

"BURGER OFF!". THE CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE AND THE LANGUAGE OF SCOTTISH POPULISM .

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I. INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday, March 20th, the British press was still dedicating a relatively large amount of space to the events which had occurred exactly one week before in the small Scottish village of Dunblane, where an armed man opened fire on a class of children in their school gymnasium, killing 16 of the pupils and their teacher. The initial five-page spreads had admittedly been reduced, and the press had reluctantly followed to a large extent the petition of local authorities and families of the victims, to maintain a low profile during the funeral services and on the day of the token return to class, scheduled for the following Friday. On Thursday, March 21st., however, the whole national press was to give massive front-page precedence to the Government's admission, despite years of denial, that the cattle disease Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) "might possibly" be capable of transmission to humans, and that the equally incurable human Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) "could" be caused by human consumption of infected cattle. The aim of this study is to look at the way this situation was treated in one British newspaper, the Glasgow-based **Daily Record** from Thursday 21st. March to Saturday 23rd, through an analysis of the language it used.

The amount of information was so extensive over the days this survey proposes to cover that I have felt it necessary to limit myself to just one newspaper. The **Daily Record** has been chosen basically because it is Scotland's largest-selling "national" daily newspaper, and one of my aims is to look at how the Government's "admission" (the word itself carries obvious connotations of guilt) was received in Scotland, and whether there might be any significant difference between this and its reception south of the border. The **Record** traditionally supports the Labour Party, although over certain issues it often adopts a line more akin to that of the Scottish National Party. The **Record's** coverage will, however, be compared with several English papers, notably **The Guardian**, **The Daily Telegraph** and **The Daily Mail**.

This study will attempt to look at the ways in which the language used reflects both the traditional ideology of tabloid populism and the extent to which this is placed within a Scottish context.

The principal methodological framework will be that proposed by **Roger Fowler** in his 1991 publication **Language in the News**. In this work, Fowler stresses the ideological nature of any type of linguistic use or representation. Language, he argues, can never be neutral. It is always "a highly constructive mediator" (1991:1). News is no exception, and the two main processes from which news is produced, "selection" and "transformation" are not, as

is often believed, "natural" , but are rather the result of a deliberate social construction of events. As in other linguistic texts, in news nothing can be considered to be accidental. News is a representation of events which (allegedly) take place within the world, and as this representation uses the medium of language, a semiotic code which "imposes a structure of values, social and economic in origin, on whatever is represented" (Fowler, 1991: 4), it must inevitably give a pattern to that of which it speaks. Newspapers are conceived of as profit-making concerns, and this profit comes principally from advertising revenue. Given that the world of advertising is directly related to the market, its values are logically those of capitalism. The ideology inherent within the discourse presented by the press cannot therefore diverge to any great extent from the status quo. Criticism of the existing system is generally highly relative, and tempered by a consistent policy of explicit or implicit approval. The supposedly "left-leaning" press, of which the **Daily Record** forms a part, is no exception to this rule. Thus it can allow itself the luxury of attacking the closure of the Ravenscraig steel plant in Lanarkshire without calling into question the system which demands such a closure. It will criticise the actions of a Conservative government but share a similar discourse to that of the press on the political right.

The presence of a determined ideological discourse throughout the press is not, according to Fowler, a part of some kind of general conspiracy against the reader. Ideology can be detected in all aspects of language, in syntax, in vocabulary, in morphology etc., but the choice is often sub-conscious, habitual and conventional. As ideology is present in all discourse, the reader is, or can become, equipped with different strategies which allow the texts to be effectively processed. Critical linguistics provides the reader with just such strategic competence, and through the close linguistic analysis of press discourse, hidden "deep" meanings can be unearthed.

One of Fowler's most convincing arguments is that, hidden beneath apparent "news" stories, there often lies a deep structure which reveals certain commonly-repeated paradigms and stereotypes which reveal the ideological grounding of the paper. It is hoped that by the study of the language used in one daily newspaper, some of these paradigms and stereotypes can be brought to the surface.

