Introduction: Journalism In Question

The title of this introductory essay sounds like the title of a university seminar. Rightly so, since its authors are employed in the academy, and the academy is bound to question its objects of study or it can hardly claim to be studying them. Questioning professional journalism is thus the everyday activity of everyone involved in Journalism Studies. Today, however, journalism faces another line of altogether different questioners, this time from outside the academy. Advertisers, publishers, readers, viewers and listeners – and even journalists themselves – are all questioning journalism, wondering what it is for, and asking whether its professional, paid-for incarnation provides anything that digital media users are unable to supply for free.

This line of inquiry may have been initiated at the same time as 'Web 2.0', i.e. around the turn of the twenty-first century, but at that time it was pencil thin. Since then the question mark hanging over journalism has been cross-hatched by a combination of cyclical advertising recession and fundamental economic downturn; with the added complication that each of these has now segued into the other, making it almost impossible to distinguish one cause from another's effects. You know the score: we only know that the tally of journalism's casualties (titles closed; publishing houses brought down; hacks no longer hunting in packs, but singly, for jobs) will be higher by the time you read this than it was when we wrote it.

Questioning journalism has become much more than an academic exercise. In today's context, the hardest questions are framed by the turn of events outside the academy. Surely this should have some effect on those inside the academy and the way we go about studying journalism. If it was one thing to question the moral authority of professional journalism while its commercial viability looked assured, it must be another, lesser thing to kick at journalism when all its doors are open and unguarded.

Now journalism is down, the academy will only confirm its irrelevance – and there is no shortage of those looking for confirmation – if it carries on kicking in the same way that it did when journalism was on the up. On the other hand, while external events are combining to deconstruct journalism, Journalism Studies could distinguish itself by contributing to journalism's reconstruction. Instead of continuing its dog-bites-man routine (Not All Journalism Is Good – Shock! Horror!), perhaps the best outcome for the academy would be for academicians to make the most effective case for dogged, professional reporting.

We certainly think so. In today's context, the most pertinent part of critique, we believe, is that which pertains to reconstruction: logical reconstruction of the historical development of journalism, undertaken in the attempt to show the logic of its future histories. Though we are not qualified to determine which version of journalism's future will prevail, our book is an unreserved attempt to develop a version of Journalism Studies which supports what is best about journalism, and plays some part in today's struggle to ensure that journalism has a future.

To this end, we reject the kind of negative labelling which the academy has readily practised on journalism. There may have been a time and a place for something along such lines; but we think it is intellectually and morally wrong for Journalism Studies to stay within its established tramlines now that journalism has been bounced out of its own routines – almost to the point of being disestablished. Especially in today's conditions, uncritical continuation of 'critical thinking' will add little more to the understanding of journalism's past, still less to the prognosis for its future; moreover, it can only have a corrosive effect on the academy's relationship with media and society.

This does not mean that we find all journalism defensible. Some of it has been truly culpable (such as the erstwhile role of the British press in legitimising state racism or its regular propaganda service in wartime), and it is the responsibility of Journalism Studies to make their own culpability comprehensible to journalists, i.e. to explain it in such a way that journalists can recognise themselves in the explanation. But this, too, is a responsibility that

Journalism Studies has not often lived up to. All too often, Journalism Studies has talked past journalism rather than addressing it.

Neither is it for Journalism Studies to address itself to the day-to-day requirements of commercial journalism or its public service counterpart. Even in the abstract, it would be self-defeating for the academy to suspend judgment and turn itself into an industrial training provider; but in today's circumstances, this turn would be doubly disastrous. If we in the academy were to rehearse our students to perform for journalism as it was, we would be failing to prepare them for what now is. Equally, there is little point in drilling students in the established patterns of today's industry, since they are not yet confirmed: at present, whatever may become the new pattern has barely begun to emerge from the disestablishment of old-style journalism.

