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The Media as a consensus generator machine:
Engagement strategies of alignment through
language devices in two opposing-view liberal
blogs about Edward Snowden

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I declare that the work I am submitting for assessment is my own work and contains no other source unless explicitly identified in quotation marks and with detailed, complete and accurate referencing.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	7
2. Liberalism and the New Yorker	8
2.1 Historical overview of liberalism, precepts and goals	8
2.2 Liberal democracy	9
2.3 Liberalism and the media	9
2.4 Liberal identity, values and narrative	10
2.5 The New Yorker as a “liberal humanist magazine”	11
3. Consensus building	11
4. The Appraisal Framework	12
4.1 Appraisal in Systemic Functional Linguistics	12
4.2 Appraisal Framework-defining the concept	12
4.2.1 The Engagement category	13
4.2.1.1 Dialogic contraction: Proclaim	13
4.3 Heteroglossia	14
4.3.1 Dialogistic effects: alignment/ disalignment	15
4.3.2 Solidarity	15
5. Previous studies	15
5.1 Studies on Appraisal and the press	15
5.2 Studies in consensus building in the media	16
6. Methodology	17
6.1 The aim of the study	17
6.2 Research questions	17
6.3 General description of the data: the New Yorker’s Articles	17
6.4 Methods of analysis: examining Engagement	17
7. Results	18
7.1 “Edward Snowden Is No Hero”	18
7.1.1 Concur	18
7.1.2 Endorse	19
7.1.3 Pronounce	19
7.2 “Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero”	20
7.2.1 Concur	21
7.2.2 Endorse	22
7.2.3 Pronounce	23
8. Discussion	24
8.1 Writer-reader relationships in the proclaim category	24
8.1.1 Concur	24
8.1.2 Endorse	25
8.1.3 Pronounce	25
8.2 Heteroglossia considerations	26
8.3 How liberalism is (re-) defined in each of the blogs	28
9. Conclusion	29
10. References	31
Appendix 1: “Edward Snowden Is No Hero”	33
Appendix 2: “Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero”	34

TITLE

“The Media as a consensus generator machine: Engagement strategies of alignment through language devices in two opposing-views liberal blogs about Edward Snowden”

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes language structures in two opposing-views blogs related to the well-known whistleblower Edward Snowden. These opinion blogs - ‘Edward Snowden is no hero’ and ‘Why Edward Snowden is a hero’- were published in The New Yorker Magazine -online- on June 10th 2013 and they provide an entry point to analyze the various alignment linguistic strategies for dialogic contraction used by the journalists Jeffrey Toobin and John Cassidy to generate media consensus on the Snowden case. It will also be of significance to understand how consensus is built in a liberal publication and how liberalism is re-defined in each of the blogs. For that, the notion of consensus building will be briefly addressed. Appraisal Theory (Martin and White 2005), situated within the Systemic Functional Linguistics Theory, provides the theoretical framework to qualitatively scrutinize wordings chosen by the journalists to make evaluative judgments or introduce other voices into the debate by means of dialogic heteroglossia.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a recent paper (2001, p. 13), Coronel poses the following statement:

A truly democratic society requires citizen participation. If they do their jobs well, the media keep citizens engaged in the business of governance and prompt them to take action. As a tool for information dissemination, the media aid the public in making informed choices, such as whom to vote for and which policies should be endorsed (...)

This thesis directly engages this media’s role in helping people endorse certain statements, with specific reference to the handling of the Edward Snowden case in a liberal news publication. The media is not only “a tool for information dissemination”(Coronel 2001); by the use of Engagement strategies of alignment, journalists seek to create consensus.

Before going any further, a brief explanation of the Snowden case must be provided. In 2013, Mr. Snowden, a former CIA employee and current government contractor, deliberately provided secret information about National Security Agency (N.S.A) programs to the media- *The Guardian and The Washington Post* newspapers-, arguing it to be of interest for the American citizen. The leak basically consisted of revelations about private telephone calls, e-mails and other files’ being recorded without the common citizen being aware of this. What was most curious about this issue was that the spying was not only domestic but also foreign, with allied countries such as Jordan, India and Egypt being targeted too.

I selected this topic not only because it is controversial but because opposing views could be seen inside the same liberal publication. As it can be seen in the two blogs, there are divided opinions as to whether Mr. Snowden acted in the right way or not in disclosing secret and sensitive information to the public, and this is a potentially conflict generating issue. Indeed, most dissent can be said to be derived from liberal precepts where the individual freedom is predominant over society (Garry 1992), and another source of conflict is the violation of the fourth amendment of the US constitution.

Coronel (2001, p. 2) claims that even though the media can help build consensus, it often takes sides and reveals half-truths. This may explain the different postures journalists take in relation to the magazines or newspapers they work for. The main notions of *liberalism*, *conservatism* along with *the civic press model* cited in Hughes (2002) will be invoked to account for the different points of view in the same publication.

The purpose is to linguistically analyze how consensus is created in each of the blogs via one of the dialogic contraction Engagement system categories (**proclaim**).

The word 'consensus' will be addressed repeatedly in this study, so its meaning needs delimitation. According to the Dictionary Longman of Contemporary English (2003, p.329), consensus is defined as "an opinion that everyone in a group agrees with or accepts". In the present study, the word consensus will apply to the various alignment strategies in language, as they have the ability to create consensus in the readership. This research will be carried out under the Appraisal Framework, which is an interpersonal system included under the Systemic Functional Linguistic paradigm (SFL). The Appraisal Framework explores how writers pass judgements on people, other writers, objects, situations and therefore ally with those who share these views (White, P.R.R., 2001). The Appraisal Framework is also related to the notions of *monoglossia* and *heteroglossia*. The latter notion will be central for the development of this thesis because it holds the view that all communication is the result of the interplay of different voices and viewpoints about a certain issue (Martin and White 2005, p. 99).

In choosing the Appraisal Framework, it is assumed that both *lexicogrammar* (meaning within the clause) and *discourse semantics* (meaning beyond the clause) contribute meaning to a text (Martin and White 2005, p. 12). I will mainly concentrate on the analysis of the blogs' linguistic and discursive strategies in relation to alignment in the selected category of the Engagement system. The aim is to achieve a deeper understanding of the dialogic contractive consensus-making strategies used by the journalists in a liberal publication, and to see if these strategies differ in the positive and negative accounts of the Snowden's case. Once that is done, it will be discussed how liberalism is (re-) defined in each of the accounts.

2. LIBERALISM AND THE NEW YORKER

2.1 Historical overview of Liberalism, precepts and goals

According to Garry (1992, p. 34-35), **liberalism** is a political philosophy based on the belief in the freedom, dignity, power and potential of individuals. Social progress can be achieved by individuals who can develop their talents, thereby taking advantage of their innate power of reason. It is believed that only free individuals can bring about progress. And, as *liberalism* is based on some pillars such as reality and change, it accepts the premise that as for social progress, "(...) only individuals are capable of rationally channeling it [change] into progress"(Garry 1992, p. 35) Also, the government should be directed and consented by the governed; that is, a democracy (Garry 1992, p. 35).

Herman and Chomsky (2002, p. 1) indicate that mass media has the duty to (...) "inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society". Therefore, liberalism can be related to the **civic press model in journalism**. The **civic model's** main purpose is to hold governments accountable (Hughes 2002, p. 1), and journalists are seen as "(...) facilitators of citizen participation in politics (...)"(Hughes 2002, p. 1). Journalism provide citizens with information that can foster "(...) reasoned opinion and thoughtful participation", along with the exposure of wrong-doings and incompetence on the government's part.

Liberalism has evolved during the Age of Enlightenment, and it rejected the views of hereditary privilege, state religion, absolute monarchy and the Divine Right of Kings. John Locke, a leading figure in the founding of this philosophy (17th century), claimed that there is the social contract whereby the government should not violate a man's natural rights to life, liberty and property. Locke proposed that the governed must have a say in a government for it to be legitimate and that freedom of conscience along with religious toleration was a natural right (Wikipedia 2014).

In America, the Declaration of Independence in 1776 addressed Locke's ideas of equality rights such as liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The new Constitution written in 1787 posed the division of powers, and later amendments acknowledged the existence of some natural rights. By the end of the 19th century, however, the liberal idea that the individual could prosper in society through his own efforts seemed not possible due to industrialization and its negative consequences, such as poverty and unemployment.

Thomas Hill Green, among others, claimed that the state should be in charge of protecting the economic, political and social surroundings for individual self-realization. (Wikipedia 2014). At the beginning of the 20th century, this idea was called **social liberalism** in Britain.

Social liberalism can be further related to **classical** and **modern** liberalism: To the early Enlightenment thinkers, liberty and private property were essential but a supreme power had to be created to arbitrate the instincts of survival humans had. This power was a way for humans to transfer their natural rights to that authority "(...) in return for the protection of life, liberty and property"(Wikipedia 2014). But in modern liberalism, Thomas Hill Green left aside the conception of the selfish individual to focus on society as a whole, in which all its members had to further the common good, and at the same time he proposed that political institutions were in charge of enhancing individual freedom and identity (Wikipedia 2014). Goodman (2008, p.2) highlights in his essay *Classical Liberalism vs. Modern Liberalism and Modern Conservatism* that most modern liberals adhere to the view that one should be able to speak his/her mind even if that offends (Goodman 2008, p. 3). In Goodman's view (2008, p. 4), "(...) the liberal's view of rights is closely connected to the issue of trust". In fact, it is by struggling against **rankism**- the abuse of power (Rosenberg, 2007) -that a foundation is established for institutions and people in power positions to be regarded as trustworthy and fair.

In the 1920's, liberal themes grew to include cultural *pluralism*, *national self-determination*, and the *League of Nations* as the body in charge of mediating in international disputes among nations (Wikipedia 2014). And nearing the end of the 20th century, liberal democracies were "(...) the only major forms of government in the West"

2.2 Liberal democracy

Liberal democracy is a form of government which consists in protecting the rights of the individual, along with human and civil rights and political freedom for all people. However, for the existence of the freedoms to be guaranteed, some limits must be established, for instance, the delivering of anti- democratic speeches or terrorist actions is to be repudiated (Wikipedia, 2014). In liberal democracies, a constitution is established, universal suffrage is granted (Wikipedia, 2014), multiparty political systems can lead campaigns (Freedom house, 2011) and an important part is the separation of powers (Wikipedia, 2014). Following Montesquieu, Pangle (1973, p. 131) argues that the separation of powers- **executive, legislative and judiciary**- is necessary to protect individuals from government oppression because these powers check on one another. Examples of states with liberal democracies nowadays are: the European Union, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, Japan, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, South Korea, Taiwan, the United States, India, Canada, Israel, Mexico, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand (Wikipedia 2014).