In order to clarify the context for the "Mad Cow Scandal", as the **Record** dubbed it, it will be necessary to give some sort of background information about the history (or pre-history) of the "crisis". This will be followed with the analysis of some of the articles which appeared in the **Daily Record** on Thursday, 21st, Friday, 22nd, and Saturday 23rd, March 1996. Some comparisons will be made with English newspapers on the respective days, although it must be explained that, owing to availability, comparisons will be selective and must unfortunately lack scientific thoroughness.

II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BSE/CJD CONNECTION.

In 1985, a vet working in Kent, England, discovered the first sign of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy in cattle. The disease presented similar signs to another illness, "scrapie", found only in sheep. Over a year later, BSE was officially recognised by the government run Central Veterinary Laboratory, but was not made public until 1987, when experiments were made to see if the disease could be transmitted to other species.

In 1988, the disease was linked to the use of the offals of sheep which were infected by scrapie, and their use was banned. Infected cattle were ordered to be slaughtered, and milk and offals from cattle suspected of having the disease were banned for human consumption. In 1990, the then Minister of Agriculture, Mr. John Gummer was photographed alongside his young daughter, each eating a beefburger, and was quoted as saying; "Nobody need be worried about BSE in this country or anywhere else". (This same Mr. Goomer will later be of interest. In the middle of the 1996 crisis, by that time just a back bencher, an "intrepid" **Daily Record** reporter travels to his house in order to see if Mr. Goomer would still eat a beefburger, bought by the **Record** reporter for that purpose.) Still in 1990, Russia bans the sale of British beef, and a cat is found to have developed a similar disease, giving rise to fears that the illness was capable of crossing what had been termed as the "species barrier". In July of the same year, a House of Commons Inquiry stated that "on the basis of all scientific evidence available, eating beef is safe."

In 1991 the use of all offal in fertilisers was banned but "amid growing fears", Germany threatened to forbid the import of British Beef in 1994. In that same year a doctor belonging to the "national Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease surveillance unit" disclaimed the possibility of an emerging CJD epidemic. In 1995, suspicions that the two diseases are related led to the investigation of the "cases of two British teenagers who had developed CJD". The Prime Minister, Mr. Major, said: "I am advised that beef is a safe and wholesome product. The Chief Medical Officer's advice on the point is clear: there is no evidence that eating beef causes CJD in humans."

By the beginning of 1996, doubts as to the veracity of Government findings had prompted a "British Beef could Kill" campaign which was described by the food minister, Ms. Angela Browning as "outrageous". This led to an intervention in the House of Commons in early March by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Douglas Hogg, in which he stated that: "British beef can be eaten with confidence." On Sunday, March 17th, when the central issue in the British press was still the shootings in Dunblane, **The Observer** carried a small article in its national news pages which was headed;

1) **Farmers evade BSE controls**

in which it states that;

2) Forged certificates and bogus cattle tags are being used by farmers to evade controls against the spread of mad cow disease.

It goes on to list a number of farmers who have been prosecuted for forging documents which show that cattle are unaffected by the disease. The information is especially interesting for the present study for two reasons. First, Scotland is pinpointed as the area in which most forgeries are committed;

3) The forgeries are most common in Scotland, where there have been three prosecutions in the past six months, with several cases still under investigation. Strathclyde trading standards officials have six cases pending.

This information will later prove interesting in the light of the **Daily Record's** attempts to disassociate Scottish beef from the problem. Second, the article also highlights the bodies

which will become the main participants in the affair, the Government, represented by Food Minister Angela Browning and Ministry of Agriculture officials, the Opposition, represented by the Labour MP David Hinchliffe, farmers, experts (in this case a consultant microbiologist) and the European Parliament. When, four days later, the "mad cow scandal" is treated as the most important piece of news, all of these protagonists will be of great relevance, although they will be overshadowed, particularly in the first few days, by the other great protagonist, the general public, in its role of victim or potential victim.

