

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO WORLD LITERARY JOURNALISM

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9

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Theoretical and practical justifications of journalistic storytelling in the German language region invariably ascribe key significance to the concept of truth, or truthfulness.¹ At their core, these discussions boil down to how equipped journalism is to convey an adequate image of social reality to its audience. Indeed, the emergence of modern literary journalism—or *Literarischer Journalismus*—in Germany can essentially be attributed to a general dissatisfaction with the text forms of a supposedly “objective” news journalism.² According to a popular critique, the traditional inverted-pyramid form, with its principle of a pure rendition of facts, can hardly live up to the aim of making social interrelations comprehensible. Rather, there is a necessity for a narrative approach, as brought to bear in the genre of reportage, to fulfill the journalistic aim of a truthful coverage by creating authenticity (in the sense of genuineness and immediacy).³

However, literary journalism—at least in the German-speaking world—is also eyed with suspicion. A free use of stylistic devices borrowed from literature, particularly an all-too-careless juggling with facts and fiction, is not compatible with journalism’s social mandate, as Bernd Blöbaum warns.⁴ Scandalous examples, including the one of Swiss author Tom Kummer, who in the 1990s faked numerous celebrity interviews for the magazine of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* by referencing an allegedly new “borderline journalism,”⁵ seem to confirm the point. In such cases, literary journalism turns into an ethical problem that, according to professional standards, would need to be cleared out, but in no case promoted.

These contradictory perspectives raise questions about the responsibility of literary journalists: How far can narrative presentation go in a story and still be considered an appropriate vehicle to support the professional imperative of truthful journalistic coverage? Which standards must be heeded? And, most importantly, is the use of stylistic devices of fiction acceptable and, if so, where is the boundary between that use and forgery and intentional manipulation? This chapter discusses these questions from an ethical perspective, using the example of Claas Relotius’s narrative journalism. Toward the end of 2018, his work provoked one of the biggest fraud scandals of the recent journalism history in Germany.⁶

Chronology of the Relotius Case

Among his colleagues, Relotius counted as one of the most talented literary journalists of his generation. His pieces were published in some of the most renowned print media in the German-speaking world, most notably in the news magazine *Der Spiegel*, for which he not only wrote a regular column entitled “Eine Meldung und ihre Geschichte” [A news item and its story], but also brought to perfection the so-called reconstructive reportage—a specific narrative form that had been flourishing in the magazine for at least a decade. In December 2018, at age 33, Relotius received for the fourth time the German “Reporterpreis,” the most prestigious national award for narrative journalism. Less than three weeks later, it was revealed that he had fabricated many of his texts, either partly through decorating details or substantially by inventing central protagonists. In a first statement, his direct superior Ullrich Fichtner commented:

Truth and lies are mixed together in his articles and some, at least according to him, were even cleanly reported and free of fabrication. Others, he admits, were embellished with fudged quotes and other made-up facts. Still others were entirely fabricated.⁷

Afterwards, Relotius had no other choice but to confess his fraud, return his awards, and resign from his job at *Der Spiegel*.

The exposure of the fraudster immediately triggered lively, and to some extent outraged, discussion both within the profession and in the broad public. Thus, the Relotius case also developed into a lesson in matters of public media criticism that illustrates the potentials and pitfalls of different instruments of journalistic quality management and transparency measures at the level of the newsroom.⁸ Thanks to countless journalistic publications about this issue, not least by *Der Spiegel* itself, many details on the background of the case have been made public. Consequently, today we know that:

- The revelations by no means started only on December 19, 2018, when *Der Spiegel* announced that it had found its star reporter Relotius guilty of systematic fraud. Rather, his colleague within the newsroom, Juan Moreno, had been distrustful for weeks, but had to overcome severe resistance to convince the chief editors of any misdemeanor.
- *Der Spiegel* eventually undertook efforts to uncover the truth. Between January and May 2019, an internal commission examined the newsroom structures that paved the way for the scandal and documented its finding in an extensive report.⁹ Two senior editors from the “Gesellschaft” section, Ullrich Fichtner and Matthias Geyer, were forced to waive guaranteed promotions.
- In September 2019, Juan Moreno published his own view of the case in his book *Tausend Zeilen Lüge* [A thousand lines of lies].¹⁰ Shortly afterwards, Relotius rejoined, taking umbrage at the publication, and was quoted as saying that Moreno had disseminated “substantial misrepresentation and falsehood.”¹¹ Relotius threatened with legal actions through his lawyer, but the case remains unresolved.