Desperately Seeking Solutions

Journalists, publishers and their associates have been trying to find consistency in the midst of today's uncertainty, largely without success. Typically, brash attempts to settle the future of journalism by one means or another soon give way to the unsettling realisation that any such vehicle could be more harmful than helpful to journalism. In one week of March 2010, for example, we heard or went to hear various solutions being talked about, and came away with the sinking feeling that one journo's lifeboat might easily be another's torpedo. Uncertainty was the only unavoidable outcome, repeatable across-the-board.

There was noisy trumpeting of Apple's iPad as the tablet with journalism's future written on it. But we could not help wondering why the iPad will not launch even more of the user-generated content (UGC) which allegedly spells the demise of professional journalism. Others insisted that the answer lies in a new business model, either the pay-to-pass-firewall as pioneered by Rupert Murdoch's *Wall Street Journal,* or the collaborative collation of micro-payments mooted by Google and various magazine publishers. Perhaps one of these will prove commercially effective, or maybe both; but even so, it is naïve to expect them to solve the problems of journalism. If we can now convince ourselves that new business models are the solution to the problems of journalism, we must also be able to forget all those earlier criticisms of journalism (going for the lowest common denominator, etc., etc.) in which the old business model and its dominant influence were said to be the cause of journalism's problems. The turn-of-the-century experience, when journalism's crisis was existential before it became financial, should be a sufficient reminder: there is more to this than meets the accountant's eye.

Not everyone is fixated on private sector business models, however. At 'Democracy Without Journalists? The Crisis in Local News', a seminar held in March 2010 in the annexe of the House of Commons, the coinage common to a number of speakers was the idea of journalism as a 'public good' which merits public funding.[1] Thus the general secretary of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) introduced his union's 'economic stimulus plan for local media' (Dear 2009), which calls on government not only to invest in local journalism but also to assess which media organisations are 'genuinely local' – genuine enough to qualify for financial support. Indeed the journalists' union should have a policy response to 'the sapping away of resources from local newsrooms and a failure by major companies to invest in quality journalism'. But is it advisable for the elected representative of journalists to be inviting the state to play a bigger role in journalism? Is state intervention representative of journalism's current interests? In the peculiar conditions pertaining today, perhaps it is; but before rushing to answer, or, still worse, assuming the answer without even recognising the question, we should consider the historical record of state attempts to control journalism, and bear in mind that resistance to state control on the part of journalists has been among the formative experiences of journalism; moreover, it is one of the characteristics of journalism that make it worth saving.

This should be borne in mind along with the recent attempt to co-opt journalism into the field work of the therapeutic state, resulting in a flurry of government-funded publications which promote 'wellbeing', 'participation', and 'community'. While it is hardly unusual for journalistic

copy to be composed in ideological terms, we suggest that not since the Restoration period has so large a portion of published material come directly from government. If you live in a British city, you are certain to have seen one of these publications; and you are almost certain to have noticed that, though 'genuinely local', they are not issued from that place in our minds which looks upon all manner of events – local, regional, national and international – as if from the outside. Their content results from a selection process, but the eyes which made the selection are not those of an outsider. Such publications are state-funded, but by no means characteristic of the state of mind required for independent journalism. It is questionable whether copy writers whose livelihood depends on a funding stream that flows toward this kind of publication would be in a position to retain or even attain the independence of mind required for journalism. Their position would seem to be precarious (even if, in this age of austerity, funding were found to secure such titles); and their predicament resembles that of journalists already working on 'contract magazines' in the private sector, whose role is to promote comparable or identical values – 'sustainability', 'engagement', 'community' – oriented towards corporate brands instead of the state.

Please note, we are not saying that government funding prohibits genuinely journalistic activity outright; there is no more basis for this sweeping statement than for the assertion that contract magazines contain absolutely no journalism. What we are saying is that the relationship between independent journalism and government funding is especially fraught; and in March 2010, in the run-up to the British general election, we were surprised to find the NUJ appearing to pay little attention to this in its 'stimulus plan'. We think it foolish to enter into a revised version of this relation without careful and continuous scrutiny of the terms of engagement. Similarly, not to apply such scrutiny would endanger journalism instead of securing its future, i.e. the opposite of the desired effect.