In the 18th century it was thought that human wickedness could only be controlled by a strong leader (appointed by God) (Wikipedia, 2014). It was then when intellectuals such as John Rawls, Thomas Green, David Hume and Thomas Paine proposed that human governance should be based on **reason, liberty and equality**, and these ideas culminated in the American and French Revolution at the end of the 18th century. Little by little, liberal democracies started to displace monarchies, and by the end of the 19th century, *liberal democracy* was in vogue and continues to be to this day (Wikipedia, 2014).

2.3 Liberalism and the media

According to the book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (Herman and Chomsky 2002, p. xi), the media benefits and propagandizes the powerful people who finances them. These powerful people can advance their principles and define the news. It is also positioned in this book that the newsworthiness of a story as well as the journalists' job have to do with incentives and pressures. In a liberal democracy, this should not happen because freedom of speech is a constitutional right which allows profit and non- profit organizations to speak their minds (Wikipedia 2014). Moreover, as people are increasingly engaging in reading via the Internet (Walker Rettberg 2008, p. 44), certain political ideas can reach them: "[T]he internet changed one of the greatest obstacles to true freedom of the press by eliminating or (...) reducing the cost of production and distribution"(Walker Rettberg 2008, p. 85)

The role of the news media is largely determined by journalists because the observation made on a thing has an effect on what is being observed (McCombs 1997, p. 438). Also, the news media are seen as "(...) an institution that represents the public interests vis-à-vis the government" (McCombs 1997, p. 438): investigative reporting tries to include topics related to government corruption or failure to the public agenda (McCombs 1997, p. 438), and this is what makes a democratic society.

It is argued that the news media in democracies establish the agenda to comply with the need for topics that will catch people's attention; for that matter, setting the agenda is considered an ethical commitment (McCombs 1997, p. 433). However, it is important to bear in mind that the news media "(...) do not alone determine what the consensus will be" (McCombs 1997, p. 437); they only act to help in achieving social consensus.

2.4 Liberal identity, values and narrative

The blogs about Edward Snowden reviewed in this work take two opposing views: the blog written by Toobin, titled "*Edward Snowden Is No Hero*", is **conservative**, and Cassidy's blog, titled "*Why Edward Snowden Is A Hero*", is **liberal** (see Appendices 1 and 2 for the full text of both articles).

Conservatives believe in the following:

- It is the compulsory arm of state that should seek reform, not the individual (Garry 1992, p. 40).
- Punishment rather than rehabilitation (Goodman 2008, p. 3).
- Social protests are seen as "(...)the mischief of agitators rather than as a sign of a problem to be addressed" (Garry 1992, p. 40).
- "Individual freedom and power pose a threat to an unchanging social order (...)" (Garry 1992, p. 39).
- Faith in social institutions (Garry 1992, p. 38).
- The government should provide people with freedom to archive their own individual goals. Also, individuals are able to solve their own problems (Student's daily, 2010).
- Private property should be respected in most cases (Student's daily, 2010).

Apart from what was already said up to now, liberals believe in the following:

- "(...) [T]o perfect the democratic functioning of the political system" (Garry 1992, p. 35).
- The government should be in charge of protecting civil liberties and rights and guaranteeing equality to all while taking care of social ills (Student's daily, 2010).
- Private property can be seized by the government for a public purpose, and the owner should be compensated (Student's daily, 2010).

Paul Rosenberg (2007) attempts to explain how to construct a diverse **liberal identity** in addressing the pairing "dignity and security for all". The author proposes "(...) a new articulation of core liberal values" to respond to conservatism as well as the needs of the 21st century. It is positioned in this blog that a post-identity identity for an entire policy is set up through narratives: "you make a diverse population into a coherent subject by weaving their stories together, and revealing a common cause, a shared vision, a joint mission, and growing mutual respect". In the political arena, this can be accomplished by articulating shared values (*dignity* and *security* in this case) through a variety of different stories. This narrative bonds people as a source of new creations, and inhabits roles without dishonoring other people's thoughts.

Also, *security*, as one of the most important ideas in modern liberalism, is related to a **liberal identity**. In fact, the reluctance to put the security of others first is what makes a society vulnerable. According to Locke's social contract, "(...) all people are free in theory, but their freedom is insecure." (Rosenberg, 2007)

2.5 The New Yorker as a "liberal humanist magazine"

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (2013), *The New Yorker* is an American weekly magazine which was founded in 1925 and it encompasses current affairs and other topics. The magazine's readership consists of a sophisticated liberal audience. Inside *The New Yorker's* online magazine (2014), a background research is provided for Mr. Toobin and Mr. Cassidy, two highly experienced staff writers at *The New Yorker* since mid-nineties. Mr. Toobin had written several books inspired on the secret world of the Supreme Court and politics' private life. Mr. Cassidy articles' range from government economists to the economics of Hollywood.

After having presented what **modern** liberalism is, it is of high importance to find out what liberalism means for the New Yorker publication. When doing so, I came across interesting thoughts some of the most prestigious authors have on the issue. Analyzing some journalists' points of view about what liberalism is for them would hopefully give us an idea of what **modern** liberalism means for *the New Yorker Magazine*. The opinions will be extracted from the blogs and displayed below.

John Cassidy, in his article published in *The New Yorker* titled "Liberalism Will Survive Obamacare" (2013), manifests that: "American liberalism is the belief system that combines egalitarian impulses with a conviction that markets often fail and that the government should seek to address these failures". He also adds that: "Liberalism isn't a fixed policy agenda that can be fulfilled or demolished; it is a morally driven struggle for improvement"

When referring to the mission of liberals, Cassidy (2013) poses that: "(...) it will only be defeated when the problems it addresses vanish. Which means never".

In his *New Yorker* article titled "Values, liberal and conservative", the journalist Hendrik Hertzberg also speaks his mind about what liberalism is (Hertzberg, 2010):

I value political liberty and political rights (freedom of thought, speech, conscience, and the press, the right to vote, civil equality) more highly than economic liberty and economic rights (...). I'm in favor of progressive taxation and generous public provision of education, pensions, and health care. I think people should have enough to eat and a roof over their heads, even if they haven't done much to deserve it. (...). So I'm a liberal.

It is controversial that a magazine such as *The New Yorker* should allow the publication of two opposing points of view on the same subject. This can be related to the notions of *liberalism* and *pluralism*: "(...) the pluralist commitment to the promotion of value diversity and to respect for reasonable disagreement singles out liberalism as having a strong claim to being the best expression of value-pluralist politics, since liberalism is capable of accommodating a wide diversity of values and ways of life" (Crowder 2004, p. 161). This can be seen in the *New Yorker*: being a liberal publication, opposing points of view are offered for the reader to have the last decision on which to adhere to, with the ultimate goal of respecting *diversity* as well as *disagreement*. As different viewpoints are allowed, pluralism leads to *toleration*, another liberal principle (Wikipedia 2014).

3. CONSENSUS BUILDING

"Consensus building is a process of seeking unanimous agreement" (Susskind 1999, p. 6), and Kunde (1999, p. 436) manifests that "(...) news coverage can benefit a consensus building process immeasurably". As press coverage is needed to generate support, reporters can enlighten the public on certain affairs, provided that the coverage is responsible and balanced (Kunde 1999, p. 436).

Kunde claims that (1999, p. 436). “(...) [t]he press can either be a benefit or a detriment to a consensus process”. It is a detriment when reporters do not consider the whole picture of the conflict. In a similar way, participants can use the press in damaging ways to create consensus building, such as insulting their opponents, telling lies or putting confidential information on the spotlight (Kunde 1999, p. 442). Anyway, the consensus building process is always desired because it ensures that the public is informed about continuing discussions.

In McCombs view (1997, p. 433), consensus is defined as “(...) how individuals in a community come together to define their public interest”, and the agenda-setting role of mass communication is “[t]he influence of the news agenda on the focus of public opinion (...)”. For the agenda-setting theory, the media influences consensus-building in a community on the most salient problems of the day (McCombs 1997, p. 433). It is argued that editors have an influence over public attention, because they are the ones in charge of selecting the news. According to a new investigation carried out in Japan, Spain and The United States, “(...) the media are (...) successful in telling us what to think about and (...) how to think about it” (McCombs 1997, p. 441). Also, the way those issues are framed also influences people’s perspectives.

4. THE APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Appraisal in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

It is positioned by Martin and White (2005, p. 7) that Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) – a general theoretical framework paradigm of M.A.K. Halliday and his colleagues- is a model which allows specialists to interpret language in use by taking into account the notion of kinds of meaning (*ideational, interpersonal and textual*). These kinds of meanings “(...) operate simultaneously in all utterances” (Martin and White 2005, p. 1). *Ideational resources* deal with what’s happening, who is involved, where, why, when and how and the logical relation between them, *while textual resources* are related to information flow. However, the focus in this study will be on interpersonal meaning in written discourse, because *interpersonal* resources are concerned with the interaction among people and the feelings they attempt to share (Martin and White 2005, p. 7). What will be analyzed is how writers take stances towards the information they present and the people with whom they communicate. Martin and White (2005, p. 1) put the interpersonal meaning very clearly:

It is concerned with how writers/speakers approve and disapprove, (...) applaud and criticise, and with how they position their readers/listeners to do likewise (...). It is concerned with (...) how they align or disalign themselves with actual or potential respondents, and with how they construct for their texts an intended or ideal audience.

For these authors, language in SFL is regarded as a system of meaning making possibilities in a community, and those possibilities are exemplified in individual texts (Martin and White 2005, p. 161). But individual texts can take up only a limited array of language resources for meaning- making, depending on the social context, the relationships among people taking part in the communication and the nature of the text (Martin and White 2005, p. 161). In fact, the same text can afford different ‘readings’, because meaning actually occurs through the reader’s interpretation in a given context (Martin and White 2005, p. 162-163).

4.2 Appraisal Framework- defining the concept:

Appraisal is inserted within the SFL and is located in an interpersonal system at the level of discourse semantics. This means that the focus is on “(...) the rhetorical organization of a text rather than its logic” (Martin and White 2005, p. 33), and the way *power* and *solidarity* are negotiated with readers by means of appraisal (evaluation).