Despite the animated journalistic coverage, a systematic academic analysis of the case, which also follows up on the ethical discourse about truth and truthfulness, is still missing. The study presented in this chapter intends to help fill this research gap with a content analysis that makes it possible to reconstruct the public discourse about the fraud case. Before the methodological

approach of the empirical study is introduced in more detail, however, a condensed overview of the state of research on the history and present of journalistic storytelling in the German-speaking world is necessary. In this context, previous empirical studies by this author will prove helpful for a contextualization of the current case.

Guarded Traditions and Current Trends in Germany's Journalistic Storytelling

Historically oriented research from literary and journalism studies leaves no doubt that practices of journalistic storytelling have a long tradition in the German language region.¹² At many stages of this development, literary and journalistic techniques of communication have cross-fertilized each other.

The first precursors of the genre that is commonly described as literary journalism can be traced back to the early sixteenth century.¹³ Little by little, a “journalization of literature”¹⁴ came into effect, experiencing a first bloom during the Young Germany era that preceded the 1848 *Vormärz*, or March Revolution. In the course of the professionalization of journalism since the mid-nineteenth century, more and more journalists interpreted their profession in the sense of a possibly timely transmission of current information.¹⁵ Simultaneously, however, contrastive types of genres that purposefully rely on stylistic devices of literature, such as feuilletonism and literary reportage, flourished.¹⁶ In the short time between the two World Wars, literary journalism reached its heyday—owing to authors such as Egon Erwin Kisch and Joseph Roth, whose works are still recognized as landmarks of the genre today.¹⁷ However, all of this found an abrupt end with Hitler's regime and its gradual “*Gleichschaltung*,” or synchronization, of the press. New efforts for a revitalization of journalistic storytelling after World War II can be found, among other things, in the reportages of documentary literature.¹⁸ Since at least the 1970s, reportage and story genres have also experienced a new appreciation in daily news journalism¹⁹—not least inspired by international trends—for example, North American New Journalism.²⁰ This appreciation remains in Germany today.²¹

Even if the various German approaches to journalistic storytelling discussed here differ considerably, they all share one commonality: they make use of different literary techniques for journalistic purposes in order to fulfill their social mandates in the best possible way.²² As Gunter Reus demonstrates, this is also true for stylistic devices of fiction, which have a long tradition in journalism²³ and, most importantly, constitute an effective and established instrument for invigorating the authenticity of journalistic contributions, particularly in narrative journalism. Of course, journalism is “primarily a procedure pledged to reality,”²⁴ which focuses on real events, conditions, or statements, and is thus based on facts. To communicate and interpret these facts, however, journalism has looked time and again—generally without opposition—to fictional techniques. Examples can be found (in shades of varying intensity) in the use of metaphors, associations, and comparisons; irony and satire; dramaturgic arrangement of the material; scenic decoration; and sometimes the inclusion of composite or even fabricated characters or situations. Such instances of “fictionalization” were and are, according to Reus, “present in all journalistic text forms”: “[They] represent, even if often unconsciously and mostly unspectacularly, a firm constituent of professional conventions.”²⁵

This can be illustrated with the so-called scenic reconstruction, a technique of representation commonplace among contemporary reportages.²⁶ It follows the idea that events can be portrayed as scenes in a reportage, even if the reporter could not observe them at first hand. Of course, the postulate of truthfulness, which is constitutive for journalism, remains implicit

because the account of a scenic reconstruction is (usually) based on thorough research (background interviews, for example, with key eyewitnesses). However, the reporter fictionalizes the account by suggesting through their narrative perspective that they have directly experienced the events covered. Particularly in the case of past events, scenic reconstruction in narrative form often provides the only means possible to process a topic²⁷— in the case of a court reportage, for instance, where large parts of the action are usually reconstructed from files.

The assumption that such techniques of fictionalization are widely used in the quality German press today is corroborated by many actors in the media. In a series of interviews conducted long before the revelation of the Relotius fraud scandal on the risks and opportunities of narrative presentation in contemporary print journalism,²⁸ several senior editors of renowned news media admitted that they considered scenic reconstruction to be a legitimate journalistic method, one they often used themselves. As Ariel Hauptmeier, then editor with *GEO* and now head of *Reportageschule Reutlingen*, said, “The essence of a good reportage is reconstruction ... Either I have two weeks of time, like a *GEO* reporter, or I reconstruct. That’s a device that is used far too rarely.”²⁹