None of the available solutions are above suspicion. The other examples given above show that private sector solutions are equally in need of thorough scrutiny (just as the world we live in all but demands the level of scrutiny applied to it by journalism itself). But who is in the best position to serve journalism as its own scrutineer? Of course, the public will have the final say, but the problem with the 'final say' is that it comes at the end. When all else has been said and done, the public's verdict on journalism still comes too late to have a pro-active effect on the preceding process. Similarly, journalists have inside knowledge of their own activity, but the problem with 'inside knowledge' is that it does not look out upon that which it knows; often, its very proximity to internal pressures also limits its powers of observation and evaluation.

Neither professional writers nor everyday readers of journalism, therefore, are in the best position to think long and hard about journalism and what it should be doing. On the other hand, it seems to us that the academy is a strong candidate for this role, but only if Journalism Studies learns to scrutinise not against journalism so much as for and on behalf of it. To illustrate what we mean, we now present an example of each kind of scrutiny, negative and positive, as recently practised by Journalism Studies upon journalism.

'Big Media' vs. DIY Journalism

Journalism Studies is a young academic discipline, having emerged in the UK as a discrete area of study – distinct from Media and Cultural Studies on the one hand, and from journalism training on the other – not long before the turn of the twenty-first century.[2] It has, of course, a considerable intellectual inheritance – most recently and, certainly in a British context, most importantly, from Sociology and Media and Cultural Studies (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2009: 6). But part of our purpose is to interrogate how far that inheritance remains useful, and how far it may be holding Journalism Studies back by making it more difficult to see what is distinctive today. The problem, we argue at various points in the book, is that the post-1968 political context which shaped the radical sociology and cultural theory of the 1970s is long gone, yet the theoretical shapes from that period are being applied to the current context as if it could be moulded to fit ready-made formulations from the past.

A case in point is the critique of the influence of commercialism in journalism. There is a long and initially honourable tradition of criticism of the ill effects that market constraints can have

on journalism. Radical critics have long pointed out that ever-larger media businesses reliant on revenue from advertising sales do not deliver the plurality of perspectives that liberal theory has traditionally claimed for the 'marketplace of ideas'. Yet this enduring concern with commercialism now often seems to produce, not an increasingly sophisticated understanding, but a caricature of 'big media'. Anthony DiMaggio's study of US 'mass media and mass propaganda', for example, describes a process of 'extreme corporate consolidation and conglomeration of media' which means that 'views reflected in the news are…homogenized' (2008: 217). To make the point, DiMaggio portrays Michael Moore's difficulties in publishing his book *Stupid White Men* and in releasing his film *Fahrenheit 9/11* as examples of the marginalisation and exclusion of dissident voices. Yet, as DiMaggio himself notes, *Fahrenheit 9/11* was 'the most profitable documentary ever made' (2008: 153), generating $220 million in revenue, while *Stupid White Men* stayed on the *New York Times* bestseller list for over a year. The fact that Moore has enjoyed enormous commercial success with works that explicitly criticise mainstream US political culture surely demands critical analysis, rather than complaints about 'progressive' critics being silenced by monolithic commercial media giants. The assumptions of the past do not necessarily fit the present.

Similarly, in order to sustain the argument about the extreme 'power of corporate media', DiMaggio dismisses concerns about declining news audiences and intensified competition for advertising as exaggerations (2008: 309). The strength and dominance of 'big media' are simply assumed. From this perspective, size is not just an important factor, it is the determining factor: big media are bad because they are big; 'Progressive-Left media outlets' are all the more progressive because they are 'far smaller…[with] much more limited audiences…[and] less influence with the mass public' (2008: 24). Were such media outlets ever to gain in size and influence, presumably they would be left less progressive. This logic leads DiMaggio to suggest that CNN was a better, because smaller, outfit under its founder Ted Turner than after its takeover by Time-Warner (2008: 308). Yet this is the same Ted Turner who described media owners as 'a lot like the modern chicken farmer':