This framework “is concerned with the linguistic resources [for] by which [a] texts/speakers come to express, negotiate and naturalize particular inter-subjective and ultimately ideological positions” (White, P.R.R.,

2001). According to White (2001), the **Appraisal** Theory deals with meanings which indicate different degrees of the writers' engagement with their writing. This is manifested not only in individual words but also as the text unfolds cumulatively.

In the **Appraisal** Framework, writers can adopt stances to the texts and to those they address via linguistic resources (White, 2001). Therefore, writers either acknowledge or ignore the different viewpoints, while negotiating interpersonal space for their own thoughts: utterances are seen as *stanced* or *attitudinal* (Martin and White 2005, p. 92). In addition, **Appraisal** enables writers to present themselves as either "(...) deferential, dominating, authoritative, inexpert, cautious, conciliatory, aloof, engaged, emotional, impersonal, and so on" (White, P.R.R., 2001).

The present thesis will use the Appraisal System as a means of providing specific examples related to the ways consensus is built in opposing view articles belonging to the same liberal publication, and to see how liberalism is re-defined in each of them.

Inside the **Appraisal** Theory we can find three broad interactive semantic domains, called subtypes of Appraisal. These are: '**Attitude**', '**Engagement**' and '**Graduation**'. The present study will be based on **Engagement**, and the other domains will not be addressed for the sake of space.

4.2.1 The Engagement category

The selected linguistic devices will be analyzed under the heading of "Engagement"- all those linguistic resources through which the authorial voice engages with other voices and positions in the current communicative situation. **Engagement** deals with the ways in which the writer/speaker is positioned in relation to not only the value being advanced but also to the potential responses to that position- *quoting, reporting, denying, affirming*, etc. (Martin and White 2005, p. 36).

The *Engagement* meanings are: *Entertain, attribute, disclaim and proclaim*. *Disclaim* and *proclaim* are both **dialogically contractive resources categories** because they limit or even challenge the acceptance of alternative voices and positions (Martin and White 2005, p. 102); they tend to narrow the dialogic space rather than to expand it (Martin and White 2005, p. 117). *Disclaim* deals with "(...) meanings by which some dialogic alternative is directly rejected or supplanted, or is represented as not applying" (Martin and White 2005, p. 117), whereas in *proclaim* "(...) dialogic alternatives are confronted, challenged, overwhelmed or otherwise excluded" (Martin and White 2005, p. 117-118).

However, for relevance and space matters, only *proclaim* will be developed in full.

4.2.1.1 Dialogic contraction: *Proclaim*

As Martin and White (2005, p.121) assert, "we group together under the heading of 'proclaim' those formulations which (...) act to limit the scope of dialogistic alternatives in the ongoing colloquy". There are three types of *proclaim* (sub-categories): *concur, endorse* and *pronounce*.

- **Concur**: by the use of certain locutions such as **of course, naturally, of course, obviously, not surprisingly, admittedly** and **certainly**, the addresser is overtly announcing he agrees with the putative addressee. This **concurrence** relationship can also be conveyed by *rhetorical questions* (Martin and White 2005, pp. 122-123). *Rhetorical questions* are those questions for which the writer does not expect an answer on the grounds of them being 'obvious' (Martin and White 2005, p. 110), and for that they are contractive. But it is only when addresser and addressee are aligned and the proposition is regarded as commonsensical that agreement can be taken for granted (Martin and White 2005, pp. 122-123).

Concurring formulations are dialogistic in that "(...) they present the speaker/writer as in 'dialogue' with the text's audience generally". However, these expressions are contractive in that they convey certain points of views as if they were held by every person in the world (Martin and White 2005, p. 123).

There are two types of *concurrency*: **conceding concurrences (admittedly... /certainly..., I accept...)** and **affirming concurrences (naturally, obviously, of course)**. In conceding concurrences, there can be different degrees of reluctance (**admittedly** is more reluctant than **certainly**) (Martin and White 2005, p. 125).

- **Endorsement**: this term relates to "(...) those formulations by which propositions sourced to external sources are construed by the authorial voice as correct, valid, undeniable or otherwise maximally warrantable" (Martin and White 2005, p. 126). Some of the verbs used when showing endorsement are: **show, prove, demonstrate, find** and **point out**.

When referencing and *endorsing* the utterances of a previous speaker, "(...) the authorial voice enters into a dialogic relationship of alignment with that speaker" (Martin and White 2005, p. 126). Martin and White (2005, p. 126) point out that the main difference between **attributions** and **endorsements** is that the former uses reported speech as a resource for disconnecting the proposition from the internal authorial voice, while this does not happen in **endorsements**, where "(...) the internal voice takes responsibility for the proposition (...)" (Martin and White 2005, p. 127).

Endorsements link the proposition with the subjectivity of the writer, and they also construe "(...) a heteroglossic backdrop of potential alternative viewpoints for the proposition" (Martin and White 2005, p. 127). However, they are **dialogically contractive** because the writers consider the propositions as highly legitimate and therefore other alternatives are excluded. As a result, the reader is aligned into the value position being advanced by the text (Martin and White 2005, p. 127).

- **Pronounce**: It happens when the authorial voice's intervention into the text- *interpolation*- is meant to assert the value of a proposition, and the subjective role the writer takes is more prominent. For instance: "**I contend..., The facts of the matter are that..., The truth of the matter is that..., We can only conclude that..., You must agree that... There can be no doubt that...,** intensifiers with clausal scope such as **really, indeed**, etc. (...)" (Martin and White 2005, p. 127). While these formulations have a dialogistic feature because they acknowledge contrary positions, at the same time they are contractive because they question or confront this alternative (Martin and White 2005, p. 129), and "(...) the interpersonal cost to any who would advance such a contrary position is increased (...)" (Martin and White 2005, p. 128).

In **pronouncements**, there is "... some contrary pressure of doubt or challenge against which the authorial voice asserts itself" (Martin and White 2005, p. 128). Martin and White (2005, p. 128) further indicate that "[i]t is only necessary to insist when there is some counter viewpoint against which the insistence is directed".

Writer- reader relationships will vary depending on the nature of the position: is it one that is likely to be held by the addressee? Or is it challenging the opinions of some third party? (Martin and White 2005, p. 129). When the text intervenes to protect the addressee and challenges a third party, then solidarity is enhanced because both writer and reader stand in opposition to a third party. However, when **pronouncements** confront the addressee, *solidarity is threatened* and the writer will apply further dialogistic resources from which some solidarity may be obtained (Martin and White 2005, p. 130).

4.3 Heteroglossia

Martin and White's approach (2005, p. 92) is based on Bakhtin's/ Voloshinov's notions of *dialogism* and *heteroglossia*, by which written or spoken verbal communication is dialogic because when writing one is revealing or taking up what has previously been said or written in the same sphere, and at the same time anticipating the replies of actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners. According to Bakhtin (cited in Martin and White 2005, p. 99), 'heteroglossic' locutions function to signal the diversity of the communicative situation in a text.

As Voloshinov (cited in Martin and White 2005, p. 92) asserts,

A book (...) is also an element of verbal communication... [it] inevitably orients itself with respect to previous performances in the same sphere (...): it responds to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks supports, and so on.”[Voloshinov 1995:139]

In the same way, Bakhtin (cited in Martin and White 2005, p. 93) states that all utterances exist

...against backdrop of other concrete utterances on the same theme, a background made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgements... pregnant with responses and objections [Bakhtin 1981:281]

A writer can be **for**, **against**, **neutral**, **unsure**, or **neutral** with respect to other writers and their value positions. At the same time, the position readers can take to the value position put forward can be: **taken for granted**, **novel**, **problematic**, **likely to be questioned**, **resisted** or **rejected** (Martin and White 2005, p. 93).

As the Appraisal Framework orientates itself to meaning in context rather than grammatical forms, the meanings (value positions) of several lexical and grammatical locutions will be discussed to see if there are differences in the creation of **consensus building** in the positive and negative accounts of Snowden’s whistleblowing case.

4.3.1 Dialogistic effects: Alignment/ disalignment

Dialogistic effects play a role in meaning-making procedures because the writer negotiates relationships of alignment/disalignment in relation to the value positions put forward. *Alignment/ disalignment* can be understood as agreement/disagreement regarding both attitudinal assessments and shared assumptions about society. Martin and White (2005, p. 95) claim that when writers express their own attitudinal positions they expect their audience to **endorse** and to **share** with them what they are announcing.

The central point in this investigation is the relationship between the writer and the text’s *putative addressee to generate consensus*. By the use of several indicators which “include”the reader into the text, an “ideal”putative reader is imagined, and it is with this reader that the writer is introduced as more or less aligned (Martin and White 2005, p. 95), as the writer can be presented as knowing that certain points of view will be shared or not with the reader, or may be the case that the reader needs to be convinced about a certain point of view, etc. (Martin and White, p. 95)

4.3.2 Solidarity

The term “*solidarity*”refers to the writer acknowledging different points of view about an issue under consideration. Therefore, the writer is prepared to engage with different ways of thinking (Martin and White 2005, p. 96).

5. PREVIOUS STUDIES

5.1 Studies on Appraisal and the press

The present study takes up the premise positioned in Miller (2004). In this essay, *Engagement* strategies of alignment and alienation were analyzed in relation to a speech made by the US President W. Bush in 2002. It was argued there that “(...) such strategies are often aimed at negotiating an inherent fundamental conflict between the US-as-speaker’s discursive position and that of the international community”(Miller 2004, p. 1). In relation to this essay, the present thesis introduces the topic of consensus in the media and the objective is to show that the same *Engagement* strategies of alignment can be extended from this previous study to throw light on this new topic, with the premise that conflict in consensus building can be created when the opposing views blogs on Edward Snowden are read.