Sabine Rückert, who primarily worked as a court reporter for the weekly *Zeit* before rising to the rank of an editor-in-chief, added: “I work ... with reconstructions a lot, and I take large parts of what I write from files. Large parts—and, of course, the reader knows that. He knows that I was not present when the murder took place.”³⁰

Similarly, Jochen Arntz, who at the time of the interview was co-head of the reportage page “Seite 3” at *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, explained by reference to one of his own reportages:

I once wrote ... a story about Walter Kohl [son of the late German Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl]. In the opening section, he stood at the cemetery in Ludwigshafen and recited the farewell letter by his mother at his mother’s grave. I was not there ... Nevertheless, I described it as if I was there, so that you can imagine the scene. I am not a purist in this regard. I think that, if you talked to people about these things, you can describe it.³¹

Freelance author Erwin Koch, who has also been publishing in *Der Spiegel* for years, argues even more explicitly:

As far as my texts are concerned: I am simply ... taking the right to reconstruct a life and describe it in the present tense as a chronicle. Facts are sacred, that’s for sure. Whether a dialogue has taken place in exactly this form, I do not know. This is what I have been told ... I am simply taking the right now. Full stop.³²

Cordt Schnibben, who became chief editor of the newly founded magazine *Spiegel Reporter* in 1999, headed the “Gesellschaft” section of *Der Spiegel* from 2001 to 2013, thereby contributing to a notable rise of narrative journalism within these publications. In a comment that is particularly interesting for the analysis of the Relotius case, he recalled:

And what we did then, since the mid-’90s, is that we turned this form of journalism into something big. I mean not only ... into a one- or two-page story, but we said: “Okay, if we do it reportage-like, then we’ll do it properly.” And this developed into more and more reportages, and then also the form of scenic reconstruction. The scenic reconstruction is the XXL version of a news story.³³

Of course, Schnibben no longer had any editorial responsibility at *Der Spiegel* when Relotius obtained a permanent position as a reporter in the “Gesellschaft” section in 2017. However, he was complicit in establishing a reportage culture at *Der Spiegel* that tolerated and even justified fictional forms of representation in journalism. In this respect, the excerpts from the interviews reported above also raise questions about organizational responsibility in the Relotius case.

Empirical Research: Results from Content Analysis

Methodological Preliminaries

To illuminate the wide-reaching ethical breaches of the Relotius case, content analysis of the public discourse following the uncovering of the fraud scandal was conducted during the study presented here. The analysis focused on the journalistic coverage in seven selected daily and weekly newspapers or news magazines (including their respective online editions) that had informed the debate: *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, *Die Welt*, *die tageszeitung (taz)*, *Bild*, *Zeit*, and *Der Spiegel* itself. The investigation, which covered the 12-month period from December 1, 2018 to November 30, 2019, analyzed the contributions to the fraud scandal debate in the aforementioned media. Articles were first uncovered through a quick archival search for the term “Relotius” and then examined more closely. Only those articles which had devoted observable and substantial space to the debate (at least 50 percent of the text length) were selected for analysis. Few coextensive duplicates were eliminated from the sample.

For the analytical process, quantitative and qualitative approaches were combined. Alongside several formal categories (medium, date of publication, author, length, text form, and so on), the following content categories were evaluated: main topic, actors, frames, and rhetorical characteristics. While the deductively codable categories were subjected to a complete inventory of the constructed text corpus, the inductive coding of the predominant frames of the coverage and their rhetorical techniques was restricted to a random sample of ten texts per analyzed medium.³⁴

The aim of this procedure was to enable a differentiated examination of the (publicly discerned) causes and consequences of the Relotius case. The results offer a promising basis for a reflection on the effectiveness of professional standards for narrative journalism in current news media.

The Relotius Case in the Public Discourse

The completed content analysis shows that the public discourse about the Relotius case obviously has been conducted in a very lively manner and—rather atypical for the dramaturgy of media scandals³⁵—over a comparatively long period of time. In the seven analyzed media, a total of 274 contributions to the debate can be found from December 2018 to November 2019 (see Figure 9.1). Many contributions were published directly after the disclosure of the case. In December 2018, 131 published articles can be detected—almost half of the basic population. By February 2019, media interest clearly declines and yet the issue never completely disappears from coverage. Ultimately, there are scattered examples of journalistic articles that continue the discussion about the different dimensions of the case throughout the following year. One occasion, for example, is the news that Relotius’s former superiors, Ullrich Fichtner and Matthias Geyer, must also accept personnel

