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Entretiens *Sur Le Journalisme*

Depuis 2012, la revue *Sur Le Journalisme* s'est engagée à partager des projets, diffuser des savoirs, échanger des idées, et contribuer ainsi à la construction d'un domaine d'études et de recherche sur le journalisme, dans une perspective comparée et internationale. Cet élan vers la connaissance d'autres cultures et traditions, passant par plusieurs langues, a fait naître une nouvelle envie d'ouverture. Recueillir la parole de journalistes, chercheurs et enseignants, qui chacun et chacune, à leur manière originale et personnelle, ont marqué et marquent encore la discipline, nous est apparu comme une évidence. Constituer une « histoire orale » qui soit aussi une « histoire croisée » des études en journalisme, en dialogue avec des professionnels, scientifiques et pédagogues que nous avons coutume de lire et de citer, se veut un projet fondamental et fondateur. Sans doute est-il ambitieux, mais l'audace est précieuse dès lors qu'elle engage une conversation pour revenir aux origines, élargir nos horizons, imaginer un avenir, changer nos perceptions, tendre vers une meilleure compréhension du monde.

Nous vous invitons à découvrir, à travers leurs trajectoires individuelles, mais aussi leurs visées collectives, leurs environnements professionnels et contextes nationaux variés, comment ces praticiens, experts, académiques, ont constitué, conceptualisé, critiqué les études en journalisme. Au croisement entre plusieurs disciplines – sociologie, littérature, science politique, histoire, sciences de l'information et de la communication – les études en journalisme assoient aujourd'hui leur légitimité en grande partie grâce à ces voix qui ont aidé à forger, structurer, et institutionnaliser un champ académique. Les entretiens que nous publions dans cette nouvelle rubrique sont réalisés avec des personnalités qui ont œuvré pour faire reconnaître les études sur le journalisme, en apprécier la profondeur, la richesse, et tout le potentiel. Ils constituent une source de réflexion et d'inspiration pour appréhender de nouvelles réalités, relever des défis inédits, et accompagner les enjeux d'un domaine en perpétuelle mutation, notamment en termes de diversité, d'inclusivité, de technicité.

NEW SECTION

Interviews *About Journalism*

Since 2012, *About Journalism* has been committed to presenting projects, disseminating knowledge, and exchanging ideas. In so doing it contributes to the construction of a field of study and research on journalism, from comparative and international perspectives. The inclusion in the journal of knowledge developed in other cultures, traditions, and languages, has spurred a desire for more openness. As the next logical step, the journal will from now on invite journalists, researchers, and professors, to share their stories and legacy. Each, in their own, original, and personal way, will share their past or current contributions to the discipline. Creating an "oral history", which is also "crossed" or "shared" history, aims at grounding and advancing research in journalism studies. Such an ambitious project becomes possible only through the contributions of the professionals, scientists, and academics we commonly read and quote. It is driven by the audacity to question beginnings, broaden horizons, imagine the future, change perceptions, and strive for a better understanding of the world.

We invite readers to discover how practitioners, experts, and academics, have defined, conceptualized, and criticized journalism studies through their personal trajectories, collective goals, professional environments, and national contexts. At the crossroads of multiple disciplines - sociology, literature, political science, history, information and communication sciences - journalism studies establishes its legitimacy in large part thanks to the contributions of those who have helped forge, structure, and institutionalize the academic field. Interviews published in this new section are conducted with prominent figures who have contributed through their work to bringing recognition to journalism studies and to encouraging the exploration of its depth, variety, and potential. These voices are a source of reflection and inspiration for understanding new realities, for meeting and keeping up with challenges in an ever-changing field, especially in terms of diversity, inclusiveness, and technology.

NOVA SEÇÃO

Entrevistas *Sobre jornalismo*

Desde 2012, a revista *Sobre jornalismo* tem buscado compartilhar projetos, disseminar saberes, trocar ideias, contribuindo com a construção de um campo de estudo e de pesquisa sobre o jornalismo, numa perspectiva comparada e internacional. Este ímpeto para o conhecimento de outras culturas e tradições, transitando por várias línguas, originou um novo desejo de abertura. Assim, uma proposta se impôs: compilar falas de jornalistas, pesquisadores e professores que marcaram e continuam a marcar a disciplina, por meio de relatos originais e pessoais. Constituir uma “história oral”, que também seja uma “história cruzada” dos estudos de jornalismo, em diálogo com os profissionais, cientistas e educadores que costumamos ler e citar, é um projeto fundamental e fundador. Pode parecer ambicioso, mas a ousadia se faz necessária quando se pretende estabelecer uma conversa para retornar às origens, ampliar horizontes, imaginar um futuro, mudar percepções, tender para uma melhor compreensão do mundo.