Secondly, Granato and Parini's contribution (2013) will be addressed because of its implications in technologically mediated communication. Granato and Parini's study used the Appraisal Theory-*Engagement* and *Attitude*- (Martin and White 2005) and the study on projection "(...) to identify the linguistic strategies favoured by the participants to make evaluative judgments and to introduce other voices into this type of computer-mediated communication"(Granato and Parini 2013, p. 1). They did so by analyzing 200 postings from forums and blogs referring to the reactions to speech activities delivered by the president of Argentina during her visit to the USA in September 2012, with the aim of looking at some of the linguistic resources used "(...) by the participants to show either agreement or disagreement with the president's statements in her public addresses (...)", among others (Granato and Parini, 2013, p. 1). The strategies analyzed by Granato and Parini were of a linguistic and semantic nature. As for *Engagement* and *Attitude*, this study revealed that evaluative meaning was realised preferably through the category of *Judgement* and the *dialogic contraction* category of *Engagement*, as bloggers assessed moral and ethical proceedings of the President and they needed to introduce their opinions as unquestionable in the forums and blogs (Granato and Parini 2013, p. 19). Granato and Parini's mention of agreement strategies can parallel the alignment strategies to be analysed in the present thesis. As Granato and Parini's (2013) did, this thesis will also use a qualitative method for approaching the data, with the objective of extending their contribution by going deeper into one of the Engagement contraction categories - alignment strategies in proclaim-, but in blogs included in a liberal publication applied to consensus-making.

Lastly, Paronen's (2011) thesis on the study of Engagement resources used in online reviews of South Park will also be of significance for the present investigation because it focused on how the writer shares the readers' point of view or not and therefore creates solidarity or not with those readers. Paronen (2011) focused on the four categories of *Engagement* (*disclaim*, *proclaim*, *entertain* and *attribute*). Her findings indicated "(...) a strong emphasis on creating, enhancing and sustaining solidarity between the writer and the reader"(Paronen 2011, p. 56). In addition to that, she suggested that the resources of *Engagement* were used to create an expectation of a specific type of audience. Unlike Paronen, I intend to dwell on only one category: *proclaim*. I will use the same approach as she used and I want to see how the writers create consensus through the aforementioned category of *proclaim*, to see how solidarity is or not enhanced.

5.2 Studies in consensus building in the media

In his study on consensus building, McCombs (1997) argues that for a community to function there should be consensus on priorities. The fact that there is a limit on the issues on the news agenda to be displayed "(...) makes it imperative to develop substantial consensus about which issues top the agenda"(McCombs 1997, p. 434). But at the same time, this limitation on the issues to be presented on the news agenda makes it easier to reach consensus because these topics are agreed to be the most significant by people (McCombs 1997, pp.434-435). Therefore, the role of mass media is to help achieve consensus in a community. The present study takes this position, but from a linguistic point of view: how consensus is created through dialogic contraction strategies.

However, I found that certain essays on *liberalism* and *consensus* lack in-depth analysis of the ways in which wordings create consensus. Such an example is the one written by Murphy (2004), which uses a speech delivered by President Kennedy at Yale University in 1962 called "Commencement address" as a point of entry. Murphy (2004, p. 135) addresses the need for analyzing liberal consensus in textual action, but fails to provide a thorough analysis of each of the consensus wordings, an exhaustive analysis that only the SFL- Appraisal Theory- Engagement can currently render possible.

This study also refers back to Sheila S. Coronel's essay (2001), where the notions of "The Media as Peace and Consensus Builder"(Coronel 2001, p. 16), along with the notion of the media as a "watchdog"(Coronel, 2001) are addressed. She argues that the media has a valuable role in protecting human rights and educating voters, among others (Coronel 2001, p. 3). However, the author points out that the media can also cause division and fear. Coronel (2001, p.3) establishes that her "(...) paper looks at the variety of ways in which the various media have been used to support democracy and development".

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 The aim of the study

The aim of the investigation was to extract and analyze the linguistic structures of two opposing-view blogs (*Edward Snowden is No Hero* and *Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero*) against the **proclaim dialogic contraction category of the Appraisal Framework**. The objective was to analyze linguistic resources (grammatical and lexical expressions) and discourse semantics referred to **writer-reader alignment strategies**, and to account for the resources each journalist used to build consensus in each of the two opposing views blogs. The notion of heteroglossia was also addressed for analysis to see how expansive or contractive certain locutions are depending on the blogs (either Toobins' or Cassidy's), and their implications for **consensus building** and **liberalism**.

It was advanced that such alignment strategies are aimed at prompting readers to adopt either a **conservative** or **liberal stance** towards a very sensitive issue among all American people: **N.S.A's eavesdropping**. It was argued that this situation creates a social conflict, as there is a dilemma for the citizen in which either individual freedom or society's interest could prevail. The analysis will hopefully give us a clear indication as to how liberalism is (re-) defined in each case.

6.2 Research questions

The research questions were:

1. What alignment strategies of proclaim are used to build consensus in each of the blogs?
2. Is consensus constructed differently in the positive account and in the negative account of the Snowden's case?
3. How do Mr. Toobin and Mr. Cassidy build consensus in a liberal publication in terms of heteroglossia?
4. How is liberalism (re-)defined in either the conservative and liberal blog?

6.3 General description of the data: The New Yorker's articles

The existing corpus consists of 791 words for '*Edward Snowden is No Hero*' and 1366 words for '*Why Edwards Snowden Is a Hero*'. I worked 'top-down' (from system to instance) to account for how alignment linguistic strategies generate media consensus in liberal blogs. Both blogs were published in The New Yorker Magazine -online- on June 10th 2013 (see Appendices 1 and 2 for the full text of both articles).

6.4 Methods of analysis: examining Engagement

The realization of the category of *proclaim* was analyzed in charts against language devices found in both articles in order to indicate how each journalist used lexicogrammatical choices to generate consensus among their readers, and which sub-categories inside proclaim abounded the most in each of the blogs and why.

The analysis was manual and performed by systematically going through the different sub-categories of proclaim; the blogs were printed and the examples of each of the sub-categories were highlighted with different colours in the texts. The findings were listed on tables according to the category to be studied, and the specific wordings denoting *concur*, *endorse* or *pronounce* were signaled in **bold** (see appendices).

After that, the most telling examples of each of the sub-categories of *proclaim* were chosen and discussed. As already mentioned, I worked 'top-down'-from system to instance.

7. RESULTS

In this chapter I will introduce the results of the Appraisal analysis. The aim of the study is to see what **alignment** strategies are used to build **consensus** in each of the blogs, and to see if consensus is constructed differently in the positive and negative account of Snowden's case. This chapter will also analyze how the writers of the blogs build consensus in a liberal publication in terms of *heteroglossia* and *solidarity*. Once that is done, I will indicate how liberalism is (re-) defined in both the conservative and the liberal blog.

In the sections below, I will present the results for each of the blogs regarding the **proclaim** category. I will start with "Edward Snowden Is No Hero", and then I will move on to "Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero".

It has to be remembered that the wordings denoting *concur*, *endorse* and *pronounce* will be signaled in **bold**, and they will be contextualized in their corresponding quotes (see Appendices 1 and 2 for the full quotes). However, the underlined expressions in the quotes correspond to links (see Appendices 1 and 2 for the full text of both articles). Moreover, a brief description will be provided for each of the examples. Later, in the discussion section, the most representative examples will be further analyzed against the proposed research questions.

As already indicated, I will highlight the complete examples of each of the categories with different colours in the appendices. Pink corresponds to **concur**, blue to **endorse**, and yellow to **pronounce**.

It is worth mentioning that, when selecting examples of the proclaim category, there were some wordings that Martin and White (2005) did not include on the list of examples. However, in the present study those wordings were treated as if they fell in the required category because, in my view, they functioned in much the same way as other locutions that were indeed on the list.

7.1 "Edward Snowden Is No Hero"

This section displays the results of the sub- categories of **proclaim** (*concur*, *endorse* and *pronounce*) regarding the first blog: "Edward Snowden Is No Hero".

7.1.1. Concur

This category was the one with most examples out of the categories of *proclaim*. Concurrence was conveyed by the use of locutions such as **rhetorical questions**, **apparently**, **certainly** and of **course**. Moreover, concurring formulations were further classified into **conceding** or **affirming**.

<p>"What, one wonders, did Snowden think the N.S.A. did?"</p> <p>"And that makes Snowden a hero?"</p>	<p>By the use of <i>rhetorical questions</i>, agreement is likely to be achieved provided addresser and addressee are aligned and the proposition is regarded as reasonable.</p>
<p>"But Snowden, apparently, was answering to a higher calling."</p>	<p>The adverb "apparently" indicates a conceding concurrence.</p>
<p>"(...), Snowden certainly knew this, because (...)"</p>	<p>"Certainly" is a conceding concurrence.</p>
<p>"The question, of course, is (...)"</p>	<p>"Of course" is an affirming concurrence.</p>
<p>"The question, of course, is whether (...)"</p> <p>"That's what Snowden has done"</p>	<p>This could be an implicit <i>rhetorical question</i>; the author does not expect an answer from the readers; in fact, he himself provides the answer: "That's what Snowden has done"</p>

By the use of *rhetorical questions*, Mr. Toobin is overtly announcing he does not agree with Snowden's views, and this position is supposed to be shared by his putative addressees. Addressee and addresser are seen as aligned, and agreement is seen as taken for granted. Even though the writer is presented as in dialogue with his audience, these questions are contractive in that the writer does not expect an answer from the reader.

Other expressions used in the *concur* category denote that the author is publicly agreeing with the readers, and solidarity will be enhanced only if the proposition is regarded as commonsensical. When using these expressions, the writer is seen as in dialogue with his audience generally, but some contraction can be seen as he conveys certain points of view as if they were held by every person in the world, therefore excluding any other alternatives.

In this blog, the majority of *concur* locutions extracted were *conceding*; by their use, the author indicates a low degree of commitment. This could be related to the lacking of some assertiveness on the author's part.

The only example of *affirming* concurrence occurred by the use of "of course", where the addresser overtly announced he agreed with the putative addressee. The author is certain that the conflict resides in making his readers think about the use for government employees and contractors "to sabotage the programs they don't like". This implicit question can also be a way of anticipating readers' responses, because the writer does not expect an answer from them. Instead, he himself provides the answer: "That's what Snowden has done".

7.1.2 Endorse

There are not many instances of **endorsement** in this blog. In endorsing formulations, external sources are held by the author as valid, and therefore the reader is aligned into the value position of the author.

"The <i>Post</i> decided to publish (...)"	By the use of " decided ", the writer is inserting a <i>valid</i> and <i>undeniable</i> external voice to his arguments (<i>The Post</i>).
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The writer was seen as aligned with an external source (The Post), because he took responsibility for the publishing of the slides provided by Snowden (something that had previously taken place in the same journalistic sphere). Because they are aligned, both the writer and the external source enter into a dialogic relationship. It shouldn't be forgotten, though, that endorsing expressions of this type are also contractive because the proposition put forward is seen as so legitimate that other alternatives are excluded; as a consequence, the reader is aligned into the value position being advanced by the text.