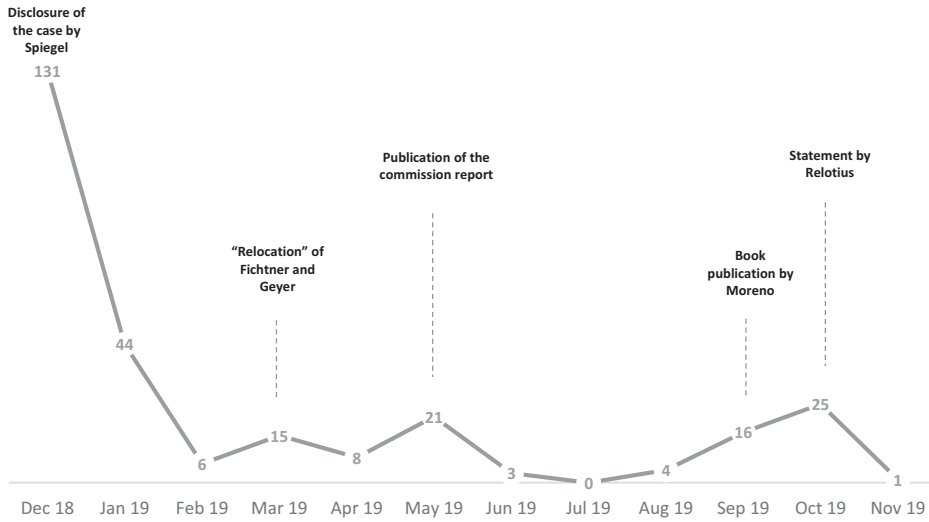


Figure 9.1 Number of articles over time (N = 274)

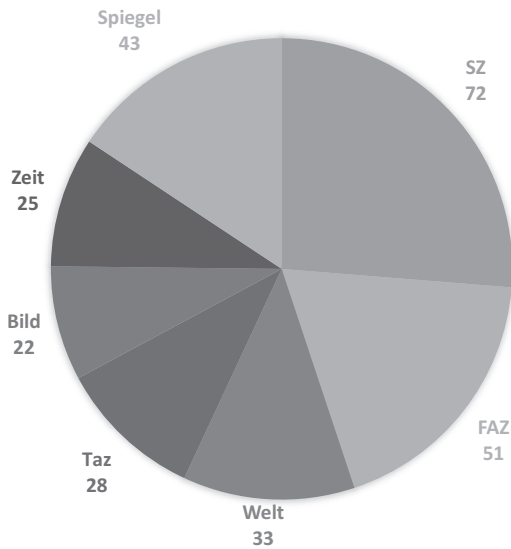


Figure 9.2 Number of articles per medium (N = 274)

consequences for the scandal. Similarly, the publication of the final report by the internal investigation committee at *Der Spiegel* entails further coverage in May 2019. The same is true—and more obvious—for the publication of Juan Moreno’s book in September 2019, and Relotius’s subsequent rejoinder. Moreover, a comparativist coverage of the media selected reveals that their approaches do not differ only quantitatively (see Fig. 9.2), but also qualitatively.

A key role in the coverage is taken over by *Der Spiegel* itself, as its self-coverage made the misconduct by Relotius public in the first place. In the year analyzed, *Der Spiegel* published

43 contributions on the case, most of them by December 2018 and January 2019. Multiple times, editor-in-chief Steffen Klusmann voices concern, apologizes, and announces retaliatory measures. Many further contributions attempt to work up the events in the form of a report, and thus render it transparent.

The highest frequency of the coverage can be found in *SZ* and *FAZ* with 72 and 51 contributions respectively. In both newspapers, the coverage is located primarily on the media page. The bandwidth of text forms is larger compared with *Der Spiegel*. In addition to news items and comments, both papers also publish interviews, guest essays, correspondent reports, and so on. Those forms are used to complement even further the already broad spectrum of opinions in the coverage.

Welt, *taz*, and *Bild* report less frequently than *SZ* and *FAZ*. While in *Die Welt* a large part of the contributions comes from media reporter Christian Meier, *die taz* deploys a more significant number of authors. Both papers do not shy away from open criticism of *Der Spiegel*. In the newspaper *Bild*, comparatively few contributions carry a name tag. Here, it is striking that quite often non-journalistic actors randomly appear in the coverage—for instance, in purposefully selected statements delivered by political decision-makers. Moreover, the coverage is more personalized than in other media.

In contrast to the daily newspapers, the weekly *Zeit* published comparatively few news pieces. Instead, comments and analyses dominate the coverage, supplemented by occasional glosses, columns, and interviews. Quite early in the course of time, a comparatively broad bandwidth of different positions on the case was published. After January 2019, however, the *Zeit* hardly takes part in the debate.