Convidamos vocês a descobrir como esses profissionais, especialistas e acadêmicos, por meio de suas trajetórias individuais, suas ambições coletivas, seus ambientes profissionais, em contextos nacionais variados, constituíram, conceitualizaram e criticaram os estudos de jornalismo. No interstício entre várias disciplinas - sociologia, literatura, ciência política, história, ciências da informação e da comunicação -, os estudos de jornalismo assentam hoje sua legitimidade em grande medida nessas vozes que ajudaram a forjar, estruturar e institucionalizar um campo acadêmico. As entrevistas que publicamos nesta nova seção dão voz a personalidades que trabalharam pelo reconhecimento dos estudos de jornalismo, valorizando sua profundidade, sua riqueza e todo o seu potencial. São fonte de reflexão e inspiração para apreender novas realidades e desafios de um campo em constante mutação, especialmente em termos de diversidade, inclusividade e tecnicidade.

La rubrique est coordonnée par
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INTERVIEW

How George Orwell Invented Journalism Studies

An interview with Prof. Richard Lance Keeble, a self-defined “hackademic”

PRESENTATION

To inaugurate our series of conversations with scholars in journalism studies with a view to securing some useful insights into the history and practice of journalism education, Prof. Richard Lance Keeble appeared an obvious choice. Now an Honorary Professor at Liverpool Hope University, Prof. Keeble was first director of the International Journalism MA, then director of the Journalism and Social Science BA, at City University, London (1984-2003). He was then appointed Professor of Journalism (2003-present) at Lincoln University where he also became acting head of the Lincoln School of Journalism (2010-2013) and later a Visiting Professor at Liverpool Hope University (2015-2019). Prof. Keeble has been the recipient of prestigious and distinguished prizes, namely the National Teaching Fellowship Award (2011) and the Lifetime Achievement Award for services to journalism education (2014), the latter bestowed by the Association for Journalism Education in the UK.

Parallel to his academic career, Prof. Keeble has always been a practising journalist. On completion of his studies in Modern History at Keble College, Oxford University (1967-70), he started a career in journalism, first as sub editor at the *Nottingham Guardian Journal/Evening Post* (1970-73) and then at the *Cambridge Evening News* (1973-77). He was deputy editor, then editor, of *The Teacher*, the weekly newspaper of the National Union of Teachers (1977-84). His dual pedigree in journalism, as a practitioner and a professor, led him to take on many editorial responsibilities. He is emeritus editor of *Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication and Ethics* and joint editor of *George Orwell Studies* and is also on the board of an impressive number of journals, among which are *Journalism Studies*, *Digital Journalism*, *Journalism Education*, *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, *Media Ethics*, *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism*, to name just a few. Prof. Keeble was also Chair of the *Orwell Society*¹ (2013-2020) and has authored or edited no less than 44 books. They include *Ethics for Journalists* and *The Newspapers Handbook*,² respectively on their second and fifth editions, as well as several volumes on George Orwell, investigative journalism, and the British media.

It was an honour and privilege to talk to Prof. Keeble in a phone interview on March 25, 2021. The conversation was transcribed while some passages were edited for clarity. I hereby express my immense gratitude for his time, generosity, expertise, and humour. It is such a thrill to start our series of interviews in a way that only makes us want more such conversations.

Can you tell us about the origins of journalism education in the United Kingdom?

I have done five editions of my *Newspapers Handbook* and, in a number of those, I did talk about the history of journalism education. Well, the first journalism school was founded in 1908 at the University of Missouri, and ten years later there were eighty-six schools offering some journalism coursework. In Britain, a diploma course ran at King's College in London between 1922 and 1939, but it wasn't re-started after the war. Now, you know, I'm very much a fan of George Orwell. We could talk a lot about George Orwell's contribution to journalism studies. In one of his "As I Please" columns in *Tribune* in 1944 – he wrote eighty between 1943 and 1947 – he responded to a letter sent to him by a woman who had subscribed to the London School of Journalism, clearly a commercial operation at that time. With typical humour, he wrote, obviously damning the organisation for advising this woman not to write for socialist newspapers: "Isn't it curious that trainers are not well-known writers? If Bernard Shaw or J. B. Priestley offered to teach you how to make money out of writing, you might feel there was something in it. But who would buy a bottle of hair restorer from a bald man?" (*laughter*). That's typical Orwell. Orwell is finding something humorous to say. Now, around this time, certain newspaper companies such as *The Sunday Times* also ran their own in-house training programmes.