7.1.3 Pronounce

An interesting discovery for the **pronounce** category was that several examples were extracted. The explanation for all of these examples is provided below the table.

“(…), Snowden certainly knew this, because he leaked the very court order that (…)”	
“ Indeed , Snowden was so irresponsible (…)”	
“(…) This may be true, in some limited way, but the overriding fact is that Hong Kong (…)”	
“(…) But our system offers legal options to (…)”	
“Instead, in an act that speaks more to his ego (…). We all now have to hope (…)”	

There were several authorial interpolations in the text to insist on the warrantability of propositions. The use of “**very**”, “**indeed**”, “**the overriding fact is that**”, and “**in an act that speaks**” all indicate the subjective role the author takes is prominent. Moreover, by the use of “**our**” and “**we**”, the textual voice indicates a further intensified personal investment, because he includes himself, therefore aligning the readers into his position.

While *pronouncements* acknowledge contrary positions (*Hong Kong having a spirited commitment to free speech/the American government being a flawed institution/ Snowden’s conscience/the expectation of good coming from Snowden’s acts*), they are also contractive in that, by the author’s intervention in the text, they question these very alternative viewpoints. As contrary viewpoints are challenged, the interpersonal cost of anyone who would advance such opposite positions is reduced.

In all of these examples, there is an authorial intervention which holds the proposition as valid and challenges other alternative viewpoints. For instance, by writing “**very**”, the writer is indicating that Snowden leaked the actual court order, while discouraging other viewpoints. By the use of the intensifier “**indeed**” and the phrase “**the overriding fact is that(…)**”, the author is implying that he is sure of what he is saying. The use of the *inclusive* personal pronoun “**we**” (**further emphasized by the determiner “all”**) and the determiner “**our**” manifest authorial interpolation. Also, the author’s intervention “**in an act that speaks(…)**” is implying that what follows is likely to be accepted by the addressees.

7.2 “Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero”

This section displays the results of the sub-categories of *proclaim* (concur, endorse and pronounce) regarding the second blog: “Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero”

7.2.1 Concur

This category had a greater number of examples than the previous blog. *Concurrences* were signaled by locutions such as *rhetorical questions*, *doubtless*, *it's clear that...*, *seemingly*, *conceivably*, *apparently*, *partly* and *clearly*. Here too concurring formulations were further classified into *conceding* or *affirming*.

<p>“Doubtless, many people (...)”</p>	<p>This is an affirming concurrence.</p>
<p>“But it's clear that, in the process of (...), and keeps it locked away—seemingly forever.”</p>	<p>“It's clear that”: This is an affirming concurrence.</p> <p>“Seemingly”: This is a conceding concurrence.</p>
<p>“Conceivably, the fact that (...)”</p>	<p>“Conceivably”: This is a conceding concurrence.</p>
<p>“Apparently designed to (...)”</p>	<p>“Apparently”: This is a conceding concurrence.</p>
<p>“Partly, that was due to (...)”</p>	<p>“Partly”: This is a conceding concurrence.</p>
<p>“Were Clapper and Alexander deliberately lying?”</p> <p>“So what is Snowden's real crime?”</p>	<p>By the use of two <i>rhetorical questions</i>, agreement is likely to be achieved provided addresser and addressee are aligned and the proposition is regarded as reasonable.</p>
<p>“In some instances, conceivably, the (...). Here, though, the scales are clearly tipped in Snowden's favor.”</p>	<p>“Conceivably”: conceding concurrence.</p> <p>“Clearly”: affirming concurrence.</p>

The use of *rhetorical questions* by Mr. Cassidy is implying that their answers are obvious to the readership, and probably writer and reader will share the same response (if addresser and addressee are aligned and the proposition is regarded as commonsensical).

As far as *conceding* and *affirming* concurrences were concerned, the majority of expressions were *conceding*, which means the writer was not entirely committed to the proposition, while trying to leave the last opinion to the reader and in that way *create solidarity* with those who do not think the same way as he does.

By the use of *affirming* concurrences, the writer is **certain** that many people in power won't see things as he sees them, that the N.S.A sweeps a lot of online data from Americans and that the scales are tipped in Snowden's favor.

It should be remembered that *solidarity is threatened* if some readers think in a different way, because *concur* propositions are presented as if they were held by everybody; thus, alternative positions are excluded.

7.2.2 Endorse

Contrary to the previous blog, here many instances of endorsements can be seen.

<p>"In revealing the colossal scale of (...)"</p>	<p>This formulation is making reference to the consequences of what Snowden (an external source) has revealed; the formulation is construed as valid because the writer takes responsibility for the advantages of Snowden's revelations.</p>
<p>"Like Daniel Ellsberg, (...), Snowden has brought to light important information that (...)"</p>	<p>The endorsing formulation relates to the information that Snowden put in the spotlight; "important" information that he provided for people to notice. The author is once again construing this formulation as correct, undeniable.</p>
<p>"As Glenn Greenwald, (...), pointed out on "Morning Joe" today, this wasn't (...)"</p>	<p>By the use of the endorsing formulation "pointed out", Greenwald's formulation that this case wasn't similar to WikiLeaks is seen as valid by the author of the blog. The internal voice of the author takes responsibility for this proposition.</p>
<p>"So, what did the leaks tell us? First, they confirmed that (...)"</p>	<p>By the use of "confirmed that", the author is construing this external source (the leaks themselves) as undeniable. The proposition is regarded as truthful.</p>
<p>"In March, 2013, alone, the <i>Guardian</i> reported, the N.S.A. (...)"</p>	<p>The author of the blog is regarding the information provided by this external source (<i>the Guardian</i>) as correct; he is delivering information from a source he trusts and acknowledges, and for which he is taking responsibility.</p>
<p>"So what is Snowden's real crime? (...), he uncovered questionable activities (...)"</p>	<p>By the use of "uncovered", the authorial voice is construing the formulation as valid; the writer takes responsibility for what Snowden did.</p>

<p>“I’ll leave the last word to Ellsberg, who, for revealing to the world that (...)”</p>	<p>Mr. Cassidy is entering into a dialogic relationship with Ellsberg when saying what he revealed to the world. Ellsberg’s formulations are regarded as truthful.</p>
<p>“(…) he recognised the NSA’s surveillance programs (...).” (<i>This is an Ellsberg’s quote</i>)</p>	<p>In this heteroglossia case, Mr. Cassidy enters into a dialogic relationship with Ellsberg, and at the same time Ellsberg enters into a dialogic relationship with Snowden.</p>

One of the examples of endorse was related to what The Guardian reported; Mr. Cassidy construed it as a warrantable source, and endorsed its formulations.

By making reference to Snowden’s revelations and what they confirmed, what Snowden brought to light or uncovered, and what he recognized, the author is construing this external source (Snowden’s acts) as undeniable. The propositions are regarded as truthful.

In a similar way, by endorsing the sayings of Greenwald, Mr. Cassidy regards her formulations as correct. Also, by the insertion of an Ellsberg’s quote, Mr. Cassidy acknowledges his words, and at the same time Ellsberg endorses Snowden’s formulations (by the use of the verb “recognized”) and construe them as valid. Cassidy and Ellsberg are regarding Snowden’s propositions as truthful, and both of them are taking responsibility for the propositions.

As the writer is transmitting to his readers information about sources for which he is taking responsibility, he is entering a dialogic relationship of alignment with those external sources (Snowden, Greenwald, The Guardian, Ellsberg). However, *endorsements* are also contractive because, as the writer considers the propositions to be highly acceptable, alternative views are discouraged.

7.2.3 Pronounce

The same number of examples as in the previous blog were extracted here.

<p>“(…), let’s remind ourselves of what the leaks (...).”</p>	<p>The author is explicitly intervening by the use of the pronoun “ourselves”. The proposition “(…)of what the leaks so far have not contained” shows the writer is insistent.</p>
<p>“For most Americans, the main concern (...).”</p>	<p>The interpolation of the authorial voice insists on the warrantability of the proposition for the majority of Americans.</p>
<p>“Thanks to Snowden, (...), we now have (...).”</p>	<p>The author’s intervention “[t]hanks to Snowden” makes the following proposition “(…) we now have cause to doubt the truth of this testimony” highly warrantable.</p>
<p>“I suppose you could make the argument that (...). You could question his motives, (...). But he doesn’t sound like an airhead; (...).”</p>	<p>By this authorial intervention, the writer is implying that part of the audience may probably think Snowden is a naive young man, or even that his motives were questionable.</p>
<p>“I’ll leave <u>the last word</u> to Ellsberg, (...).”</p>	<p>The author is explicitly interpolating in the text to compare this case to another (Ellsberg’s).</p>

By the author's interpolations "Thanks to Snowden (...)" ... "we (...)", "let's remind ourselves(...)" and "for most Americans(...)", the writer is insisting on the warrantability of the propositions and therefore the subjective role he takes is more prominent.

As it happens in all interpolations, while contrary positions are acknowledged (*Snowden is a naive young man/ his motives were questionable*), space for dialogic interaction is reduced because the writer questions these contrary positions in subsequent argumentation. Therefore, *solidarity is threatened*. As a result, it is unlikely for people to increase their interpersonal cost just to dissent to these propositions. However, by the insertion of other voices in preceding and subsequent argumentation, the author tries to use other resources from which some solidarity may be obtained.

Lastly, by comparing the Snowden's case to the Ellsberg's one, the author wants to align the readership into that very same position.

8. DISCUSSION

The results of the Appraisal analysis are discussed in the sections that follow. The results were dissimilar among the blogs as far as the categories of *concur* and *endorse* are concerned. In "Edward Snowden Is No Hero", there were six *concur* occurrences, while in "Why Edward Snowden is a Hero" there were nine. Similarly, in the former blog there was only one instance of *endorse*, while in the latter there were eight. *Pronounce* expressions were more balanced in both blogs, with almost the same number of occurrences (six and seven respectively). The options of *Engagement* that were most commonly used for the blog "Edward Snowden is No Hero" were *concur* and *pronounce*, while *endorsement* was not so widely used. However, in the blog "Why Edward Snowden is a Hero", the three categories were all very much applied.

