

## 0.1 Chapter 1: capitalism: Media

### 0.2 Media

## 1 On the New and the Recurring

It feels like there is always an infinite amount of news, so much is happening in the world every day. A newspaper could be 1,000 pages long and hardly scratch the surface. Perhaps if you really cared about the news, you'd read more and more of it?



Getty/Fiona Goodall

### 1.0.0.1 Auckland mayor Len Brown has been having an affair. News but not new

Yet there's a strange thing that goes on. After a while it becomes clear that the same kinds of events are recurring again and again. The details of the story change, but the core issue is the same. In New Zealand, the mayor of Auckland recently got into huge trouble for sexting his mistress and for abusing his travel budget. In Australia at much the same time a Queensland MP and head of the state ethics committee had an affair, and there were sexual photos and allegations of misuse of public money.

Then it was reported that US Secret Service agents around the world had been hiring prostitutes, visiting brothels and having extra marital affairs. Meanwhile, in the UK the man who had been, until shortly

before, running the Co-Op bank was caught up in a sex and drugs scandal. A while back, there was an American president who...



Wilfredo Lee/AP/Press Association Images

#### **1.0.0.0.2 Its been going on a while**

All of these stories circle round the same archetypal story. It goes like this: Men in highly responsible positions are coming unstuck because their sexual desires lead them to do things that, when made public, are shameful. Really there is just one story here which is being repeated. What could be seen as four (or, over a year, 40 or 400) different news items actually belong to just a single story. There is a lot less news than we suppose.

The search for archetypes for the basic patterns which recur many times is not just a game. Identifying the underlying theme is more important in the long run than going through the details of every specific case. The big news the news that matters is not so much that this particular MP or mayor or banker or leader did what they did. What we need to address is why such things happen. It is the archetype that takes us to the nub of this.

There are also large number of stories about celebrities doing ordinary things. Prince William has a child and copes perfectly well with the car seat and the nappies.





Yui Mok/PA Wire/Press Association Images

#### **1.0.0.3 Famous person does ordinary thing**

It's fascinating to hear these stories. But when we home in on the common factor the archetype the real news emerges. The archetype goes like this: Powerful and famous people do the same things as ordinary mortals, leaving the public slightly stunned, yet cheered. The famous shed a little bit of welcome glamour, a kind of grace, on humdrum actions. When we're stressing to fit the baby car seat in the back or when we get a take-away coffee and have to drink it in the rain, we realise that we are not as we might normally feel suffering an irritating indignity or a banal humiliation we are in fact sharing the life of the

stars; not because we are making ourselves like them, but for a deeper and more moving reason: they are like us.



Getty

The point of an archetype is to simplify the vast number of things which are going on at any one time. If we were more conscious of archetypes, we'd have to take in a lot less news. That's why news organisations don't normally want to tell you about archetypes (ad revenue would go down). We don't mind.