Which were the key events or watershed moments in the development of journalism education in the UK?

In 1949 there was a Royal Commission on the Press, and it drew attention to the need for better training. As a result, the Advisory Council for the Training and Education of Junior Journalists was set up in 1952. In 1955, it became the National Council for the Training of Journalists³ (NCTJ) – an organisation that has played a significant role in the history of journalism teaching up to the present day.

The first university postgraduate programme in England was started at Cardiff University by Sir Tom Hopkinson in 1970, and there was a diploma course set up at City University London in 1976. This is where I come in. The International Journalism MA course was launched there in 1982. I arrived in 1984. So, I guess I am the longest surviving teacher of journalism in the country. Alas, my dear friend Bob Jones, who ran the International MA with me for a number of years, died last month – I've written his obituary which appears in *The Guardian*.⁴

Following that, undergraduate courses appeared across the country so that by 2000, there were 100 degree programmes at 32 universities. Why? Because they were popular. Universities needed money. They drew in the student numbers. We, at City, also

launched an undergraduate programme and after my first sabbatical I went back and ran the Journalism and Social Science degree from 1992 to 2003. Colleagues at City at that time thought journalism did not have the academic credibility to operate as a separate discipline in its own right at undergraduate level, so they combined it with the social sciences. This made total sense, and I very much enjoyed running that programme.

What about the evolution of research in journalism studies?

In relation to the history of research of journalism, I recommend you a book called *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*, edited by Martin Löffelholz and David Weaver.⁵ It's got it all in there. A group of Marxist intellectuals in the so-called Frankfurt School – men like Marcuse, Fromm, Benjamin, Horkheimer, and Adorno – looked at the media very critically. Focusing on the reception and consumption of the mass media, they saw it as contributing to a 'massification', and a 'dumbing down' of culture. Well, things had to move on from that rather negative approach. In America, the seminal book was called *Mass Communications*. It was edited by Wilbur Schramm and published by the University of Illinois Press.⁶ And then surveys of journalists began. There was one by the sociologist John Johnstone and his colleagues in 1976.⁷ 1991 saw Shoemaker and Reese's *Mediating the Message* seminal text.⁸ And we shouldn't forget George Orwell in England in the 1940s. In one of my recent books, *Journalism Beyond Orwell*,⁹ I look at his response to the press and he had a remarkably original approach. He deconstructed not only a front page, say, of *The Daily Mirror* and an issue of the women's magazine *Vogue* but also boys' weekly comics. George Orwell we could perhaps argue, invented journalism studies.

The journal *Journalism Studies* was set up in 2000 by Routledge. In the same year, Sage published *Journalism*. That was largely run by colleagues of mine at City, Howard Tumber and Michael Bromley who moved to Australia. The research into journalism has really expanded over the last twenty years with many other academic journals appearing – such as *Ethical Space*, which I launched in 2003.

Do schools develop niches in the UK? And how did you carve out and spearhead your own programmes?

Our International MA was the first of its kind. It was launched for financial reasons, being blunt, because in this country foreign students – non-EU at the time – paid astronomical figures. It has now grown enormously since I left City University in 2003 and so you can imagine what a cash cow it is. But there are enormous sorts of benefits for international MAs.

Students come to England because of the global status of journalism in this country. I think in the seven years I ran the programme I had students from 35 different countries. So, if you are a practising journalist, which most of them were, if you came to England and gained an MA, it helped your career. Moreover, I also learned an enormous amount from my students. I began in 1984 and, by the time I took my first sabbatical in 1991, I was confident enough to base my PhD research on international politics. Because if I had a student coming from, say, Uganda, Sudan, Angola or Israel, I had to be aware of their country's politics. They knew about the politics in this country, so it was dependent on me to know theirs, so I learned an enormous amount.

In terms of niche, after a few years of being at Lincoln University, I launched an MA in Peace Journalism. Now I'm a pacifist, as you know, and in all my writing and my teaching I make clear my radical approach to the state. Essentially I see it as being geared for warfare rather than welfare. Do I thrust my views down at my students' throats? (*laughter*). Not at all. I present my views as part of an ongoing debate: they know where I stand and all opinions, including my own, are to be questioned. Peace Journalism proved to be highly controversial when I proposed the MA at Lincoln. So we changed the title to "Journalism, War and International Human Rights" and, hey presto, it was approved (*laughter*). To accompany the launch of the programme, I co-edited with my great friend and Lincoln colleague John Tulloch and PhD student Florian Zollmann a book on Peace Journalism drawing contributions from internationally celebrated academics and activists.¹⁰ And John Pilger, the award-winning investigative journalist, wrote a foreword.