Causes for the Relotius Case

A qualitative analysis of the coverage makes it possible to identify different content dimensions. The view on varying ascriptions of responsibility is particularly interesting because, as a matter of fact, the evaluated media focus on quite different causes for the case. Altogether, four central causal frames can be differentiated, some of which are located at the micro level, some at the meso level, and some at the macro level (see Figure 9.3).

The most dominant frame is found at the micro level. It can be called the “lone perpetrator” frame, and it surfaces in more than half (57 percent) of the analyzed contributions. According to this view, the main cause for the fraud scandal is Relotius’s personality. Many articles describe him as a “pathological”³⁶ liar and impostor “with treacherous energy.”³⁷ His fabrications are thus seen primarily as an isolated psychological problem, and only secondarily as an editorial one.

The lone perpetrator frame in many cases overlaps with the image of a “passively tolerating newsroom” (33 percent) at the meso level. Several observers see at least a partial responsibility of the newsroom because of insufficient quality management. While the specific fabrications revert back to the individual Relotius himself in this perspective, the observers also admit that they could only have been published because the renowned “Dokumentation,” *Der Spiegel*’s fact-checking department, “failed.”³⁸

Even higher organizational responsibility can be found in the articles with the frame of the “actively promoting newsroom” (30 percent). There are several hints, for example, that Relotius was apparently motivated by his seniors to adhere to predefined plots and protagonists for his stories. The structures of the “Gesellschaft” section within *Der Spiegel*, which are repeatedly criticized as elitist, seem to have contributed to such practices. Generally, *Der Spiegel* is said to lack an open and constructive error culture.

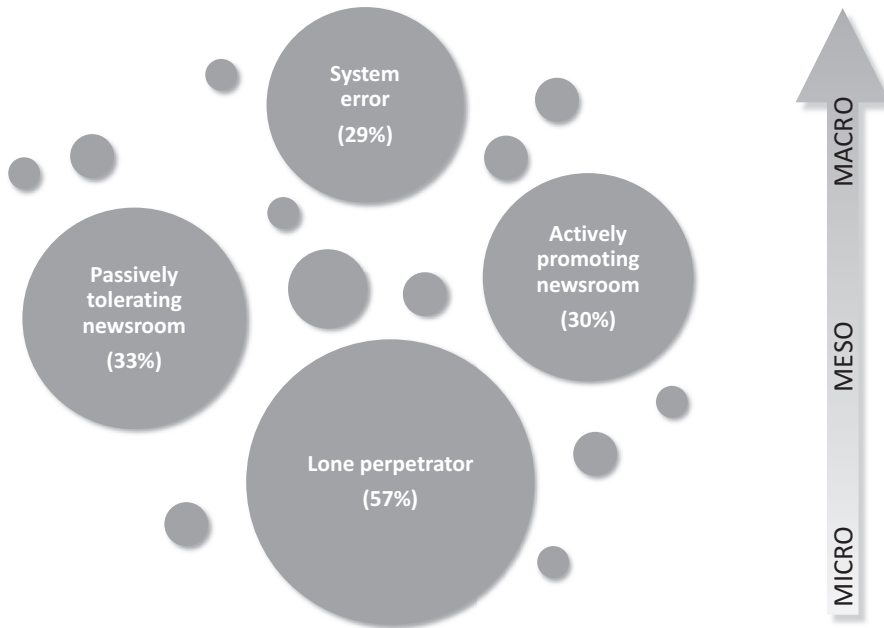


Figure 9.3 Causal frames and their share in the coverage (n = 70)

The final frame goes one step further. It can be described with the catchword “system error” (29 percent) and sees the causes for the case in constraints at the level of the journalism system overall (macro level). Some observers, for example, hint at the pressure caused by certain journalism awards to favor fabrications. Generally, the reportage as a subjective text form is characterized as being specifically susceptible to forgeries—which, however, is not the newsroom’s fault.

These four causal frames can be detected in the analyzed coverage throughout the whole sample period. It is noteworthy that the self-coverage of *Der Spiegel* was long dominated by the frames of the lone perpetrator and the passively tolerating newsroom, while other media come to more differentiated assessments in an early stage of the public debate. In the case of *Der Spiegel*, this does not change before May 2019, when the internal investigation commission presents its report. Afterwards, it becomes hard to deny at least some kind of co-responsibility of the newsroom.

