shapes the editorial policy of the paper” (pg. 19). As the “head,” the editor-in-chief is the thinking brain for the rest of the organization, setting the agenda for newsgathering and deciding what the paper “thinks” about the news and will express editorially. Shuman then describes the remaining editorial room staff in terms of spatial relations which also order their position in the hierarchy of authority: “Next in authority is the managing editor…under his control we find the city editor…” and so on, until he reaches the “bottom of the list…the reporter, the beginner” (pg. 21). This narrative tour demonstrates the reporter’s position within the newspaper establishment as a whole. As professionals, reporters would be above business and tradesmen. However, as novices, reporters are at the bottom of the professional hierarchy. However, the emphasis on the reporter’s low professional status is ameliorated by the equal emphasis throughout the text on his ability to “move up” in the organization through hard work.

To some degree, the emergence of college journalism programs reflects a confluence of trends in the late nineteenth century. Bledstein (1978) describes a culture of professionalism emerging in this period in tandem with the reorganization and expansion of the university system. He traces a mutually beneficial relationship between the development of modern higher education and the solidification of a middle-class identity based on what he describes as a "vertical vision" of the potential for infinite personal and social progress (105). The word career took on its modern sense in this period, describing “a pre-established total pattern of organized professional activity with upward movement through recognized preparatory stages, and advancement based on merit and bearing honor” (BLEDSTEIN, 1978, pg. 172). Thus, the concept of a professional career situated vertical vision, the organizing feature of middle class self-identity, within the workplace and installed the university as its gatekeepeper. With titles like Steps Into Journalism (SHUMAN, 1894) and The Ladder of Journalism (How to Climb It) (CAMPBELL-COPELAND, 1889) journalism textbooks captured the vertical vision implicit in the idea of college education as a first step toward career development.

In the next section, I will describe in more specific detail the means by which Shuman discursively positioned the student in the role of the reporter.

4. The Role of the Student/Reporter

Shuman’s text makes three important moves in order to position the student in the role of the reporter: First, it establishes the reporter’s subordination to the city editor, then it appropriates the role of city editor as repository of professional knowledge, and finally it discursively positions the student in the reporter’s place.

In the general tour of newspaper spaces, the city editor occupied a subordinate position “under” the managing editor. However, once Shuman turns his attention to the subsection of the editorial staff which a reporter would occupy, the city editor’s authority swells to encompass not only the physical space of the local news department, but also the subordinate bodies that occupy it. “Though in a sense subordinate” himself to more powerful editors in the staff hierarchy, the city editor “is the czar of the local room.” He has dominion over “all the news within a hundred miles of the city” (pg. 20). The city editor’s rule also extends over the reporters, controlling not only their work activities, but their bodily needs (and, one might assume, functions). They are “his minions, subject to his orders at every hour.
of the day; they may not even go out to lunch without his knowledge and consent” (SHUMAN, pg. 20). The city editor is able to exert this level of control over bodies through his control of the texts they produce, specifically the form and content of the stories that will be published in the news section (SHUMAN, pg. 20-21). A chapter of Shuman’s text titled “Day with a Reporter” begins not by describing the reporter’s day, but rather by emphasizing the responsibilities of the city editor. He is described as an “Angel with a flaming sword” guarding the pages of the news section (pg. 44). In this rich, albeit clichéd, metaphor, the pages of the newspaper are figured as a space into which the reporter wishes to “enter” as text. The news story is the central genre around which editorial room relationships are organized. The city editor’s power resides in his authority over the production and circulation of news texts: he decides what situation reporters will write in response to and then judges the fitness of their writing for presentation to the paper’s audience.

However, the news story also mediates the transfer of professional knowledge from city editor to reporter. Shuman describes the city editor as a Damocles with not one, but two swords—the threat of being scooped by another paper and the threat of a libel suit—hanging over his head (pg. 44). His position is located at the convergence of the dominant values of the organization: timeliness and accuracy. The reporter’s professional responsibility is thus represented as a responsibility to the city editor. In order to protect the city editor from losing his head, the reporter must gather the most factual, up-to-the-minute information in order to get the facts and get them first. Again, this relationship is rendered in a narration of physical space. As with the previous description of the Editor in Chief as the “head” of the editorial room, the city editor is the figurative and literal head of the city editorial room: "at his desk [the city editor] sits all day, with the telephone in front of him… reporters close at hand, ready to be feet and fingers for the ideas in his head " (44). However, as both Shuman and Copeland note, career advancement—which is the assumed goal of the professional—requires the reporter to demonstrate mastery of the professional knowledge possessed by the city editor. This is mastery gained in the process of composing news texts under the city editor’s supervision, but is also demonstrated by the ability to produce the same kind of text without editorial intervention. The following quote illustrates how the novice reporter learns to write a news story by composing under the city editor’s direction:

The reporter has a chance to learn the relative value of news from an expert judge. When sent out to investigate a ‘tip’ that gives promise of a story, the first thing that he does on his return is to report the results of his quest in the fewest possible words to the city editor. In a flash the latter will weigh the value of the story, take into account the space still to be filled, and tell the reporter how many words to make of it—whether a stickful (about 160 words) , two or three sticks, half a column or a column. Under this training the new man soon learns to judge for himself almost instinctively what an item is worth, and to avoid wasting time in collecting minutiae on a worthless lead. (60)

Through guided practice, the reporter moves from having to learn from the city editor the value of news (calculated in terms of space allotted in the newspaper) to being able to judge for himself “what an item is worth.” Mastery of the genre signifies his absorption of the professional knowledge and values that were formerly the provenance of the city editor. As Copeland states, “The moment a young man exhibits that journalistic instinct and prompt judgment which enables him to determine, without consultation with his superiors, exactly what an item is worth in point of space, he is on the highway to promotion and his success in the profession is assured” (pg. 8). These quotations also demonstrate the degree to which professional knowledge and values were organized around the central concept of news sense, which will be discussed in more detail later.
Having established the authority of the city editor, Shuman’s next move is to usurp that authority by appropriating the city editor’s knowledge. The introduction of Shuman’s text describes the book as a “condensation” of the “editor’s hard earned knowledge” (1894, pg. ix). Shuman concludes, “But most editors, after having come through this ordeal, are either too busy to analyze and systematize the knowledge that has been pounded into them by grim experience, or too weary to give advice save in emphatic and sweeping negatives. Hence things that to them are commonplace, to the outside world are secrets” (1894, pg. ix). Likewise, Copeland claims to have collected and systematized the accrued knowledge of the "veteran" in order to make the "beginner's work simpler and more systematic" (iii).

These claims to have systematized the inchoate knowledge of the editor is a move enabled by the discourses of professionalism circulating in late nineteenth century American culture. In this period, an occupation’s status as a profession hinged on its ability to demonstrate the “scientific” authority of its specialized knowledge. The word “science” in this sense denotes an approach to knowledge that could be applied to any subject, “In contrast to its art or applied nature, any subject could be taught scientifically, according to its philosophic premises; methodically examined in the dry light of pure principles” (BLEDSTEIN, pg. 285). Textbooks took up this discourse, for example when Shuman (1894) describes journalism as a science and claims that “in so far as it is a science it can be taught by instruction and advice (pg. 3). The university became the site for such examinations, establishing coherent, uniform educational regimes that promised to efficiently collect and disseminate professional knowledge. However, in a 1904 essay printed in The Nation, Joseph Pulitzer reminded readers that those training regimes also served a pragmatic purpose. Invoking economies of scale, he argued that a capable editor engaged in the day-to-day activities of his position could train only one journalist on the job, while the same editor, by devoting himself “heart and soul” to training students might turn out forty successful journalists (1904, p. 647). Unintentionally, Pulitzer also highlights the contradiction at the heart of teaching professional writing. The editor is the repository of professional knowledge and values. But by eschewing editorial duties in order to teach full-time the editor must leave the professional space in order to enter the educational one: he is no longer an editor, he’s a teacher. Textbooks like Shuman’s mediated that contradiction by translating professional knowledge into the classroom space, thereby appropriating the city editor’s role as repository of professional knowledge and authority.

In attempting to teach workplace genres, teachers—and texts—must select from a wide range of explicit and tacit professional knowledge and beliefs in order to draw out those features of situation and context that will be most salient to their students. Bazerman (1994) describes every classroom as a “reduction,” “an elimination of unrealized alternatives and underlying dynamics not attended to” (pg. 29). At the same time, teachers can attempt to expand the classroom by connecting student writing to outside situations or audiences (for example by having students write and submit letters to the editor of the local paper) or by attempting to “constitute the entire class as a socio-communicative microcosm” (Bazerman, 1994, pg. 30).