> They grind up the feet to make fertiliser, they grind up the intestines to make dog food. The feathers go into the pillows. Even the chicken manure is made into fertiliser. They use every bit of the chicken. Well, that's what we try to do with the television product.
>
> (Quoted in Pilger 1999: 476)

He drew this comparison in 1994 – two years before Turner Broadcasting Corporation was bought out by Time-Warner; yet in DiMaggio's account Turner is cast as the plucky little critic of 'the perils of monopoly domination' (2008: 308). Rather than illuminating the contemporary relationship between journalism and market imperatives, the routine denunciation of 'big media' seems to miss the point.

Concern over the commercialisation of media, first expressed for the radical Left by the Frankfurt School in the aftermath of the Second World War, grew stronger in the 1990s in the context of debates about the growth of 'infotainment'. Serious journalism, many critics argued, was being squeezed out by the trivial and frivolous in a bid to increase profits – a trend that is often seen as further evidence of the strength of corporate media. Daya Thussu's study of 'global infotainment', for instance, describes the 'growing power of global infotainment conglomerates and their local clones' (2007: 13). These 'news factories', he argues, signal the world-wide dominance of neo-liberalism, eroding journalism's capacity to serve the public good and promoting a shallow consumerist culture. While there is little doubt that news agendas have indeed become 'dumbed-down', with a preponderance of trivia, celebrity gossip, scandal and so on, this development could just as easily be indicating, not the strength, but the weakness of media businesses. That is to say, although the trend since the 1990s has in one sense been towards maximising profitability by making the news more 'entertaining', the context has been one of declining audience numbers – largely as the result of widespread disengagement from public political life. Thus, as larger numbers of the people formerly known as the electorate, have become further alienated from the political coverage that was once the very bread and butter of journalism – even commercial journalism – so media businesses have been under pressure to win them back with new kinds of jam, up to an including the honeypot of celebrity. In this reading, the divorce of journalism from serious coverage, is not reduced to the simple love of money on the part of big media corporations.

For most critics, however, the chain of cause-and-effect is that profit-hungry big media drive out the serious in favour of the trivial, thereby undermining political engagement. Indeed, Thussu maintains that in this sense 'infotainment' can be understood 'an ideology for a neo-imperialism of neo-liberalism' (2007: 13). As he argues:

> Infotainment, especially in its global context, entails much more than dumbing down: it works as a powerful discourse of diversion, in both senses, taking the attention away from, and displacing from the airwaves, such grim realities of neo-liberal imperialism as…the US invasion and occupation of Iraq; the intellectual and cultural subjugation by the tyranny of technology; of free-market capitalism and globalization of a profligate and unsustainable consumerist lifestyle.
>
> (2007: 9)

This scenario draws on a long tradition of critique in which all-powerful media provide an alibi for the weakness or failure of radical politics. Yet surely a more credible explanation is that people are not so much 'diverted' from serious political issues as simply uninspired by a political culture which, after the end of Left and Right, is almost entirely devoid of vision. As it happens, the issues highlighted by Thussu – anti-consumerism, suspicion of science and technology, and an individualistic, 'not-in-my-name' opposition to war – constitute something like the commonsense of the age: there is little evidence that people are 'diverted' from holding these familiar views. But the larger point here is that in an era when the character of political life is given by technical managerialism rather than compelling ideals, it does not take a global cabal of media moguls to turn people off politics.