III. THURSDAY, MARCH 21ST, 1996

On Wednesday, March 20th, the British Government admitted for the first time that BSE could be linked to CJD. This information was given massive coverage in the press the next morning. The headlines were significant. The main headline in the **Daily Telegraph** read;

1) **Beef linked to brain disease**

. The main article treats the information with the use of a large number of modals related to doubt or uncertainty;

2) might be passed to humans, the "most likely" cause, certain types of offal, they could not predict, younger people could be particularly at risk, whether children should continue to eat beef products, scientists had not discovered absolute proof, the possible link, could lead to the virtual destruction, unconfirmed cases, there could be an increase, could not be adequately complained....etc.

The presence of this modality of uncertainty on such a large scale obviously reflects official policy. It is in the interests of the Conservative Government, given the impossibility of denying the links, to cast as many doubts on them as possible. **The Daily Telegraph**, as a paper which is fully supportive of Conservative policy, is therefore obliged to reflect this policy in its discourse. Some of the modals used come from accessed voices, ("government sources"), while others come directly from the paper's reporters, demonstrating the obvious collusion which exists. The modality of the article is, however, undermined by the other elements which appear on the same front page. As we saw above, the main headline is strictly declarative, as are the sub-headings with which it is linked;

3) **New strain of CJD kills younger victims**

4) **Ministers try to calm fears over children**

5) **"Mad cow" risk to humans is admitted for first time**

The affirmation which appears in the headlines is further supported by the massive colour photo of an eighteen-year old girl who is in coma, presumably a victim of the disease. The photo takes up almost twenty per cent of the surface area of the front page, and is linked to a small article (less than a third of the size of the photo) which bears the headline;

6) **Report too late, says family of coma girl**

Although the official discourse speaks of doubt, the facts suggest otherwise, and both

the public and the Daily Telegraph are aware of this fact. Following the events at Dunblane and countless other news stories over the last few years, one of the most dominant paradigms in the British press has been that connected with the safety of children, and the "mad cow affair" fits neatly into this paradigm. This is also reflected in another Conservative newspaper of the same day. The article on the front page of the shares the modality of doubt with the Telegraph. The headline reads;

7) **BEEF AND CHILDREN: THE AWFUL QUESTIONS**

This is accompanied by a (different) photo of the same girl who appears in the Telegraph, and the sub-heading;

8) **As this teenager lies in hospital in a comma...**

The concept of personalization is common in the press. It acts as a means of promoting identification, but also, as Fowler suggests as a way of effecting "metonymic simplification". A person, or persons, are used to represent a whole group of people, in this case, victims and potential victims of CJD. In both the **Mail** and the **Telegraph**, such personalization is combined with the "news" in such a way that inherent contradictions are brought to the surface. In the **Daily Record**, however, personalization is applied to such an extent as to almost completely conceal the apparent "news story".

The main headline in the **Record** of Thursday, March 21st takes the form of a presumed quote; a tactic which gives more credence to the concept of personalization, as the words are supposed to come directly from one of the protagonists;

9) **MAD COW BUG KILLED MY WIFE**

The style is extremely emotive. The wife is the object (demoted to the right-hand side of the sentence) and the active verb "kill" would seem to suggest a deliberate, almost vindictive act. The subject, "Mad Cow Bug" makes use of what Fowler calls "the rhetoric of animation" (1991:164) in order to present the disease as being "deliberately harmful"

The secondary headline, placed above the supposed quotation, brings the story into its political context;

10) **BEEF ALERT: Heartache as Tories do U-turn**

The alarmist "BEEF ALERT" is given a sense of urgency through its telegraphic brevity. The juxtaposition of "Heartache" with "Tories" leaves the reader in no doubt as to whom the **Record** considers to be to blame for the situation. The article itself, however, tells us little of what actually happened (the government's admission that there may be a link between BSE and CJD), giving us an account of a specific case in which the plight of one of the victims and her family is highlighted. Apart from the secondary headline, there is only one other reference to the speech act (The admission) which constituted the "news";

11) **As the government did a U-turn on the mad cow menace, ...**

The language is significant, the hysteria of "mad cow menace" to the suggestion of reckless driving and panic-stricken measures in "U-turn" both intended to win the reader over to the paper's point of view. There is also one other reference to the "news" in the supposed

words of the husband of the victim, who is reported to have said;

12) "The Government should have put money into research 10 years ago-it's all a massive cover-up."

