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Representations of War.

Correspondent-based news reporting in
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Abstract

This dissertation studies the historical development and subsequent stabilisation of war journalism as a genre by examining representations of war in Swedish public service television over the course of 40 years. The analytical framework, based on discourse and narrative theory, enables a close reading of the texts, images and dramaturgical framings used in these representations, at the same time as it establishes links to layers of relevant contemporary contexts, which are described. It is shown, firstly, that there are three basic dramaturgical framings in circulation: 'military operations', 'passive civilian victims', and the less common 'active civil society'. Secondly, there are two basic forms of reporting: the 'news story' and the 'standup'. The long-term trend is towards greater 'directness' of reporting, which has increased the space allotted to standups. From a normative view on diversity this is problematic since this increase in the use of standups has been closely coupled with the increasing prevalence of one perspective – the military perspective. The effect of this is significant since, in parallel with other studies, it is shown that the military perspective tends to accord with the official national view of the war/conflict. These results accord with a contextual analysis of news reporting. However, the analysis conducted at the micro-level – that of the individual reporter – displays substantial variations, thus indicating the importance of this level for media studies.

Keywords

War news, war journalism, representations of war, war reporting, storytelling, genre conventions, contextual analyses, textual analyses, Vietnam war, Gulf war