Consequences of the Relotius Case

From the perspective of media ethics, an analysis of the public discourse on the Relotius case is important because the coverage debates the most different consequences and possible measures. A comparison of the evaluated media basically shows that it is possible to distinguish measures within and measures outside of the journalism system (see Figure 9.4).

Individual measures	Organizational measures	Professional measures	Legal measures	Artistic measures	Civil society measures	No measures
Personal apology	Disclosure/verification	Media journalism	Labor law measures	Satire	Fact-checking by person concerned	Protection of journalistic freedom
Termination of work contract	Staff changes	Reform of education	Civil law measures	Motion picture	Letter to the editor	“No reason for hysteria”
Return of awards	Investigation committee	Reform of award system	Penal law measures		Media criticism via social media	
	Reform of quality management	Debate about professional identity			Academic media criticism	
	Reform of internal structures					
	Newsroom guidelines					
	Ombuds-commission					

Figure 9.4 Discussed measures

Within the journalism system, measures at the individual, the organizational, and the professional levels can be identified. Possible individual responses mostly concern Relotius himself. They include, for instance, a personal apology for his fabrications, a termination of his work contract at *Der Spiegel*, and the return of the journalism awards that he had won. A broader spectrum of possible measures can be found at the level of the newsroom. An important first step is seen in an unreserved disclosure of the case, followed by an internal examination—by an investigation committee, for example—and subsequent disciplinary action for liable staff members. Long-term measures are aimed at a reform of the quality management at *Der Spiegel*, a reform of the internal beat structures, the development of specific newsroom guidelines for journalistic storytelling and fact-checking, and the establishment of an ombuds commission. These measures have in fact been initiated by *Der Spiegel* in the period of investigation. Further measures are located at the professional level, thus affecting the entire system of journalism. Here, a central element is the critical observation and analysis of the case by media journalists in the daily press and trade publications. In addition, there have been repeated calls for reforming journalism education, particularly regarding narrative text forms; for reforming the culture of journalism awards; and for debating the professional identity of journalism in general.

Beyond the journalism system, legal, artistic, and civil society measures are also ponderable and even desirable, according to the content analysis. At the legal level, the coverage primarily discusses consequences for Relotius resulting from labor law, but measures in the context of civil law and penal law are also mentioned. Specific measures at the artistic level are found in the examination of the case with the means of satire, as well as in the form of a fictional motion picture. But the level of civil society also offers various opportunities for intervention. For example, sources that Relotius had used as protagonists in his texts became concerned citizens, post-publication. They themselves subjected the works to their own fact-checking procedures, uncovering false information. Further comments are found in manifold letters to the editor that covered the issue. Not least, during the investigation a dynamic media-critical debate developed on social media, complementing the journalistic coverage in various regards. Moreover, several academic experts (Michael Haller and Christoph Neuberger, to name two) spoke out in sporadic interviews, trying to assess the events from their perspective.

Without question, these measures can, each with differing means, contribute to journalistic quality management and thus to a sustainable elucidation of the Relotius case. However, the analyzed coverage also gives room to a few dissenting voices who are concerned with safeguarding journalistic freedom and warn of all-too-excessive control measures. Such statements go hand in hand with a distinct criticism of the “hysterical traits” of the debate, which is characterized as “unworldly”³⁹ and is believed to have caused more damage to journalism than good. It must be noted, however, that the concomitant recommendation by *taz* columnist Bettina Gaus to abstain from any kind of consequences of the case remains an exception in the coverage.

Conclusion: Ethical Contextualization

In sum, the study presented here demonstrates that one-sided recriminations and monocausal corrective measures are insufficient means to understanding the Relotius case. Instead, the empirical findings from the content analysis and the prepeded literature review advise a differentiated view on the current discussion about truth and truthfulness of (literary) journalism, which certainly goes beyond popular catchphrases such as “fake news” or “lying press.”

Thus, a review of the current research literature shows that stylistic devices of fiction have a long tradition in German-language narrative journalism and, in many cases, are an effective and well-established instrument to increase the authenticity of journalistic reporting. Interviews with senior editors reveal that fictionalized text forms, such as the scenic reconstruction, readily appear in many current quality media—normally without opposition. This is also true for *Der Spiegel*. Content analysis of the public discourse on the Relotius case assembled for this study makes it possible to discern specific causes and consequences of the fraud scandal. Accordingly, co-responsibility of the newsroom can hardly be denied. As a matter of fact, a bundle of different context factors seems to have created a scenario at *Der Spiegel* in which an undisputable misuse of fictional stylistic devices remained undiscovered (or ignored) for a long time, and potentially may even have been condoned. Claas Relotius’s individual misconduct notwithstanding, this also included failures at the level of the newsroom and overarching trends at the level of the journalism system.