I also started with the support of John Pilger the country's first undergraduate BA in investigative journalism, though there was already at City University a very well-established Master's course in this field. It was a programme inspired by a colleague at Lincoln who had the idea of introducing the culture of independent postgraduate research into undergraduate learning. This meant that students spent a lot of their time researching rather than coming into classes. Since I was running the journalism school and the Peace Journalism programme, this obviously suited me a lot. I wasn't buried in loads of class teaching. But obviously if you run a programme built around research, you are on call almost 24/7. So, it was extremely challenging. But I really enjoyed running that programme mainly because the final term for the students was entirely given over to working on their 20,000-word investigative project. Many rose to the ethical, investigative challenges such as when they went undercover.

I'll give you the example of one of my best students. His project was to investigate bare-knuckle fighting. It's illegal in the UK. Attending it is also illegal. But

my student wanted to explore the topic and to attend a bare-knuckle fight. Hence the problems began. Naturally, the student presented his proposal to all the relevant university committees but they were clear: he could not attend any fight because to do so would be illegal. How could I support this student? Well, in the end, I said he could witness a fight – but only off his own bat. First, he visited the site where the fight was to be held to find out escape routes should any be needed. He found an expert in bare-knuckle fighting to accompany him – for extra support and safety. He took with him my phone number – to ring in case of any emergency. On the night in question he went to a remote field and saw a group of gypsies forming a small circle – all carrying small electric torches. In the middle of this circle the men fight. Bets are laid. Blood is shed. Someone is knocked out. And so they move on to the next round. My student watched it all; so close to the action he was even spattered with blood. He reported all this in great detail and with a lot of descriptive colour. He ended up runner-up in the "young journalist of the year" award on the strength of his bare-knuckle investigative project, later joined the Murdoch-owned *Times* – and he's now a sports reporter for the *Daily Mail*. Journalism and journalism teaching, I guess, does involve risk-taking.

It's a big dilemma, I suppose. On the one hand, your institution says, "No, it is illegal," and then you need to have confidence in the abilities and determination of the student.

You're right. Other students did their own undercover work. And it was approved as a last resort "in the public interest" by the university's research ethics committee. Another excellent student, for instance, examined the ways in which the army visited schools, very often in rundown areas of the country, to recruit. You know, if you're poor, the army is one of the few careers open to you, so they deliberately target poor areas. As part of his research, the student attended an army recruitment session at the university assuming the character of someone interested in going into the army. In appropriate circumstance, I was happy to approve students going undercover as part of their investigative journalism – it helped give a sense of reality to the programme.

Your expertise is wide-ranging, but journalism ethics has always been central in your career. Is there a reason behind this?

Yes, I've always been political. I worked on local newspapers. My first newspaper was the Nottingham *Guardian Journal*, a morning newspaper. So, I worked with old blokes (*laughter*) immediately after leaving Oxford in 1970 because our shifts were from 5 in the afternoon until, say, 1 am. Then I moved to the *Cambridge Evening News*,

but conventional corporate journalism didn't appeal to me. I have always been very active in my trade unions throughout my career so I guess it was logical for me to move to the weekly newspaper of the National Union of Teachers – and I really loved it. It was very much the time of the peace movement in this country. Maryline, my partner now for 50 years, and I lived in a pacifist community of 16 people in the east end of London around that time, so I had a sense of really living the peace movement of the early 1980s. And the promotion of peace education was very much part of that movement.

When I became an academic, I had this strong political interest while ethics was an area most of my colleagues were reluctant to enter. Since I was running the course, I thought, I'll teach it. Ethics, then, became a way in which I could talk about politics and, crucially, the political economy of the media. Now this is for me the determining factor, as it was for George Orwell, of course. The underlying economic structure of the corporate media aligns it closely to dominant political, economic, and military interests. As a result, the notion of professionalism, which is at the heart of many journalism teaching programmes, I've always regarded problematically, seeing it rather as an ideology serving to legitimise the place of corporate journalism within the bourgeois state.

Look at the history of the professionalisation in Western societies: it occurred largely in the latter half of the 19th century. Professions amongst lawyers, teachers and journalists emerged – all of them closely integrated into the operations of the state. Accordingly, around this time, notions relating to the free press, democracy and objectivity became essential parts of the dominant ideology; in effect, part of the very air we breathe.