Overall, both blogs enhanced solidarity, especially by the *pronounce* category. However, the options of *Engagement* used in "Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero" were meant to create more solidarity between writer and reader than in the blog "Edward Snowden is No Hero", not only because of the numerous examples of *endorsements* found in the former blog, but also because of the insertion of more external voices into the text. I will start by going through the analysis of the *Engagement* sub- categories of *proclaim*, with the aim of establishing relationships between them and each of the research questions from the methodology section. First, *writer-reader relationships in the Proclaim category together with consensus building* will be addressed. Next, *heteroglossia considerations* will be discussed, along with *consensus building in the positive and negative accounts of the Snowden's case*. Then, *how liberalism is (re-) defined* in each of the blogs will be analyzed.

8.1 Writer-reader relationships in the proclaim category

This sub- section examines the categories of *proclaim* (*concur*, *endorse* and *pronounce*) in the blogs "Edward Snowden Is No Hero" and "Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero". The results obtained from the blogs were **compared** and contrasted against each of the aforementioned categories in the light of the research question: "**What alignment strategies of proclaim are used to build consensus in each of the blogs?**". Also, this section attempts to respond to the research question about **consensus being constructed differently in the positive account and in the negative account of the Snowden's case**.

8.1.1 Concur

The number of instances of *concur* obtained in the results indicated that both authors applied the *concur* category in their blogs for **consensus building**. However, Mr. Cassidy's blog had more examples of *concur* than Toobin's (*nine* and *six* respectively).

In both cases the majority of *concurrences* were *conceding*, and both authors included the same number of *rhetorical questions* into their blogs.

Nevertheless, Cassidy had three more *affirming* concurrences than Toobin (“**Doubtless...**”, “**it’s clear that...**”, “**clearly**” and “**of course**” respectively).

The fact that Cassidy’s blog (liberal) had more *concurrences* than Toobin’s (conservative) suggested that it was more likely for some conservative readers to have their viewpoints excluded when reading the liberal blog, as *concurrences* have the characteristic of conveying certain points as if they were held by everybody. In this respect, Cassidy used *concurrences* more appropriately for creating **consensus** (seeking unanimous agreement) than Toobin, as Cassidy tried harder to align the readers into his position by the use of more *concurrences*.

Moreover, the use of a couple of *rhetorical questions* in each of the blogs indicated that both Cassidy’s and Toobin’s presuppositions would be welcomed by their respective readerships (liberal/conservative), thereby encouraging **consensus** building.

The majority of *concurrences* being conceding showed that the authors were not entirely committed to the proposition. Also, when doing that, the authors were establishing some solidarity with the opposing -views audience who may be reading the blog (either conservative or liberal). The solidarity generated meant that the coverage on the Snowden’s case is balanced, at least in The New Yorker publication, and that benefits **consensus building**.

I think Mr. Cassidy took the risk of including more *affirming concurrences* than Mr. Toobin because he posed more argumentation to his blogs, along with more external sources which made the audience to be certain of his information. In my opinion, as *affirming concurrences* are stronger, then **consensus** is more rapidly established among the liberal readers.

8.1.2 Endorse

Even though both blogs posed at least one example of *endorse*, Cassidy’s blog easily surpassed Toobin’s in number of instances (**eight** and **one** respectively).

Once again, this finding meant that the liberal audience was more aligned into the value position being advanced by the text than the conservative audience as, in my view, **consensus** is more rapidly created when the writer takes responsibility for an external source which comes to support the author’s statement. In the case of Toobin’s blog, *The Post* was the only external source mentioned as far as *endorsement* is concerned, and, although it is true that the reader is usually aligned into the value position being advanced by the text, this sole source does not seem to be enough for a reader to be aligned. In contrast, Cassidy’s blog offered more endorsements (it mentioned **Snowden’s revelations**, **Glenn Greenwald** sayings on “**Morning Joe**”, what the **leaks** contained, what **the Guardian** reported, and a reference to **Ellsberg**). In my opinion, these *endorsements* aligned the readers more closely with the value position put forward, and explained this affair in a responsible way (by bringing external sources into the blog), therefore favoring **consensus**. However, it has to be said that the use of more *endorsements* in Cassidy’s blog may have a negative consequence on the conservative audience, who might find these *endorsements* legitimate and therefore their viewpoints excluded.

8.1.3 Pronounce

In both blogs, pronounce expressions were almost equal in number because there were **six** and **seven** occurrences (Toobin’s and Cassidy’s respectively). That suggested that both authors considered it worthwhile to interpolate into the text in order to insist on the warrantability of their propositions. Also, in both cases the personal pronoun “**we**” was used, along with the possessive determiner “**our**” (for Toobin’s blog) and the possessive pronoun “**ourselves**” (for Cassidy’s blog). However, Cassidy made a stronger personal investment than Toobin because of the use of phrases such as “**For most Americans...**” (which includes the writer himself), pronouns which address the reader directly (“I suppose **you** could make...”) and a direct writer’s interpolation by the use of a personal pronoun (“I’ll leave the last word to...”). Moreover, the means for intervening in the text were quite different: Toobin resorted to adverbs and clauses while Cassidy resorted more to sentences.

In both blogs, the writers tried to align the readers into their positions to **generate consensus**, as the interpolations were numerous. Also, part of creating **consensus** is to create *solidarity*, and both writers protected their conservative/liberal addressees and challenged a third party (**Snowden- Toobin- the N.S.A -Cassidy**). However, it has to be remembered that because of the contractive and highly personalized nature of *proclaim* locutions, both blogs are likely to challenge contrary viewpoints (either conservative or liberal) therefore threatening *solidarity*, and this can contribute to the detriment to a **consensus** process. In addition, by the use of *proclaim* locutions the authors probably know that their readership will share their points of view; therefore, **consensus** is more easily created by the use of the aforementioned linguistic resource.

I think that the resources used for intervening in the text varied because of the emphasis each of the authors gave to their propositions. In my opinion, sentences are more convincing that adverbs and clauses, so I argue that Cassidy's blog was more likely to create **consensus** among the New Yorker's readership.

So far, the **alignment strategies** of *proclaim* used to build **consensus** in both blogs have been analyzed. All in all, each of the categories of *proclaim* were useful for **consensus building**, except for the *endorsement* category in Toobin's blog because, in my opinion, more *endorsement* formulations would have been necessary for readers' alignment. In addition, Cassidy's use of more **concur** and **endorse** categories meant that the liberal audience was more aligned into the value position being advanced by the text than the conservative audience. As a result, **consensus** was constructed differently among the positive and negative accounts of the Snowden's case.

8.2 Heteroglossia considerations

This sub- section displays the analysis of the heteroglossia facts presented in the literary review, such as **dialogism**, **solidarity**, **alignment**, along with **writer and readership positions**. The results obtained from the blogs were **compared** and **contrasted** against the aforementioned heteroglossia facts in the light of the research question: "**How do Mr. Toobin and Mr. Cassidy build consensus in a liberal publication in terms of heteroglossia?**" This section also responds to the research question: "**Is consensus constructed differently in the positive account and in the negative account of the Snowden's case?**"

Both blogs presented **dialogism** examples. In "Edward Snowden Is No hero", by saying "**(Evan Osnos has more on that)**", and by extracting paragraphs from either the "Post" or the "Guardian", the writer took up what had been previously written in the same sphere, and anticipated the replies of potential readers. The same happened in "Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero", by the presence of some external sources such as **Ron Wyden, Ellsberg, Glenn Greenwald, The Guardian** and **The Washington Post**. However, it has to be said that Cassidy's blog contained far more voices and **external sources** brought into the text than Toobin's blog.

In both cases, *solidarity* was established with their opposing-views readership. In Toobin's case, some *solidarity* was established by the insertion of Snowden's quotes, by Toobin's assertions that interaction between reporters and sources who have classified information is "**normal, even indispensable**", and by Toobin's acceptance that "**the American government**" is a "**flawed**" institution. As for Cassidy, the mentioning of opposing view-names such as "**Obama**" and "**James Clapper**", and the author's suggestion that "**(...) the N.S.A can always go to court to obtain a wiretap or search warrant-and it will be a very good thing for the country**".

As for **dialogistic effects**, both Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Toobin wanted to **align** the readership into their value position (**for** and **against** Snowden respectively) by the use of *exophoric references*. In Toobin's blog, "**The Bradley Manning**" case was mentioned to establish a parallel between Manning and Snowden as to their irresponsibility in "**reckless dumping of classified information**". In Cassidy's blog, by mentioning names such as "**Daniel Ellsberg**" "**Mordechai Vanunu**" "**Bradley Manning**" and "**Morning Joe**", Mr. Cassidy probably wanted to relate the present leaking case to older ones.

After analyzing the results, it was clear that Mr. Toobin was positioned **against** Mr. Cassidy, and that Mr. Cassidy was **for** Mr. Snowden's actions. It has to be mentioned, though, that both writers appeared

to leave the ultimate decision to the reader as to what posture he/she should take, as inside the blogs there were links to each other's works. Cassidy wrote: "*(My colleague Jeffrey Toobin disagrees)*", and Toobin wrote: "*For this, some, including my colleague John Cassidy, are hailing him as a hero and a whistle-blower*". I think that the value position presented in "Edward Snowden is No Hero" was **likely to be questioned** by the readership, while in "Edward Snowden Is a hero" the position put forward was likely to be **taken for granted** by the readership. Mr. Toobin made use of **dialogism** because he knows that their readers may want to refer to the Evan Osnos link or "The Post"/"The Guardian" newspapers for further information, and this is good for **consensus** building because it shows that journalists can enlighten the public on certain affairs. On the other hand, Mr. Cassidy tries to demonstrate that it is not only him who thinks that way; other respectable sources (*Ron Wyden's, Ellsberg, Glenn, etc.*) have the same saying on the issue (Martin and White 2005, p. 116).

Acknowledging contrary points of views show the heteroglossic nature of texts (blogs in this case), where, according to Martin and White (2005, p. 93), utterances do not exist in isolation, but an interplay of contradictory opinions and points of view are displayed for the writers to respond and object to. As a consequence, readers may regard Cassidy's material as highly credible, and this aligns the readers into the writer's position, therefore favouring **consensus** more than in Toobin's blog. As more external sources were inserted in Cassidy's blog than in Toobin's blog, Cassidy's blog is considered an instance of balanced reporting which benefits **consensus** building. In Toobin's blog, the mentioning of the *Bradley Manning* case acts as an illustration which could further convince the reader. This exophoric reference operates as a resource for including the reader into the text, because the writer may want his readership to feel for Snowden the same as they felt for Mr. Manning. However, this reference has to be known and accepted by all the readers for *solidarity* to be enhanced, and for **consensus** to be created. In Cassidy's blog, the writer probably wants to relate the present case of leakages to older ones, and create **consensus** in that way among the readership, as the writer probably assumes that the validity of these exophoric references will be accepted by his readership.