Above all, the analysis also demonstrates that the responsible parties at *Der Spiegel* came to terms with the Relotius case in a thoroughly professional manner by opting for complete transparency in their treatment of the forgeries and delegating the further examination to an independent investigation committee. With the publication of the committee report, all essential problems were publicly displayed, and multiple measures (such as the development of newsroom guidelines and the establishment of an ombudsperson position) were initiated to prevent similar forgeries from being perpetuated in the future. However, the ethical problems of journalistic storytelling are by no means restricted to *Der Spiegel*. A sustainable debate about the Relotius case should therefore—and this is also suggested by the empirical study—involve actors and measures outside of the concerned newsroom, too.

From an ethical perspective, a thorough reflection on the options of presentation in contemporary narrative journalism seems to be of paramount importance, particularly regarding the risks and opportunities of fictional techniques. The new *Spiegel-Standards*⁴⁰ only partly allow for guidance when they postulate for the treatment of scenic presentations:

A scene can give an account of a subjective impression, but it must not falsify. Scenic presentations in texts are only allowed if they were experienced first-hand or the

source is accurately named. Describing a scene is reasonable if it leads into the story and encourages continued reading. If the scenes were not observed in person, but are based on accounts of third parties, the author must indicate this.⁴¹

Here, a more differentiated discussion about the potential for fictionalization in journalism would have been desirable, which, however, is hardly possible without a simultaneous assertion of the journalistic core task of truthful coverage. This process should be taken on by all parties interested in quality journalism—from journalists and media managers to journalism educators, media researchers, and the appropriately predisposed audience.

For a sustainable quality management in literary journalism, a broad spectrum of instruments with different degrees of institutionalization is available.⁴² This includes internal journalistic instruments such as codes of ethics, newsroom guidelines, systematic fact-checking, ombuds positions, and educational measures, as well as external media criticism through civil society actors. Ultimately, the conjunction of such diverse instruments in the Relotius case made it possible to reconsider the causes and consequences in a variety of different ways and perspectives. If the insights gathered here were capable of, in the short term, inciting recognition of the problem in newsrooms beyond the *Der Spiegel* building in the Port of Hamburg, the fraud scandal may have also sparked incentives to discuss the ethics of producing quality literary journalism in the long run.

Notes

- 1 See, for instance, Flath, “Storytelling im Journalismus,” 41–77; Früh and Frey, *Narration und Storytelling*; Haller, *Die Reportage*; Köhler, *Die Nachrichtenerzähler*; Lampert and Wespe, *Storytelling für Journalisten*.
- 2 Eberwein, *Literarischer Journalismus*, 94–99.
- 3 Pöttker, “Reportage.”
- 4 Blöbaum, “Literatur und Journalismus,” 23–51.
- 5 Reus, “Mit doppelter Zunge,” 252: “Borderline-Journalismus.” All translations from German to English in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are my own.
- 6 A German version of the study is published in parallel as Eberwein, “Sagen, was sein könnte,” 279–98.
- 7 Fichtner, “Der Spiegel reveals internal fraud.”
- 8 Hoffmann and Ruß-Mohl, “Der Fall Relotius und die Auswirkungen auf den Spiegel,” 201–39.
- 9 Fehrle, Höges, and Weigel, “Der Fall Relotius: Abschlussbericht der Aufklärungskommission,” 130–46.
- 10 Moreno, *Tausend Zeilen Lüge*.
- 11 See, for example, Siemes, “‘Ich muss keine ... Falschbehauptungen von Juan Moreno hinnehmen’”: “erhebliche Unwahrheiten und Falschdarstellungen.”
- 12 For more details, see the overview by Eberwein, *Literarischer Journalismus*, 100–49.
- 13 Duchkowitsch, “Journalismus und Literatur,” 15–25.
- 14 Roß, “Fakten und/oder Fiktionen,” 77: “Journalisierung der Literatur.”
- 15 Birkner, *Das Selbstgespräch der Zeit*, 132 ff.
- 16 See, for example, Geisler, *Die literarische Reportage in Deutschland*; Haas, *Empirischer Journalismus*; Kostenzer, *Die literarische Reportage*.
- 17 See, for example, Patka, *Egon Erwin Kisch*; Westermann, *Joseph Roth, Journalist*.
- 18 Berghahn, “Dokumentarische Literatur,” 195–245.
- 19 Haller, *Die Reportage*, 72–108.
- 20 Hohlfeld, “Der schnelle Marsch durch die Institutionen,” 337–60.
- 21 Eberwein, *Literarischer Journalismus*, 136–49.
- 22 Vogl, *Literarischer Journalismus und die Zeitung*.
- 23 Reus, “‘Zum Tanze freigegeben,’” 77–89.
- 24 Reus, 79: “zuallererst ein der Wirklichkeit verpflichtetes Verfahren.”
- 25 Reus, 78 ff.: “Fiktionalisieren ... in allen journalistischen Darstellungsformen präsent. Es bildet, wenn auch oft unbewusst und meist unspektakulär, einen festen Bestandteil professioneller Konventionen.”