In this country, there was at the start of the 19th century a very outspoken partisan, radical, revolutionary, trade union-based, anti-clerical press. It was both very popular and illegal. The legal press, such as *The Times*, was stamped and only wealthy people could afford it. In contrast, the radical press was read out in pubs and at big, mass meetings. Many radical journalists, since they were operating illegally, ended up in jail. They became martyrs to the cause of the free press. How did the state eliminate the radical press? It was very, very, very clever. There was in the middle of the 19th century a series of parliamentary debates in which the 'threats' posed by the extremely popular, radical, revolutionary trade union press were discussed. Were they going to extend the laws that restricted access to the press and made unstamped journalism a criminal activity? Or were they going to do the complete opposite and open the press to the market? Very cleverly they chose the latter. Within a few years the radical press was mar-

ginalised. The market, in effect, served to control the content of the media – then as it still does today. I have always placed my teaching on professionalism, objectivity and partisanship in this critical, historical context.

How was I going to tackle all these issues in my *Ethics for Journalists*? I didn't want to just spout my (somewhat controversial) ideas. In the end I decided to present the issues in the form of questions. So I could present many different responses to the ethical dilemmas I raised – and leave the reader to decide which one they preferred. The questioning approach was also highly symbolic for me. After all, being curious is critical for being a good journalist. Dogmatism can only lead to confrontation. In contrast, the questioning approach is far more creative and stimulating.

I saw that you interviewed Phillip Knightley, in your book on ethics.

Phillip was certainly one of my mentors. He struck me as a journalist whom I wanted my students to emulate. I made him a Visiting Professor at Lincoln University – and awarded John Pilger (another man who has been a constant inspiration) an honorary doctorate. I knew John since very early on in my teaching days at City, and he wrote a very generous endorsement for the first edition of my *Newspapers Handbook*. So his words of wisdom are on the back cover and I'm sure they helped sell it around the world.

Phillip Knightley was very bright and very witty. He was aware of the importance of the radical critique of the media and would write for the radical media, for instance in Australia, the journal *New Matilda*. But he also contributed to mainstream newspapers. Can I tell you a joke?

Of course!

Phillip once told the story of when he was a cadet reporter in some godforsaken suburb or Sydney, Australia, it was a Friday and there was no news. So his editor said: "Go out and find some." So, he invented this report. It was about a man who roamed the local buses and used a coat hanger to lift up the skirts of the women. Some sexual pervert! And he headlined this story: "Hook Man Terrorises Women." His editor was completely satisfied and so the story became the front page lead. Phillip was very worried about this. First day after the publication went by, no response from the cops. Second day, no response. Third day, PC Plod comes on the phone and asks: "Is Phillip Knightley there?" Nervously, he replies, "Yes." To which the policeman announces, "You know that Hook Man. Well; we've caught the bastard!" With Phillip you never knew if an anecdote like that was true or false, and that's the point he was making. You see, Phillip

was deeply involved in reporting on spooks and the links between journalists and the intelligence services. Anything there could be false, it could be true. You just don't know. For one simple reason: there is no way of verifying most of it because, by definition, it's secret. So, I think that Phillip's joke was essentially warning the students ... don't really believe anything, and certainly don't believe me. Always question.

Literary journalism is another field you are actively exploring and writing profusely about. Did it become one of your signature courses too?

In all my career as a full-time academic, from 1984 to 2013, I only once ran a literary journalism module and that was because my dear friend John Tulloch had died, and I had to take it over. I've always, as you know, approached journalism, generally, as a creative field. My *Newspapers Handbook*, for instance, focuses on the conventions of news and feature reporting which students have to know; but they also need to be encouraged to break free of those conventions, when appropriate, and explore the creative dimensions of journalism.

For instance, that student who reported the bare-knuckle fight. In composing his feature, he had to capture the atmosphere of the scene. What were the sounds coming from the fight and the onlookers? What were the expressions on people's faces, what was it like being spattered with blood? This is not easy to write, but students do rise to the occasion. And what I have stressed in all my teaching of practical journalism is the range of genres within it: news (hard and soft), news features, profiles, interviews, reviews, editorials, captions, background features, lifestyle features, etc. I think when I wrote my first *Newspapers Handbook* in 1996 there were 17 different, essentially creative genres. Now, with the explosion of the Internet, social media and Data Journalism, there are many more.

How credible is it if you use the word "I" in this piece and how relevant is it? How much personal opinion should I include? How much analysis or description? These are all creative challenges which appear in straight journalism as much as they do in so-called *literary* journalism.