These words are highly inconsistent with the rest of the person's discourse, and one can't help suspecting that this in fact constitutes the use of licence on the part of the reporter. The rest of the article is made up of the story of the illness, symptoms and death of a female victim, and the father's fears that his baby son might also be affected. Both the **Daily Telegraph** and the **Daily Mail** used the example of a young girl victim, and the **Record** also uses the baby as a metonym for the helpless victims. Personalization is reinforced by the constant use of colloquial diminutives (mum, dad hubby, dad-of three), by the details of the age of the various members of the family (the victim is referred to as "Michelle,29" twice in the space of a few lines and by other "personal" details. The child is referred to as "wee son Tony", the Scots diminutive "wee" being used to provoke a further degree of familiarity with the case, which, although based on a family from Manchester, is aimed at reaching a high level of empathy with the paper's readership. The symptoms are described in detail, and the husband's conjectures are given as much credit as the apparent facts of the case. The two photos which accompany the article show the victim with a baby, once in a normal state of health and the other under the effects of the disease. The language is highly coloured, the husband is "angry and bitter", and it is obvious that the reporter wants his readers to feel the same way.

On page three of the same edition, beside the continuation of the front page story, there are two more "personal accounts" which treat the matter in a similar vein. The first of these, under the headline;

13) **Slaughter all these cattle**

echoes the language of the main account, with such non-core elements as "pleaded", "shattered", "mad bug menace" etc. The second;

14) **Mum died because she loved her mince**

will be dealt with in more detail at a later stage.

The assumption made by the **Daily Record** is that BSE causes CJD in humans. The "real news" is therefore interpreted for the reader, and made graphic by a "moving" example. The two London newspapers which were briefly considered above juxtaposed the concepts of the "admission" and "children" using the concept of personalization as a support, but the **Record** goes one step further by subordinating the news of the official speech act to the subjectivity of the example. While both **Telegraph** and **Mail** imitate the official language of doubt and uncertainty, the **Record**, through the use of an example which is never questioned and whose veracity is never doubted, implicitly takes away any doubt from the official discourse.

On pages 2 and 3 of the same edition of the **Daily Record**, the subject is treated in more detail. Apart from the continuation of the front-page story, there are five more articles dealing with different aspects of the problem. All of these reports are gathered under one large generic headline which reads;

15) MAD COW CAN KILL YOU

This headline is syntactically related to that of the front page;

9) MAD COW BUG KILLED MY WIFE

And implicitly invokes the reader to make the obvious connection. The modality of these headlines is a long way from the uncertainty of the "could", "might" and "possibly" of the official discourse reproduced in the two London papers. On page two, the basic "information" about the Government statement is given under the alarming headline;

16) Thousands more may die, warn scientists

The language in this article has little to do with that used to describe the same event in the other two papers. The **Record** talks of "a terrifying new form of sickness", and states that "incredibly, frantic parents are being left in the dark about findings". The Government is said to have "confessed", and ministers "finally admitted" their "serious concern". The disease is treated as a "killer bug" or "deadly bug" on which the Government has "declared war". The violent imagery is typical of hysterical "scare" journalism, but in this case the fear is used in order to criticise the inefficiency of political action. The Government is seen to be in a state of disarray, "blasted" by the opposition and virtually guilty of potential mass murder. As a ;

17) grandmother from Tyne and Wear, sobbed. "If they had of (sic) admitted this years ago, my daughter and others could still be alive."

This article is juxtaposed with another which, under the headline;

18) Just burger off!

Relates the attempt made by a **Daily Record** reporter to convince the ex-minister, Mr. John Gummer to eat a hamburger. According to the Record,

19) John Gummer scoffed at the mad cow disease scare yesterday - but still refused to bite into a burger.

Six years ago, as agriculture minister, Gummer used his daughter, four-year old Cordelia, in a cheap publicity stunt. He fed her a burger in an attempt to prove that beef was safe.

But he exploded with anger yesterday when we called at his London home and presented him with a burger.

He said: "You have no right to call here. The story is nothing to do with me any more."

And refusing to eat his words, he added: "We eat beef, and will continue to eat beef."