- 26 Schäfer-Hock, *Journalistische Darstellungsformen im Wandel*, 202 ff.
- 27 Haller, *Recherchieren*, 109–11.
- 28 Eberwein, *Literarischer Journalismus*, 151–215.
- 29 “Die Essenz einer guten Reportage ist die Rekonstruktion ... Entweder ich habe, wie ein *GEO*-Reporter, zwei Wochen Zeit, oder ich rekonstruiere. Das ist ein Mittel, das viel zu selten gemacht wird.” This and the following direct quotations originate from interview transcripts that were generated for Eberwein, *Literarischer Journalismus*. They are unpublished for the most part.
- 30 “Ich arbeite ... viel mit Rekonstruktionen, und ich habe weite Teile dessen, was ich schreibe, aus Akten. Weite Teile—und das weiß natürlich der Leser. Er weiß, dass ich bei einem Mord nicht dabeigewesen bin.”
- 31 “Ich habe ... eine Geschichte geschrieben über Walter Kohl. Da ging es am Anfang darum, wie er auf dem Friedhof steht in Ludwigshafen und den Abschiedsbrief seiner Mutter am Grab seiner Mutter vorträgt. Da war ich auch nicht dabei ... Das habe ich aber trotzdem so geschildert, damit man die Szene vor Augen hat. Ich bin da jetzt kein Purist. Ich finde, wenn man sich mit Leuten über diese Sachen unterhalten hat, dann kann man das schildern.”
- 32 “Was meine Texte angeht: Ich nehme mir ... einfach dieses Recht, ein Leben zu rekonstruieren und das in der Gegenwartsform als Chronik darzustellen. Die Fakten sind heilig, das ist klar. Ob jetzt ein Dialog ganz genau in dieser Form stattgefunden hat, das weiß ich nicht. Mir wurde das so erzählt... Ich nehme mir jetzt einfach das Recht. Punkt.”
- 33 “Und was wir dann gemacht haben, ab Mitte der 90er-Jahre, ist eigentlich, diese Form des Journalismus ins Große zu drehen. Also nicht nur ... auf die Ein- oder Zwei-Seiten-Geschichte, sondern zu sagen: ‘Ok, wenn reportagig, dann aber richtig.’ Und daraus sind dann immer mehr Reportagen entstanden, und dann auch die Form der szenischen Rekonstruktion. Die szenische Rekonstruktion ist ja eigentlich die XXL-Version der Nachrichtenstory.”
- 34 The author was assisted by Susanne Behrens during the archival research and the coding of the formal categories.
- 35 Burkhardt, *Medienkandale*.
- 36 See, for instance, Siemes, “‘Ich muss keine ... Falschbehauptungen von Juan Moreno hinnehmen’”: “krankhaft.”
- 37 Polke-Majewski, “Der sogenannte Fall Relotius”: “mit betrügerischer Energie.”
- 38 Klusmann, “Wir ziehen unsere Lehren”: “versagt.”
- 39 Gaus, “Debatte mit hysterischen Zügen”: “hysterische Züge”; “weltfremd.”
- 40 Der Spiegel, *Die Spiegel-Standards*.
- 41 Der Spiegel, 28: “Eine Szene gibt einen subjektiven Eindruck wieder, sie darf aber nicht verfälschen. Szenische Schilderungen in Texten sind nur erlaubt, wenn sie selbst erlebt wurden oder die Quelle genau benannt wird. Beschreiben einer Szene ist dann sinnvoll, wenn es in die Geschichte führt und zum Weiterlesen anregt. Würden die Szenen nicht selbst beobachtet, sondern beruhen auf den Erzählungen Dritter, muss der Autor dies kenntlich machen.”
- 42 See also Eberwein, Fengler, and Karmasin, *The European Handbook of Media Accountability*.

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Reconstruction of a Scandal

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