Inside the vicious circle of declining audience interest in the stuff of journalism, of course media owners and managers have seized opportunities for cutting costs while grabbing as much as possible of a dwindling audience share (the context in which Turner was so determined to wring every last drop of value from the 'product'). The strategy to achieve this – making the news glossier, lighter, more user-friendly – may, in turn, have further discouraged popular engagement with the public sphere; but rather than the media causing disengagement, in reality it has been the hollowing out of politics by politicians, and the electorate taking itself away from this increasingly empty shell, which prompted various attempts to connect with the news audience in a different way. Hence, for example, in the numerous re-vamps of British television news during the 1990s, the explicit concern was to find some point of connection with the audience. In 1997, Channel Five's controller of news, Tim Gardam, promised a 'non-elitist and bottom up' approach, and said that he aimed to prevent the news from being 'painful' by featuring 'less politics and more consumer, sports and entertainment news'. The same year, the BBC's Head of News, Tony Hall, embarked on a 'search for new audiences' which would reportedly entail 'less on political ding dongs at Westminster and more on technology and consumer issues' (Franklin 1997: 11—12). By the end of the decade, Independent Television's flagship *News at Ten* programme had been dropped in order not to clash with films and entertainment in the evening schedule, and a new magazine-style programme, *Tonight*, was launched with the slogan: 'the stories that matter to *you*'. As it turned out, such innovations were not very successful (in ITN's case, viewers complained about the absence of the *News and Ten* and switched over to the BBC, which had promptly moved its own programme to the 10pm slot). But the clear intention was to retain audiences by lightening up and focusing less on traditional political stories. 'Tabloidisation' in the broadsheet press can be understood in similar terms – attempting to retain readers via restyled formats and lifestyle content – with similarly disappointing results. At nearly every turn, the public has rebuffed the news executives and their charm offensive. Received ideas about the evils of 'big media' turn reality on its head, however, portraying these lame responses to the worsening health of the news industry as if they were a sign of economic and ideological strength on the part of neo-liberal, mega-media corporations.

The rise, over the last decade or so, of various forms of web-based journalism and UGC, has to some extent been understood, either negatively or positively, within the same framework. Efforts by established media organisations to solicit 'citizen journalism' and to encourage 'users' to be content-generators is sometimes understood as simply a cost-saving measure, getting the public to supply for free what might otherwise have to be paid for (Deuze 2009:

255). In fact, news organisations have incurred considerable costs in concerted attempts to encourage and process users' photos, stories and other contributions: the BBC's UGC Hub, established in 2005, for example, employs more than twenty people to handle the 10,000 contributions it receives every day, checking stories, verifying pictures, and selecting what to use.[3] The BBC has also sponsored research into how to elicit more UGC from its viewers and listeners (Wardle and Williams 2008; Wardle 2010a, 2010b). Of course, it might be argued that more, free UGC ultimately means less paid journalism, but encouraging audience 'interaction' appears to be a greater priority than any cost savings.

More upbeat assessments of citizen journalism usually understand it as presenting a challenge to corporate media. According to Dan Gillmor (2004), for example, whereas 'Big Media..treated the news as a lecture', the Web allows 'news reporting and production…[to] be more of a conversation, or a seminar', thereby giving 'new voice to people who've felt voiceless'. Such optimism, common in early accounts of web journalism, has been tempered by more sceptical appraisals of the idea that digital media have an inherent democratic potential (Hindman 2009; Markham 2010). The point, however, is not to write off the positive potential of new technologies, but to arrive at a realistic judgement about how it might be realised: the claim, for example, that the Internet provides 'a radically reforming (if not revolutionary) tool for globalized, social-movement-based activism' (Atton and Hamilton 2008: 4) lacks credibility because of its fantastic projection of incipient global radicalism. Besides this exaggerated opportunity, there is also the equally exaggerated threat which is said to be posed by media corporations in their 'cynical attempt to recuperate radical forms of representation for the purposes of marketing, to take emerging forms of alternative journalism and rework them in order to add a contemporary sheen to dominant practices' (Atton and Hamilton 2008: 141). A more sober assessment of the relationship between citizen journalism and the mainstream is suggested by documentary filmmaker Adam Curtis:

> Now our presenters plead with us to send in our photos and videos. They proudly present it as a new kind of open democracy. But in reality it's something very different. Because the journalists don't understand what is going on in today's complex, chaotic world, they have had to revert to their old habit of finding someone in authority who will tell them. But this time, it's not the politicians – it's us, the audience, that they've turned to. The only problem is that *we* don't have a clue what's going on. Particularly because the journalists have given up on their job of explaining the world to us.
>
> (Quoted in Meikle 2009: 194—5)