I argue that the argumentation in the blogs was constructed differently, and that has an impact on **consensus** building. In "Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero", Cassidy was not shown to be against an opponent overtly. Instead, the writer intended to supply external argumentation that could have outweighed any contrary position. However, in "Edward Snowden Is No Hero", Mr. Toobin was set against Cassidy's arguments, or Snowden's acts, without the insertion of many external sources which could have made the **consensus** building process more balanced for the readership. We have to remember that the insertion of more or less external sources can be related to a different way of framing issues, and this, according to McCombs (1997, p. 441), has an influence on people's perspectives.

The fact that the writers made an explicit reference to each other's works indicated that some *solidarity* was established among them: as both authors acknowledged their opposing viewpoints, readers were able to read and even adhere to those contrary views. Since the authorial voices were interacting with each other, the whole picture of the conflict could be portrayed, and this was a benefit to a **consensus** process. The consensus position would be that the individual has a right – in some circumstances - to follow his/her conscience but must be ready to pay the price - with disagreement centering on the circumstances and the price to pay.

The Snowden case is a controversial issue, and there is so much information about both sides of the topic - thanks to media diffusion - that citizens' opinions may be divided. In "Edward Snowden is No Hero", by the use of *pronounce* resources (the use of "**we**" and "**our**") which tend to include the reader into the text, and the lack of *endorsements*, the writer knows that **his readership may need to be persuaded** about this point of view. However, in "Why Edward Snowden Is a hero", by Cassidy's use of more *endorsing formulations* than Toobin, it seems that the readership does not need to be convinced over this point; rather, the position put forward is likely to be **taken for granted** by the readership.

During this sub-section I have offered my interpretations about how Cassidy and Toobin created consensus in terms of heteroglossia facts such as **dialogism**, **solidarity**, **alignment**, along with **writer and readership positions**. Besides, it was again shown that **consensus** is built differently in the positive and negative accounts of the Snowden's case.

8.3 How Liberalism is (re-) defined in each of the blogs

Both blogs adhered to the principle of *modern liberalism* that people should be able to **speak their minds** (Goodman 2008, p. 3). Cassidy expressed in his blog that Snowden "(...) sounds like (...)—a man of conscience", and Toobin wrote that "disgruntled government (...) contractors (...) can bring their complaints to Congress; they can try to protest within the institutions where they work".

However, as far as other principles were concerned, the blogs were quite different. The blog "**Edward Snowden Is No Hero**" presented characteristics of *modern liberalism*, in which not only the interests of the individual, but also the interests of the society should prevail. Also, the text was found to be **conservative** in general.

When turning to the second blog, it was found that *liberalism* was defined in *classical* terms, because the ideas of individuals' liberty and private property predominated. This blog was *liberal* overall, as ideas such as **security**, **perfectionism of democracy** along with **the civic press model of journalism** were observed.

When analyzing *freedom of speech*, it was seen that this tenet is respected by these opposing -view writers, because it is a constitutional right which leads to **pluralism**. *Freedom of speech* is also enhanced by this magazine: being in an electronic format, *The New Yorker* makes people be more engaged in and aware of their civic duty.

Mr. Toobin pinpointed the disadvantages of Snowden's actions for the American **society**; he considered that what Mr. Snowden did was a crime, and that he deserved to be in prison. That coincides with the **conservative** view that it is the compulsory arm of state that should seek reform, not the individual (Garry 1992, p. 40), along with the conservative belief in punishment rather than rehabilitation (Goodman 2008, p. 3). On the other hand, Mr. Cassidy said that Snowden "(...) performed a great public service that more than outweighs any breach of trust he may have committed"; this refers to the role **dignity** in an individual plays in liberalism, along with the **power of reason** every human is provided with, and the idea that individuals can channel change into progress (Garry 1992, p. 34-35).

Moreover, if we consider that "conservatism (...) tends to look on legitimate social protest as the mischief of agitators rather than as a sign of a problem to be addressed" (Garry 1992, p. 40), in Toobin's eyes Edward is an agitator for the government, and the disclosure of information is not a problem to be addressed. However, when Cassidy wrote that this classified information deserved to be in the public domain, he referred to the liberal value that the government should be directed and consented by the governed (Garry 1992, p. 35). In fact, it was positioned in Rosenberg (2007) that it is by struggling against rankism that people in power positions are regarded as trustworthy.

There were also some other **conservative** (Toobin) **and liberal** (Cassidy) characteristics in these blogs. For instance, Mr. Toobin posited that disseminating classified information to the press was an instance of individual power exercised in detriment of the current social order, which is what Garry (1992, p. 39) established. Also, Mr. Toobin wrote in his blog that annoyed contractors can use other paths to make their voices heard, such as bring their complaints to Congress. This expresses the conservative faith in social institutions (Garry 1992, p. 38). However, the fact that liberalism seeks "(...) to perfect the **democratic functioning** of the political system" (Garry 1992, p. 35) relates to what Cassidy proposed about publicity helping Congress to prevent certain companies from acting as information-gathering agencies for the government. Inside **the civic press model** of journalism, Cassidy is seen as the provider of information that can foster reasoned opinion in individuals, and he is also in charge of exposing wrong-doings on the government's part. As a result, the governed are on the alert on what is happening in the government, and have a say in its actions. In general, Cassidy's claims make reference to the liberal identity right for American citizens to be **secure**, and he probably thinks that the security of others (the eavesdropped citizens) should be put first to make a society stronger (Rosenberg, 2007).

In general, all of these differences among Toobin and Cassidy arose because the authors have different conceptions of the word "society", and so liberalism is - according to the authors' beliefs. Even though both authors write for a liberal magazine, each one has a different "lens" through which society is seen (either conservative or liberal).

It is important, though, that both authors should share **freedom of speech** as a point in common, as this is the basic pillar for *liberalism*. After all, *liberalism* is about respecting each other's viewpoints, ways of life, etc.

9. CONCLUSIÓN

In the present study I have explored strategies of **alignment** in wordings related to the **proclaim category** of the Engagement System (Appraisal Framework) to generate **consensus** in a liberal publication.

It was found that the *New Yorker Magazine* adhere to Coronel's view that the media should "(...) aid the public in making informed choices (...)", because opposing views of the same issue were published (therefore enhancing **pluralism** and **toleration**), along with the exposure of wrong-doings.

Worth mentioning in the context of this investigation is the use of more **affirming concur** expressions in the blog "*Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero*" than in "*Edward Snowden Is No Hero*", which indicates a higher degree of the author's commitment in the propositions put forward, and also the use of more **endorsing** formulations in the first blog for which the writer takes responsibility. This meant that Cassidy provided more arguments than Toobin for creating **consensus** in the readership.

Overall, **consensus** was constructed in a similar way among the two blogs (because all the sub-categories of *proclaim* were used), though not identical. The aforementioned difference among the categories of **concur** and **endorse** indicated a different way of framing the same piece of news, because, for example, by the repeated use of these two categories, the readership's credibility augments. Nevertheless, by the use of approximately the same number of **pronounce** locutions, both writers took a prominent subjective role when interpolating into the text, therefore signaling their assertiveness and also their assurance that their views will be shared by their readers. In spite of that, Cassidy made a stronger personal investment than Toobin because of the use of phrases and/or sentences which include the writer himself, pronouns which address the reader directly, and the personal pronoun **I**.

After having analyzed the data it could be seen that, by the insertion of **external voices** in both blogs, **discourse semantics** also contributed meaning to the text. As a result, communication in these blogs was the result of **the interplay of different voices and viewpoints** about the Snowden's case. However, it should not be forgotten that Cassidy's blog had more instances of external voices, therefore increasing readership's credibility and alignment, and consequently making the **consensus** building process more balanced.

Even though both blogs are **liberal**, the blog "*Edward Snowden Is No hero*" is seen as adhering to a more **modern** view of *liberalism*, while at the same time presenting some **conservative** features. On the other hand, the blog "*Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero*" complies with a more **classical** view of liberalism, and it mostly has **liberal** features.

It is worthwhile to bear in mind that the present corpus is a mere sample of what can be found about liberal blogs, as well as it refers to only one particular topic. Therefore, the results obtained are not aimed at being *representative* of all liberal blogs, but *indicative* of the patterns that were observed in the data.

The Appraisal Framework gave me the possibility to study wordings not only from a linguistic point of view but also from a discursive and semantic one. Also, it allowed me to analyze words and phrases separately or together, depending on what I needed. The weaknesses of the Appraisal Framework for this sort of study are that it is has to be made meticulously, it is labour intensive, and all-embracing in that there were numerous categories that were not addressed for the sake of space. Also, the scope of this investigation is limited and the results may not be applicable to other blogs. Nevertheless, this method is better than others used in the past for this type of study, because the Appraisal Framework focuses not only on words, phrases and clauses but also on meaning beyond the clause, and it is interesting to see the link between linguistic forms and what they really mean for **consensus** building.

This thesis is valuable in that the study of these blogs has shown how *liberalism* can be re-defined as either **modern** or **classical**. It could also be seen how **consensus** was built differently among the two opposing -view blogs, according to how strategies of proclaim were used. After having presented the results and the discussion section, I could see that liberalism is re-defined according to the lens through which it is seen: **liberal** or **conservative**. It should not be forgotten that both “lenses” are valid, as there is no fixed definition of liberalism; rather, it is one that changes as the years and decades go by to suit the needs of citizens. Also, the fact that both Toobin and Cassidy created **consensus** among their readership in either a conservative or liberal way was reflected in some of the language of **heteroglossia** analyzed. I have also found that the press can play a major role in consensus building, and **alignment** strategies can be used in different ways in order to create more or less consensus among readers.

This investigation may be of use in various fields such as linguistics and politics. For instance, it can account for the linguistic strategies a liberal publication with opposing -view articles use to build **consensus** in the face of a delicate issue such as eavesdropping. Analyzing the blog’s comments could be an interesting area for future research, as well as a detailed analysis between the genre of blogs and the Appraisal Framework.