But he still refused to bite...

The use of puns, ("burger off", "eat his words", "refused to bite"), is typical of the "house-style" of the **Daily Record**, and combined with the implied cynicism of Mr. Gummer's attitude ("scoffed", "used his daughter", "fed her a burger") the article is used to underline the opinion implicitly expressed in the main article, that is that the Government has been lying about the connection between BSE and CJD for the last few years, and now

that it has been "forced" into a confession, it is trying desperately to maintain its dignity. When we are told that Mr. Gummer "exploded with anger", we are expected to see this as a metaphor for the Conservative Government, angry not at the findings, but at having been forced to admit to its error.

It now seems obvious that one of the "deep" meanings of the **Record** treatment of the affair could be described as that of "cover-up", the Conservative Government has lied and hidden facts from the public, and as such now deserves to be punished. Apart from this desire to chasten the "Tories", the Record also tries to assert the position of Scotland in the affair. On Thursday, March 21st it seems that the paper was as yet unsure as to the role Scotland might have to play.

While announcing that "10 cases of a new type of CJD had been found by Edinburgh's National Surveillance Unit", the **Daily Record** voices its fears for the Scottish beef industry. In an article based on statistics, what Fowler calls "the rhetoric of quantification", the **Record** makes its first attempt at trying to distance Scottish beef from that produced in the rest of the UK:

20) Traditionally the Scots beef herd has been fed naturally and has not been connected in any way to the dairy herd

The authoritative use of the affirmative is used to create the impression of unalterable truth, and any rejection of Scottish beef by foreigners will be the result of an (implicitly foolish) "panic reaction" which "could lead to the Scots trade being hit. Despite this favourable opinion of the healthiness of Scots beef, the **Record** is faced with a dilemma. The article mentioned above with the headline;

14) **Mum died because she loved her mince**

is forced to come to terms with the fact that "more than 40 Scots have died in the last 10 years". The case is presented of a 58 year-old Scottish "granny" who died because, according to her family she loved mince, the traditional staple working-class meat diet. If Scottish meat is as free from the disease as has been suggested on the preceding page, how can the fact that there have been forty Scots victims be reconciled.. Of the forty victims, only one case is given, and she was "living in Leeds when she fell ill". The implication is clear. Scottish victims, English beef.

IV. FRIDAY, MARCH 22ND , 1996

On Thursday March 21st, it has been possible to identify three main paradigmatic tendencies in the **Daily Record**, with regards to what the paper now called, with a special graphic logo, the "mad cow scandal". The first and most obvious of these was the use of the story as a typical case of a "scare", in much the same way as the "salmonella-in eggs affair" which has been fully documented by Fowler, the "baby food Scandal" etc. with extensive use of hysterical prose, the proliferation of nouns like "panic", "fear", terror etc. To this was added the attempt at scoring party political points by putting the blame firmly on the Conservative Government. Thirdly, the tentatively suggested disassociation of Scottish beef from the problem.

These three ideas continue in the edition of Friday, March 22nd, although they are eclipsed somewhat by two new, if related, concepts, namely the threat to the meat industry and the reactions of foreign, particularly European, countries. The main headline on the front page;

1) **BEEF BAN WILL BUTCHER JOBS**

uses a stridently authoritative alliteration to consider the first of these aspects. The short front-page article sums up all these paradigms in just a few words;

2) Mad cow panic has put up to 200,000 Scots beef jobs under threat.

The Government yesterday predicted sales would plummet by half.

As worried shoppers boycotted butchers throughout the country, Belgium France, Sweden, Portugal and Holland announced a ban on British beef.

And some politicians in Germany called for a ban across the EU.

The panic was sparked after the Government conceded this week it had been wrong for 10 years and humans CAN catch mad cow disease from infected meat.