Though tongue-in-cheek, Curtis's comments capture the way in which major media organisations are seeking to incorporate their readers, viewers and listeners in a diminishing spiral of reciprocal uncertainty. But they are reaching out to audiences, more because of a loss of professional nerve on their part; much less in the attempt to de-activate a radical, alternative viewpoint. Even among minor media organisations, there is little to suggest that the latter really exists. In contrast to the 1960s and early 1970s, when setting up a small shop usually entailed piling into the monolithic foundations of post-war, consensual thinking, being small is no longer cognate with Big Ideas.

Exemplary Work

Amidst a stampede of stories about the death of journalism, in the title of his March 2010 inaugural lecture as Head of Journalism at City University, Professor George Brock took the bull by the horns. 'Is News Over?', he first asked, before answering, no, not at all, if only journalists prove their worth by 'narrowing down the elements which make the core of what they do' – elements identified as 'verification'; 'sense making'; 'witness'; and 'investigation' (Brock 2010). Professor Brock also hazarded a definition of journalism as 'the systematic effort to establish the truth of what matters to society'. He added: 'it follows that expertise and experience, for example, should count for something' (Brock 2010).

To us, Brock's contribution seems commendable on a number of counts: (1) it identifies professional journalism with a consistent quest for truth in the interests of all humanity – a form of identification which has fallen into disrepute for all the wrong reasons; (2) it associates

journalism's claim on truth with its claim to public attention, and by implication, the preparedness of the public to pay for what it attends to; (3) in approaching the problems of journalism, Brock acts as its critical friend. His friendliness is hardly surprising, since he himself was only recently a journalist (managing editor of the *Times*; editor of the *Times* on Saturday); but in his new-found, professorial role, he is not afraid to voice sharp criticism, such as when, in his lecture, he compared the recent course of journalism with that of the Titanic.

Positioning himself as something like an external examiner of journalism, who is sympathetic to journalism and its ambitions while remaining critical of their imperfect realisation, Brock seems to us to personify the kind of positive role which Journalism Studies should be playing in today's circumstances. Moreover, Brock's selection of 'elements which make the core' of journalism, accords with our emphasis on journalism as the organised fulfilment of a cognitive capacity that is socially constructed. In other words, we think that besides politics and economics there is also a philosophy of journalism – a whole aspect of journalism which has tended to be either sadly neglected or erroneously negated, but which merits much closer attention, especially in today's context. We are confident that journalism and the academy's relationship to journalism, would both benefit if more attention were paid to this aspect of journalism as it is sketched out in our book. Indeed, these are the ends to which our own contribution is meant.

About This Book

This book has grown out of our dissatisfaction, as academics interested in news and journalism, with many of the inherited assumptions of the field. Not only has journalism itself changed, but the broader world of politics and public affairs has been transformed beyond recognition in the past two decades. Yet the study of news and journalism often seems stuck with ideas and debates which have lost much of their critical purchase. *Journalism Studies* both offers a reassessment of conventional themes in the academic analysis of journalism, and sets out a positive proposal for what we should be studying. The book is organised in three sections, addressing the contexts in which journalism is produced, practised and disseminated.

Part One: Ownership

In Chapter 1 we discuss some key examples from the history of journalism to show how developments in journalistic technique correspond to the changing social and historical context in which they arose. In tracing this evolution, we attempt a logical reconstruction of the changing relationship between the press, politics and patterns of ownership. This understanding of journalism's past, we suggest, should make Journalism Studies wary of reductionist approaches which identify editorial content too closely with bourgeois ownership (as in the denunciations of 'big media' discussed above). As an alternative, in Chapter 2 we set out a different view of the news industry which takes account of its dual character, involving both private appropriation and social production. We propose a new theory of media as a form of mediating activity – that is to say, a form of activity that mediates between the indirect relationships of capitalist production, and the direct, interpersonal relationships between individual human subjects. In the history of capitalism, mediating activity has sometimes been monetised, just as culture is often produced as a commodity. But in the 300 years since Joseph Addison and Richard Steele wrote the *Spectator* as well as owning it, the history of journalism has also entailed the relative divergence of ownership from observation. Thus, though they may be in the same building, the reporter's room (with its concerns) and the boardroom (with its priorities), are not normally identical; and academic signage which points to them being in one and the same place tends to be unhelpful, if not misleading.