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APPENDIX 1: “Edward Snowden Is No Hero”

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

Edward Snowden, a twenty-nine-year-old former C.I.A. employee and current government contractor, has leaked news of National Security Agency programs that collect vast amounts of information about the telephone calls made by millions of Americans, as well as e-mails and other files of foreign targets and their American connections. For this, some, including my colleague John Cassidy, are hailing him as a hero and a whistle-blower. He is neither. He is, rather, a grandiose narcissist who deserves to be in prison.

Snowden provided information to the Washington Post and the Guardian, which also posted a video interview with him. In it, he describes himself as appalled by the government he served:

The N.S.A. has built an infrastructure that allows it to intercept almost everything. With this capability, the vast majority of human communications are automatically ingested without targeting. If I wanted to see your e-mails or your wife's phone, all I have to do is use intercepts. I can get your e-mails, passwords, phone records, credit cards.

I don't want to live in a society that does these sort of things... I do not want to live in a world where everything I do and say is recorded. That is not something I am willing to support or live under.

What, one wonders, did Snowden think the N.S.A. did? Any marginally attentive citizen, much less N.S.A. employee or contractor, knows that the entire mission of the agency is to intercept electronic communications. Perhaps he thought that the N.S.A. operated only outside the United States; in that case, he hadn't been paying very close attention. In any event, Snowden decided that he does not “want to live in a society” that intercepts private communications. His latter-day conversion is dubious.

And what of his decision to leak the documents? Doing so was, as he more or less acknowledges, a crime. Any government employee or contractor is warned repeatedly that the unauthorized disclosure of classified information is a crime. But Snowden, **apparently**, was answering to a higher calling. “When you see everything you realize that some of these things are abusive,” he said. “The awareness of wrongdoing builds up. There was not one morning when I woke up. It was a natural process.” These were legally authorized programs; in the case of Verizon Business's phone records, Snowden **certainly** knew this, because he leaked the **very** court order that approved the continuation of the project. So he wasn't blowing the whistle on anything illegal; he was exposing something that failed to meet his own standards of propriety. **The question, of course, is whether** the government can function when all of its employees (and contractors) can take it upon themselves to sabotage the programs they don't like. That's what Snowden has done.

What makes leak cases difficult is that some leaking—some interaction between reporters and sources who have access to classified information—is normal, even indispensable, in a society with a free press. It's not easy to draw the line between those kinds of healthy encounters and the wholesale, reckless dumping of classified information by the likes of Snowden or Bradley Manning. **Indeed**, Snowden was so irresponsible in what he gave the Guardian and the Post that even these institutions thought some of it should not be disseminated to the public. The *Post* **decided** to publish only four of the forty-one slides that Snowden provided. Its exercise of judgment suggests the absence of Snowden's.

Snowden fled to Hong Kong when he knew publication of his leaks was imminent. In his interview, he said he went there because “they have a spirited commitment to free speech and the right of political dissent.” This may be true, in some limited way, but **the overriding fact is that** Hong Kong is part of China, which is, as Snowden knows, a stalwart adversary of the United States in intelligence matters. (Evan Osnos has more on that.) Snowden is now at the mercy of the Chinese leaders who run Hong Kong. As a result, all of Snowden's secrets may wind up in the hands of the Chinese government—which has no commitment at all to free speech or the right to political dissent. **And that makes Snowden a hero?**

The American government, and its democracy, are flawed institutions. But our system offers legal options to disgruntled government employees and contractors. They can take advantage of federal whistle-blower laws; they can bring their complaints to Congress; they can try to protest within the institutions where they

work. But Snowden did none of this. Instead, **in an act that speaks** more to his ego than his conscience, he threw the secrets he knew up in the air—and trusted, somehow, that good would come of it. **We all** now have to hope that he's right.

APPENDIX 2: "Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero"

BY JOHN CASSIDY

Is Edward Snowden, the twenty-nine-year-old N.S.A. whistle-blower who was last said to be hiding in Hong Kong awaiting his fate, a hero or a traitor? He is a hero. (My colleague Jeffrey Toobin disagrees.) **In revealing** the colossal scale of the U.S. government's eavesdropping on Americans and other people around the world, he has performed a great public service that more than outweighs any breach of trust he may have committed. Like Daniel Ellsberg, the former Defense Department official who released the Pentagon Papers, and Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli nuclear technician who revealed the existence of Israel's weapons program, before him, Snowden **has brought to light** important information that deserved to be in the public domain, while doing no lasting harm to the national security of his country.

Doubtless, many people inside the U.S. power structure—President Obama included—and some of its apologists in the media will see things differently. When Snowden told the *Guardian* that "nothing good" was going to happen to him, he was almost certainly right. In fleeing to Hong Kong, he may have overlooked the existence of its extradition pact with the United States, which the U.S. authorities will most certainly seek to invoke. The National Security Agency has already referred the case to the Justice Department, and James Clapper, Obama's director of National Intelligence, has said that Snowden's leaks have done "huge, grave damage" to "our intelligence capabilities."

Before accepting such claims at face value, **let's remind ourselves** of what the leaks so far have not contained. They didn't reveal anything about the algorithms that the N.S.A. uses, the groups or individuals that the agency targets, or the identities of U.S. agents. They didn't contain the contents of any U.S. military plans, or of any conversations between U.S. or foreign officials. As Glenn Greenwald, one of the journalists who broke the story, pointed out on "Morning Joe" today, this wasn't a WikiLeaks-style data dump. "[Snowden] spent months meticulously studying every document," Greenwald said. "He didn't just upload them to the Internet."

So, what did the leaks tell us? First, **they confirmed that** the U.S. government, without obtaining any court warrants, routinely collects the phone logs of tens of millions, perhaps hundreds of millions, of Americans, who have no links to terrorism whatsoever. If the publicity prompts Congress to prevent phone companies such as Verizon and A.T. & T. from acting as information-gathering subsidiaries of the spying agencies, it won't hamper legitimate domestic-surveillance operations—the N.S.A. can always go to court to obtain a wiretap or search warrant—and it will be a very good thing for the country.

The second revelation in the leaks was that the N.S.A., in targeting foreign suspects, has the capacity to access vast amounts of user data from U.S.-based Internet companies such as Facebook, Google, Yahoo, Microsoft, and Skype. Exactly how this is done remains a bit murky. **But it's clear that**, in the process of monitoring the communications of overseas militants and officials and the people who communicate with them, the N.S.A. sweeps up a great deal of online data about Americans, and keeps it locked away—**seemingly** forever.

Conceivably, the fact that Uncle Sam is watching their Facebook and Google accounts could come as news to some dimwit would-be jihadis in foreign locales, prompting them to communicate in ways that are harder for the N.S.A. to track. But it will hardly surprise the organized terrorist groups, which already go to great lengths to avoid being monitored. Not for nothing did Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad go without a phone or Internet connection.

Another Snowden leak, which Greenwald and the *Guardian* published over the weekend, was a set of documents concerning another secret N.S.A. tracking program with an Orwellian name: "Boundless

Informant.” **Apparently** designed to keep Snowden’s former bosses abreast of what sorts of data it was collecting around the world, the program unveiled the vast reach of the N.S.A.’s activities. In March, 2013, alone, the *Guardian* **reported**, the N.S.A. collected ninety-seven billion pieces of information from computer networks worldwide, and three billion of those pieces came from U.S.-based networks.

It’s **hardly** surprising that the main targets for the N.S.A.’s data collection were Iran (fourteen billion pieces in that period) and Pakistan (more than thirteen billion), but countries such as Jordan, India, and Egypt, American allies all, may be a bit surprised to find themselves so high on the list. “We hack everyone everywhere,” Snowden told the *Guardian*. “We like to make a distinction between us and the others. But we are in almost every country in the world. We are not at war with these countries.”

For most Americans, the main concern will be domestic spying, and the chronic lack of oversight that Snowden’s leaks have highlighted. In the years since 9/11, the spying agencies have been given great leeway to expand their activities, with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Court, which deals with legal requests from the agencies, and the congressional intelligence committees, which nominally oversees all of their activities, all too often acting as rubber stamps rather than proper watchdogs.

Partly, that was due to lack of gumption and an eagerness to look tough on issues of counterterrorism. But it also reflected a lack of information. Just a couple of months ago, at a Senate hearing, Oregon Democrat Ron Wyden, one of the few legislators to sound any misgivings over the activities of the intelligence agencies, asked Clapper, “Does the N.S.A. collect any type of data at all on millions or hundreds of millions of Americans?” To which Clapper replied: “No, sir.” (He added, “Not wittingly.”) At another hearing, General Keith Alexander, the director of the N.S.A., denied fourteen times that the agency had the technical capability to intercept e-mails and other online communications in the United States.

Thanks to Snowden, and what he told the *Guardian* and the *Washington Post*, **we** now have cause to doubt the truth of this testimony. In Snowden’s words: “The N.S.A. has built an infrastructure that allows it to intercept almost everything. With this capability, the vast majority of human communications are automatically ingested without targeting. If I wanted to see your emails or your wife’s phone, all I have to do is use intercepts. I can get your emails, passwords, phone records, credit cards.”

Were Clapper and Alexander deliberately lying? If so, perhaps Snowden should be extradited to the United States and dragged into court—but only as part of a proceeding in which the two spymasters face charges of misleading Congress. I suppose you could make the argument that he is a naïve young man who didn’t fully understand the dangerous nature of the world in which we live. **You could question** his motives, and call him a publicity seeker, or an idiot. (Fleeing to Hong Kong wasn’t very smart.) But he doesn’t sound like an airhead; he sounds like that most awkward and infuriating of creatures—a man of conscience. “I don’t want to live in a society that does these sort of things,” he told Greenwald. “I do not want to live in a world where everything I do and say is recorded. That is not something I am willing to support or live under.”

So what is Snowden’s real crime? Like Ellsberg, Vanunu, and Bradley Manning before him, he **uncovered** questionable activities that those in power would rather have kept secret. That’s the valuable role that whistle-blowers play in a free society, and it’s one that, in each individual case, should be weighed against the breach of trust they commit, and the potential harm their revelations can cause. In some instances, **conceivably**, the interests of the state should prevail. Here, though, the scales are **clearly** tipped in Snowden’s favor.

I’ll leave the last word to Ellsberg, who, **for revealing to the world that that** Pentagon knew early on that the war in Vietnam was unwinnable, was described in some quarters as a communist and a traitor: “Snowden did what he did because he **recognised** the NSA’s surveillance programs for what they are: dangerous, unconstitutional activity. This wholesale invasion of Americans’ and foreign citizens’ privacy does not contribute to our security; it puts in danger the very liberties we’re trying to protect.”