The "scare" notion is represented by words like "panic", "threat" and the verb "plummet", while blame is directed at the Tories through "conceded ... it had been wrong" and the capital type face used in the modal "CAN". The "worried shoppers", the readers, represent the potential victims, and the planned "ban on British beef" by other European countries is treated, here at least, as a natural reaction, as it is almost given approval by its semantic linking to the "boycott" of the "worried shoppers". Only the Germans, the traditional scapegoat in the **Record**, can perhaps be accused of not being in the right, as is suggested by the separate paragraph which can almost be read as a kind of "they would anyway, wouldn't they?". The main difference that lies within the ideological content of this article is the new role attributed to Scotland and the Scots. While in the Thursday edition, Scotland was depicted as little more than a bystander, affected more by proximity than anything else, the Friday paper assigns to it the role of victim. The syntax of the first sentence is relevant. Predication places the "200,000 Scots beef jobs" in the role of object, of affected patient, while it is the "mad cow panic" which acts as subject. The implication is clear, innocent Scottish jobs are being threatened by irrational panic.

The main articles on pages two and three confirm this tendency. In the article which carries on from that of the front page, with a headline which reads;

3) **200,000 Scots beef workers fear chop over mad cow alert**

reference is made to Scotland, Scots or Scottish on no less than 12 occasions. The accessed voices protest that "most cases of mad cow disease have been found in English dairy cattle" and that "out of a total of 158,698 cases, only 7645 have been north of the border". Foreign countries are here seen more as a threat, and the habitual chauvinism is allowed to participate. "Gleeful French farmers," we are told, "were last night preparing to cash in on the gap in the market.

The main fears seem now to be related to more pragmatic factors, such as jobs and

exports, taking a lot of the emphasis away from the "human" aspect of victims and their families which had been central to the issue the day before. The articles on page 2 support this shift with a large number of figures, giving a new precedence to the economic factors involved in the affair. There would also appear to be a move away from the wholehearted belief that the two diseases are in fact connected, voices are quoted which accuse the Tories of "procrastination and delay", of not having done "enough to reassure the public" and of "totally mishandling the crisis". The problems are now considered to be those of misinformation, rather than the actual disease itself. Attention has shifted from the disease to the fears and panic which surround it.

If in the edition of Thursday, March 21st could only produce one pun in its headlines, "Burger off!" (which will later be repeated), the Friday edition contains various. As well as the use of the verb "chop" in the headline mentioned above, the following examples are to be found on page 3;

- 4) **JOBS AT STEAK ...**
- 5) **Not a sausage for Mrs. Dorrell**
- 6) **Fat's bad news pie the way**

This apparent trivialisation can be seen to reinforce the idea that perhaps the disease isn't as serious as had been previously considered. In a similar vein, a series of four articles that appears on the following page treat the problem far from seriously. In these, a rugby player and a comedian both claim that they will continue to eat beef, while "Lottery girl Anthea Turner says she will never eat beef again after the BSE scare". In the next paragraph, however she reveals that she has been a vegetarian for the last two years, thus taking away any relevance the article might have had. The other "interview" is equally irrelevant, dealing as it does with a fictional character, "Comic book hero Desperate Dan" who "faces a ban from his favourite meal", cow pie.

On the same page as these "fun" interviews, there is an article in a question and answer format, which purports to give the reader "THE LOWDOWN ON MAD COW". This is in many respects at odds with the trivial articles which appear above, and can be seen as an example of a typically authoritarian modality. The ignorant reader is "told the facts" by the knowledgeable voice of the newspaper, a voice which echoes other official voices, and even predicts the future situation.

V. SATURDAY, MARCH 23RD , 1996

On the Saturday after the "mad cow scandal" broke, the "quality press" still dedicated their front pages to coverage of the affair. **The Guardian**, for example, dedicated its main headline to the international repercussions, stating quite simply;

- 1) **EU backs beef ban**

The tabloids, on the other hand, had already demoted the story to inside pages, presumably reflecting tabloid policy of not boring their readers with the same story for too long. In both the **Daily Mail** and the **Daily Record** the news about the BSE/CDJ link is found a

long way from the main news stories. While the Mail, on pages 6 and 7, tries its hand at a **Record**-style pun;

2) **Beef sales are cut to the bone**

the **Record** itself dedicates only one page, divided into two distinct points of view. That of the "experts" and that of "Beef-eating Scots" who, in their great majority, it would appear have "vowed to keep on munching". Under the headline;

3) **We're still the munch bunch**

it gives the results of a survey carried out on "dozens of meat lovers". Does this fact mean that the so-called survey was only carried out on members of the public who had already professed a predisposition to continue eating meat? The accompanying photo shows a "burly bus driver" and "father-of -two" with a large plate of beefburgers. The overall opinion is highly favourable towards continued beef consumption, only the last person interviewed, "Mum Kate Crighton, 27", has opted not to eat beef.