I've always been worried that there will be this elite group of teachers, focusing on literary journalism, developing the creative side of journalism, while other teachers handle the basic skills of news and feature writing. Personally I believe all journalism is worthy of critical attention for its literary/creative elements. So the front page of the tabloid, Murdoch-owned *Sun* is as interesting for me and my students to deconstruct as say the front page of *The Guardian* or *The New York Times*. In all media, fascinating questions relate to

language – for instance, the use of the vernacular, its conciseness, the subtle cultural references, the puns and alliteration, the recycling of press releases, and so on – and the ways in which the political economy of the media impact on content.

Is it essential to be both a scholar and a practitioner to teach journalism?

Journalism teachers, all my colleagues, have been practising journalists. They may not have done much, but all have done some journalism. What it means is that there can be an over-emphasis on practical skills. I've always stressed skills, but I've had this kind of reflective, critical, analytical approach which I hope my *Newspapers Handbook* captured. My own PhD, which I was awarded in 1996, was the first PhD by a practising journalism academic in the country. I also introduced a new PhD at City, which I called the DJorn (Doctorate in Journalism), for which journalists could submit their own work and build a theoretically creative thesis around it. Now in this country there is a new trend of teachers studying for a PhD by Practice.

When I launched the MA in International Journalism in 1984 with my friend Bob Jones we did something quite radical. The students had to submit a 20,000-word dissertation, but it wasn't a piece of conventional academic writing with an abstract, lit review, methodology, analysis of data and so on ... it was a piece of journalism! So, it was written like a Phillip Knightley book; that was always the model I gave my students. Look at one of Phillip's great books – say on war reporting or the history of the intelligence services – and, because it's referenced, it's academically robust but it reads like journalism. The writing is always accessible. It's based on massive research, interviews, and the analysis of documents. It's often quite brave and daring in what it reveals. So, we did that as far back as 1984. The students wrote journalistic books, and some students did amazing things. For instance, one student covered the AIDS crisis, which was new at the time. And she wrote it as letters to her sister. One student went to China and interviewed novelists, and she did it in the form of a diary. This playing with genre was brilliant. The dissertation projects that the students on the Investigative Journalism BA at Lincoln produced also tended to incorporate a range of genres: such as profiles, eye-witness reports, Data Journalism, insightful, investigative pieces, personal commentary and so on.

What should we be teaching in journalism today?

Obviously, that's an enormous question, but I've always stressed in my teaching and in my talks to my students that at the heart of journalism is the acquisition of transferable skills. Over the years I taught them

I saw the students developing their social skills, for instance, in striking ways. Why? Because journalism requires these special skills: the handling of various sources, meeting them, winning over their confidence. Journalism is also about building up the sense of curiosity. It's about developing technical skills – and critical, reflective, theoretical skills. These skills are incredibly important for all students to acquire. In these Covid times, it is difficult to know how many jobs in the corporate media there will be. Who knows? But journalism as an academic subject will still be popular. Research suggests that journalism graduates are certainly employable – in a large part because the transferable skills they have acquired are attractive to employers.

One of the things I think we need to stress is that students break free of the computer and the dominance of Google and the Internet, Facebook, Twitter etc. The value of meeting people, building up sources face-to-face, cannot be under-rated. Now, bringing up a political point, can I highlight how, in my country and around the world, the surveillance state is becoming ever increasingly powerful. The notion of privacy, which I explored at length in my ethics books, is even more problematic now because the state has enormous powers to intrude on the most intimate aspects of our lives, in particular those of journalists. Yet I think the debates amongst journalists and academics do not yet adequately confront the reality of the secret state and its impact on journalism and, in particular, reporters' contacts with sources. Given the way in which most electronic communication now is hardly confidential and because confidentiality is so critical to the operations of journalism, I think the teaching of journalism needs to take all that into account. Thus, the teaching of encryption techniques has to be an essential part of all journalism programmes, just as all students need to be critically aware of the secret state's crucial role in the operations not only of society and politics in general, but journalism in particular.

Very true. What you say about technical skills and transferable skills is so important because the ecology of journalism is changing all the time. Is adaptability also a key element for students?

Many of them have to write theoretical essays. Along with that, they have to write hard news. They have to produce a broadcast. They have to write for the Internet. These are all extremely demanding tasks and require different intellectual and literary skills. It's not easy for students, we have to appreciate that. Taking on a journalism programme? I really admire my students.

In the UK, you have such a diverse press. How do you teach students knowing that you have high quality papers, but also tabloids? How do you embrace this range of journalism?