Part Two: Objectivity

We turn next to the question at the heart of journalism: is it true, and how do we know? Chapter 3 outlines the various academic objections to journalistic objectivity, either as a desirable ideal that has rarely been reached in practice, or, more often, as an impossible and

misleading claim. Reviewing accounts of the historical rise and fall of objectivity, the chapter goes on to argue that the critique of objectivity itself needs to be seen in historical context, largely as a response to circumstances that no longer exist. Rather than continuing to repeat the critique – superfluous, in any case, since journalism has internalised it – Journalism Studies would do better to reclaim the possibility of objectivity. Chapter 4 attempts just that, arguing for a new understanding of objectivity as the corollary of human subjectivity rather than something opposed to it.

The critique of objectivity, we maintain, was really a critique of objectivity in its alienated form, whereby 'hack' journalists were likely to become estranged from themselves as subjects producing an object – the story of what happened, while readers were encouraged to become passive: immobilised by the weight of objects known as facts, as they too were alienated from themselves as autonomous subjects. More recently, the same developments, inside and outside journalism, which have destabilised these erstwhile arrangements, also demonstrate that the meaning of 'objectivity' was not fixed for all time; objectivity is not uniform throughout history. Accordingly, we propose that journalism, supported and perhaps even led by Journalism Studies, can play a significant role in the reconstruction of objectivity in a different, non-alienated form. Whereas alienated objectivity rested on the denial of human subjectivity, non-alienated objectivity depends on the extension of it. This is objectivity produced collectively by self-conscious subjects – not the pretence that knowledge is a ready-made object which lies on the ground waiting to be picked up and packaged. Non-alienated objectivity is now facilitated by digital technology and the subjective interactions which it enables. It is predicated on human subjects producing the world and it anticipates the possibility of us producing a different one.

Part Three: The Public

Journalism studies has long complained of an exclusionary public discourse which fails to take account of difference, yet the opposite problem now presents itself: that journalism addresses, not a public sphere, but 'separate public sphericules', in Todd Gitlin's (1998: 173) phrase. Chapter 5 addresses this issue, reappraising the claim that the news media construct false unities such as the 'general public', by examining some of the difficulties that broadcasting has historically encountered in conceptualising the public it serves. We then further scrutinise the emphasis on textual representation and discursive construction that Journalism Studies has inherited, attempting to place this approach in historical context as not just a theoretical debate but a response to a particular set of political circumstances. In order to address the very different circumstances of the present, we argue, both journalism and Journalism Studies need to rescue a universalistic conception of the public.

In the Conclusion, we return to the relationship between journalism and Journalism Studies in light of our enquiry, offering a mutually reinforcing approach to both the practice and the study of journalism. Our focus is the point where journalism as inquiry into the world meets academic inquiry into journalism. While others may wish to serve as the conscience of journalism, we would act as its consciousness.

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[1] See: 'Putting the Crisis in Local Journalism on the Political Agenda', Goldsmiths, University of London, http://www.gold.ac.uk/global-media-democracy/events/localjournalismcrisis/ (accessed 6/7/10).

[2] Its two major academic journals – *Journalism Studies* and *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism* – both began publishing in 2000. For an interesting account of the tensions generated between Cultural Studies and journalism training in the emergence of Journalism Studies (in an Australian context) see Turner (2000).

[3] See: 'The BBC UGC Hub', *BBC College of Journalism*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/journalism/skills/citizen-journalism/citizen-journalism-guide/the-hub.shtml (accessed 6/7/10).