Descriptions of early journalism classes suggest that teachers chose the latter, striving to constitute the classroom as an editorial room. For example, the year before Shuman’s text appeared on the market, Joseph French Johnson, formerly a staff writer at the Chicago Tribune began teaching journalism at the University of Pennsylvania. Performing the role of a city editor, Johnson gave students assignments to cover in Philadelphia (LEE, 1918, pg. 10). Efforts like Johnson’s were consistent with the cultural discourse of professionalization. Education proponents invoked the laboratory model to describe practical courses like Johnson’s as “lab courses in actual newspaper making” (Eliot qtd in LEE, pg. 12). Textbooks helped create the conditions for further uptakes by providing rich description of the
organization and activities of the editorial room, which could be re-enacted in the classroom by teachers and students. Moreover, the books worked to situate the student in the place of the reporter, the entry-level position in a newspaper office.

As demonstrated above, Shuman’s text frequently invokes the presence of the reader in the text by using the grammatical first person, as when he commands the reader to join him on a tour of the office or directs his attention to particular persons or details in the editorial room. This mode of address is an invitation for the reader to enter the scene and observe, as when he writes "we will follow a reporter through his duties for one day and see what he does and how he does it" (Shuman, pg. 50). However, the text also employs the grammatical first person to direct the reader to behave and think in professionally appropriate ways. As, for example, when it warns writers about the anonymity of newspaper work in order to reaffirm professional values: “Banish from your heads at once any nonsense about becoming celebrated. Be content with distinction in your own office. Be renowned within its walls for industry, accuracy, speed and good copy” (Shuman, pg. 84). Here, the text underscores the professional values of speed, hard work, and “good copy.” It also discursively situates the reader within the occupational space of the editorial room, and establishes it as the source of approval and validation. The text’s effectiveness depends on the reader’s recognition that it “speaks” from a position of authority. Having appropriated the city editor’s claim to professional knowledge, the textbook works to position the student as if he were already a reporter by addressing him from the city editor’s position of authority.

5. The Nose for News: Professional Behaviors and Patterns of Thought

The previous section described how the text situates the reporter in relation to other newsworkers, placing him in subordinate relation to the city editor, and further, how it positions the student in the role of the novice reporter. This section examines how the text conveys what a reporter is and what a reporter does. While the “product” of the newspaper is text, the textbooks provides relatively little instruction on writing form or style. Rather than modeling genre forms, they instead provide colorful narratives to describe the situations in which these texts would be produced.

"We will follow a reporter through his duties for one day and see what he does and how he does it," Shuman tells his readers (50). Shuman then narrates a story in which he casts the reader as a reporter looking for news: "suppose you are a young man doing general assignments on a Chicago morning paper" he commands (50). The story that follows reads like an adventure tale in which the reader/reporter leaps into a sinking tugboat to interview rescue workers and the boat’s crew, before dutifully reporting back to the city editor. The reader is explicitly cast in the role of the novice reporter. In his zeal to gather the facts of the story and report them to the city editor, he demonstrates the professional values of accuracy and speed, and he reaffirms his subordinate position to the city editor. “Then off you go to report to your chief. You may have to run a mile before you can find an available telephone, but keep a stiff upper lip; such annoyances are part of the business” (51). The story also models appropriate writing behaviors in a long narration about the composing process. Having been instructed by the city editor to “play up” the story “for columns,” the reporter begins composing it on the way back to the office:

During the ride you have your thinking cap on, and are arranging the facts in your head so that when you reach your desk you will have your opening sentences all ready to dash down, and the rest of the story arranged in your mind just as if you were going to give the whole as an extempore speech, point after point, all ready to flow from the nib of your pen as fast as you can scribble. That is the way it goes with the reporter who knows his business. But woe to the man who comes back with the
whole thing in a jumble in his head, so that he cannot write it out in a reasonable time. (52)

Shuman’s text shows students how reporters write by positioning them in the role of the reporter writing a story, without actually showing them what that writing looks like. The text does not provide a sample news story or exercises in which the student might then conduct an interview or write a story. Shuman’s text teaches writing by asking students to imagine themselves performing the actions of a writer. Moreover, the writing behavior modeled in this story underscores professional values like speed and accuracy. Like Shuman, Copeland also provides detailed descriptions of newsgathering. However, he describes more pedestrian (and probably more typical) news events like weddings and speeches. In both texts, however, the central principle around which the professional identity is organized in these stories is “news sense” or the “nose for news,” a finely grained sense of audience and purpose, an awareness of what makes a good news story and the best way to present it in writing.