I have throughout my entire career looked at the whole of journalism, critically, so not just corporate media with all its many manifestations. I've looked at the tabloids, the middle market press, the so-called qualities. And I've also looked at the so-called alternative media. I came from the trade union press, the alternative media, which until the emergence of the Internet, incorporated the feminist media, the environmental movement, the peace movement, the radical political left, etc. With the Internet, alternative media has blossomed. If you look at my *Newspapers Handbook*, I begin by interviewing five journalists because I wanted to root the book in the reality of journalism today – so I take in a corporate 'quality' newspaper, a tabloid, an alternative news agency, a local newspaper and a local free-sheet. Along with my political economy approach, I'm able to highlight in this way the different economic structures of newspapers and their impact on content.

So whenever I gave my students an assignment I made it clear to them that they were not writing, essentially, for me – they were writing for the market. This meant, then, that one of the most important bits of information on their copy was the word at the very top identifying their target. They could be writing for, say, *The Guardian*, or for *The Morning Star*, the newspaper of the Communist Party, or for a feminist Internet site. Each of these would require a different kind of report.

If you look at my writings, which encapsulate my teaching, I bring in the alternative media as much as I do the corporate media. And whether it's *The Sun*, or *The Mirror*, or *The Guardian*, or *The Socialist Worker*, or an ethnic Black newspaper, a feminist website or a pacifist newspaper, they are all subject to criticism, all of them. And myself! If you look at *The Newspapers Handbook*, there is an article in there which I wrote, which I deconstruct and critique.

The Internet has also made foreign media easily accessible. So if I'm examining journalists' links to the secret state I would not take in just UK-based journals such as the mainstream *Independent* and the alternative *Lobster* but also *Le Monde diplomatique* (which has an excellent English version) and the Paris-based *Mediapart* along with alternative investigative sites in Australia, New Zealand and India. If you are looking for an excellent website critical of US/UK imperialist adventures and the secret states throughout the world then take a look at *Declassified*,¹¹ which is run by the human rights campaigner Mark Curtis.

What are your thoughts on the incidence of the Leveson Report on journalism curricula?

The Leveson Report – published in 2012 following an inquiry into the 'hackgate' scandal in the UK – despite

all the hype has had little impact on media operations. The main witnesses were journalists, academics and celebrities. Ordinary people, such as the relations of Millie Dowler, a murdered young girl whose phone had been hacked, were given just walk-on parts. So its connection with everyday reality was somewhat remote. It was a kind of spectacle serving essentially to marginalise the major problems in the industry. In this respect, given my interest in the political economy of the media, it's not surprising that I should stress the monopoly ownership by a few companies. These are headed mostly by men and, indeed, there is an inherent sexism within the industry. The Leveson Inquiry, surprise, surprise, took no account of the alternative media, which could have provided examples of good media coverage. The Butler Inquiry had previously, in 2004, examined the handling of intelligence by the government following the Iraq War. But, again, significantly, a particularly important factor – namely the links between the media and intelligence – was never, ever (not surprisingly) discussed.

Now, there was to be a Leveson Inquiry Two, in which politicians' close ties to journalists were to be examined. These ties have been written about by academics for decades, so the topic is well known. But, of course, the follow-up inquiry never happened. It was cancelled.

How important is accreditation in UK schools of journalism? Is it a *sine qua non* for survival? Does accreditation enhance credibility and employability? Are rankings a matter of utmost importance?

Accreditation: Absolutely crucial. It's part of the marketing, really, the selling of the courses. At Lincoln, it helped us a lot. We had accreditation from all the relevant bodies: the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) for newspapers, the Broadcasting Training Council (BTC), the Periodicals Training Council (PTC) for magazines, and we had accreditation from the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA).

There is a problem that goes with NCTJ accreditation. The organisation is dominated by local media editors who have tended to stress the importance of shorthand. But can you fail a student because they have not mastered shorthand? It's a dilemma. Now if you want to meet journalism teachers in the UK and get totally bored (*laughter*), you mention the NCTJ. Because the debate around shorthand is endless!

In the ongoing debate on “the future of journalism education,” some recommend “a realignment of journalism education from an industry-centered model to a community-centered model as one way to re-engage journalism education in a more productive and vital role in the future of journalism.”¹² Where do you stand on this?

I think journalism programmes need to be focused on both the industry and the community (local, national, international). I might be very critical of the industry, but it's very much at the heart of everything I do. Can I add two things?

Of course, please!

Humour, I've done two books on humour with my friend David Swick.¹³

Yes, from University of King's College, in Nova Scotia.

I taught journalism for all those years but very rarely gave my students an assignment to write humorously. Now I've retired from full-time teaching I am able to reflect more – and see what I failed to cover. But clearly there is a lot of interest internationally in the topic amongst journalism academics – we were sent so many excellent abstracts we were able to produce two texts.

It is fascinating because humour is something that does not always travel easily.