In a similar vein, on the same page, a small article talks in a pun-ridden style, of the actress Ulrika Jonsson who "ain't got no beef about sausages" and who "thinks bangers are a smash". Ms. Jonsson, it appears, is to present "the Bangers 1996 Awards: the Oscars of the sausage world". This article functions in a similar way to the one discussed above, effectively minimising the situation with "news" of dubious relevance.

The other main article, under the headline;

4) **Don't buy beef**

reflects a "watchdog warning to worried shoppers", that is, the recommendations made by the Consumers' Association. The "warning" is, however, qualified by the director of the Association stating that "those who wanted beef should stick to red joints and steaks". The position has therefore been softened, accepting that higher quality beef is not at risk, and would now appear to implicitly acknowledge the wisdom of those interviewed in the preceding article who, like

5) Toilet attendant Frances Smith, 59, from Dennistoun, Glasgow, said: "I like steaks and it would be hard to say I'll never eat them again."

In a smaller article on the same page, the Scottish aspect of the matter is once again dealt with. The headline is at best highly subjective;

6) **Scots meat is best**

which echoes statements made by the spokesman of the Scottish National party, Mr. Rob Gibson. As we have noted before, the political stance of the **Daily Record** is often opportunistically close to the SNP in non-electoral periods. This article gives an almost verbatim account of the spokesperson's words, with only limited editorial intervention through the discourse markers "it was claimed yesterday", "says Scottish National Party spokesman Rob Gibson", "He wants", "He said" and "Gibson added". The confusion that exists between direct and indirect speech reflects the proximity of the implied editorial discourse to that of the accessed voice. It is therefore to be assumed that the **Record** is now firmly backing

the SNP line that "Scottish beef is safe". This is followed by the juxtaposition with two articles which present a more optimistic future for Scottish beef.

The first of these tells of "Buchan Meat" of Aberdeen, a company which "went bust with the loss of hundreds of jobs after the last BSE scare" which hopes to "reopen the slaughterhouse in two or three weeks". The use of the words "last BSE scare" would seem to point to an admission on the part of the newspaper that such scares are habitual and as such are less traumatic. In this respect, it would be consistent with the apparent new **Record** policy of minimising the dangers, especially with regards to Scottish beef. The other article furthers this optimistic vision by stating that, despite warning of the possibility of a mass slaughter of British cattle, "MPs were still happily eating beef in the Commons' dining rooms and canteens". "Commons catering chief Sue Harrison" is quoted as saying "We are members of the Scottish beef club".

VI. CONCLUSION

When the "mad cow scandal" first made the pages of the **Daily Record** on Thursday, March 21st, it was perceived as a continuation of the typical "food scares which have been a common stereotype in the British press over the last couple of decades. Coming as it did, immediately after the "Dunblane massacre", the "human" aspect was appealed to, especially with regard to child victims or the potential danger to children. To this was added the possibility of attacking the Conservative Government. Over the next two days, however, the emphasis changed when it became clear that the "scandal" proved a very real threat to the economy. Efforts were made both to minimise the risk which had earlier been treated so graphically, with the description of symptoms, photos of victims etc., and also to distance Scottish meat from the generic heading British beef, so that it is not "tarred with the same brush".

The "fear" and "panic" which the **Daily Record** originally associated with the disease became "worry" and "concern" about loss of jobs or income. Over the next few days, news would be particularly concerned with the reactions of foreign countries and the possible effects expected from a hypothetical mass-slaughter of British cattle. Not untypically, however, on Monday, March 25th, the **Daily Record** would dedicate the three pages concerning the "mad cow scandal" to the decision taken by the McDonald's hamburger restaurants to stop using British beef.

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