"What is news?" journalist Eugene Camp asked in an 1888 speech. "The books do not tell us," rather, he asserts, reporters learn what news is on the job through trial and error, "Little by little they [learn] to know news when they [see] it, and to relate it in a shape at least good enough to sell" (pg. 6). Camp was speaking in front of the Alumni Association of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business to advocate for the establishment of journalism programs. His challenge was taken up by people like Shuman. However, Shuman’s book attempts to describe not the quality of news itself, but rather the reporter’s ability to identify it. The “nose for news” is the most important qualification for success as a reporter. However, he also attributes this quality to a nature, describing it as a “sixth sense.” Despite the textbook’s claims to have systematized the science of journalism, the most important quality a journalist possesses is one that, “occurs naturally in some, is learned by others, and will never be had by some (pg. 61).

Throughout both Shuman and Copeland’s texts, the writers grapple with the problem of making explicit ways of thinking based largely on tacit values of the community. As noted above, reporters were instructed to gather information and judge its “value” in terms of the amount of space it should occupy in the paper. However, Copeland cautions novice reporters that events they perceive as disastrous, such as fires or accidents, may merit only half a dozen lines. Such cases require the reporter to “boil down” the story to its most essential details and it is “the perception of this necessity which constitutes the true journalist” (pg. 8). Likewise, Shuman instructs writers to, “put your best strongest, most startling statement first. Get the pith and point of your whole article into the first sentence or at least into the first paragraph” so that the rest of the story may be cut if necessary without losing “the point” (pg. 23). However, what’s not stated in either example is the degree to which the essential details are a matter of the community’s values. If a warehouse burned down, what would be more “startling,” the millions of dollars in damage or the loss of three fire fighters’ lives in the blaze? Neither text author is able to define news sense, but Shuman attempts to illustrate it with an amusing anecdote about “a talented graduate of an Eastern college" who is sent to cover a balloon ascension. The upshot is that he comes back to the office without a story because the ascension was ruined by an accident that killed 12 people (SHUMAN, pg. 61). Clearly, this reporter was one of Shuman’s unfortunate few who was neither born with nor able to learn news sense. His failure to report the story is a misread of his editor’s order to “get the story.” Put into Freadman’s terms, it’s a failure to return the editor’s shot according to the rules of the game. Casting a college graduate in the part of the rube is also a shot: laughing at the joke proves that the student, unlike the reporter in the story, knows the rules of the game. The savvy reader “gets” the story.
6. Conclusion

New York Herald editor Whitelaw Reid hoped journalism education would promote integrity and commitment among journalists by creating an esprit de corps as well as by fostering a higher quality of reporting to which future initiates would aspire. He and others like Joseph Pulitzer and New York Sun editor Charles Dana also invoked journalism’s democratic function to argue that better educated journalists would do a better job of educating the voting public. All of these arguments were based on the idea that education would bring professionalism, which would raise the self-esteem and social standing of journalists as it had for workers in professions like law and medicine.

However, for press reformers, professionalization served both idealistic and pragmatic functions. Beneath the vaunted rhetoric about democracy and esprit de corps, reformers also argued that higher education would systematize and economize the training of new journalists. Newsroom apprenticeship was time consuming and inefficient, monopolizing the time of already busy city editors and testing the tenacity of aspiring journalists who were overworked, abused, and underpaid. There are no exact figures on reporters salaries in the 1880 and 90s, but one estimate is that journalists averaged around $3.75 per day for a 10 to 14 hour workday (SMYTHE 1998). Pulitzer compared the training process to natural selection, or “training through bitter experience” comparable to “the burns that make the child dread the fire” (642). He argued that the introduction of a “higher class” of trained journalists would spur other journalists to work harder. He had applied the same principles to management of The World news room by encouraging dissension between editors and even pitting employees against each other in competition for the same job (SMYTHE 1998). Those working for the professionalization of journalism hoped not only to elevate the profession, but to streamline and economize the process of training new employees.

Early college programs in journalism provide a rich site for inquiry into the operations of professionalization. They were supported by state press associations, courses were staffed by working or former journalists, and the authority of early textbooks was tied to their authors’ journalistic credentials. Shuman, for example, was literary editor of the Chicago Tribune. Freedman describes a book as a “material space like an office or a classroom” whose arrangements of form and content frame the situation of reading (1994, pg. 60). In translating occupational knowledge into educational discourse, Shuman’s text crossed the boundary separating work and educational spaces. In doing so, it took up both the pragmatic and idealistic aspects of the occupation’s drive to professionalize: the need to train students in professional roles and behaviors and the need to validate those roles and behaviors as professional. The book’s presence in the classroom signifies the status of the profession. And the text’s presentation of a stable image of professional spaces and roles further serves to stabilize the profession. Thus the text signifies both forward and backward, it serves to affirm the stability of a profession that it is creating through the very act of signification.

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