True. It is very tricky, but that makes it all the more interesting. I also jointly edited a book with my Australian friend and colleague, Sue Joseph, on sex and journalism,¹⁴ another topic which I failed to cover adequately while a full-timer. I did teach a programme on human rights reporting for a number of years at Lincoln and students there would deal with issues relating to sexuality. For instance, they would examine the 'epidemic' of rape in South Africa. Indeed, if you look at the overall academic study of sex it's perhaps too concentrated on 'negative' aspects. For instance, prostitution, sex trafficking – that sort of thing. But sexuality is clearly a very sensitive topic. I recently reviewed a Routledge book dealing with sensitive subjects. Interestingly, when sex issues appeared, they were all 'negative' ones.

What is your next project?

I did two books last year on Orwell: *Journalism Beyond Orwell* (published by Routledge) and *Orwell, the Secret State and the Making of Nineteen Eighty-Four* (published by Abrams). I guess I've become an Orwell bore. During lockdown I wrote 120,000 words on Orwell, many of them for various journals and websites. In one of them I looked at his appearance and the way in which he represented clothes in his writing, and along with that, nakedness. There's already been *Orwell's Nose*¹⁵ and *Orwell's Cough*¹⁶ and when I reviewed them I wondered what on earth could follow that. In the end, I've joined the fun and called mine *Orwell's Moustache*, which brings together my lockdown pieces.¹⁷

Looking forward to reading! Your career has always been very much focused on teaching, and you have this dedication and enthusiasm for students. You don't miss them too much today?

My mother was a teacher, my sister, Margaret, who sadly died a few years ago, was also a teacher. I vowed that I would be a journalist, not a teacher. Now during the early 1980s I was editor of *The Teacher*, the newspaper of the National Union of Teachers, of which my mother was actually a member. I kept meeting a friend in London, Henry Clothier, who was a teacher at City. So I began to think of moving into academia – and Henry encouraged me to apply for a job at City. I got it. And the moment I walked into City University I felt strongly “This is for me.” I loved everything about it. The contact with the students, the intellectual stimulation, the contacts, still, with the industry, the meeting with colleagues around the world, the developments of friendships. So, perhaps I was born to be a “hackademic” mixing the world of journalism and the academy. I now live in Lincolnshire, which is a very beautiful county. I look out my window, the sun is shining on a beautiful, rolling landscape, completely isolated. My 19th century ancestors were Strict Baptists in the south of the county, and from there they went around the country, preaching the word of God. Indeed, when I'm performing confidently in front of a classroom the pleasure I gain from that I guess I've inherited from my mother and my ancestors. That's what I feel in my blood, in my body, in my psyche.

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NOTES

^{1.} For more information, <https://orwellsociety.com/>

^{2.} Richard Lance Keeble, *The Newspapers Handbook*, Routledge: 2014 (fifth edition).

^{3.} For more information, <https://www.nctj.com/>

^{4.} Richard Lance Keeble, “Bob Jones Obituary,” *The Guardian*, 15 March 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/mar/15/bob-jones-obituary>

^{5.} Martin Löffelholz and David Weaver (eds). *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Blackwell, 2008.

^{6.} Wilbur Schramm (ed.), *Mass Communications*, Urbana: University of Illinois, 1969.

^{7.} John J. W. Johnstone, E. J. Slawski, and W. W. Bowman. *The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1976.

^{8.} Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message in the 21st Century: A Media Sociology Perspective*, Longman, 1991.

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^{10.} Richard Lance Keeble, John Tulloch, and Florian Zollmann, *Peace Journalism, War and Conflict Resolution*, Peter Lang, 2010.

^{11.} <https://declassifiededuk.org/>

^{12.} Donica Mensing, “Rethinking [again] the Future of Journalism Education,” *Journalism Studies*, 11:4 (2010), 511.

^{13.} Richard Lance Keeble and David Swick (eds.), *Pleasures of the Prose*, Abrams, 2015. David Swick and Richard Lance Keeble (eds.), *The Funniest Pages: International Perspectives on Humor in Journalism*, Peter Lang, 2016.

^{14.} Sue Joseph and Richard Lance Keeble (eds.), *Sex and Journalism: Critical, Global Perspectives*, Bite-Sized Books, 2019.

^{15.} John Sutherland, *Orwell's Nose: A Pathological Biography*, Reaktion Books, 2016.

^{16.} John Ross, *Orwell's Cough : Diagnosing the Medical Maladies & Last Gasp of Great Writers*, Oneworld, 2014.

^{17.} Richard Lance Keeble, *Orwell's Moustache: Addressing More Orwellian Matters*, Arima Publishing, 2021.