JOURNALISM AND PHILOSOPHY:
Remembering Clem Lloyd

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Abstract

In one of his final contributions to the Australian journalism field, the late Clem Lloyd suggested the American "can-do" philosophy of pragmatism offers promising resources for those interested in theorising journalism. History suggests this kind of theoretical work is particularly challenging. In 1918, sociologist Max Weber argued that the special talent or what he called the 'genius' of journalists is rarely acknowledged, much less understood (Weber in Tunstall 2001). The task of theorising journalism has progressed slowly since then and it has produced more discord than agreement between journalists and media scholars. The scholars argue in favour of systematic, criteria-based analysis and assessment of journalistic practices to generate greater self-knowledge and improve media performance. They have also systematically criticised a great deal of news content since its origins. Conversely, professional journalists tend to disagree not by engaging in debate with scholars but rather by simply ignoring their work: the vast majority of academic literature from journalism studies and cognate disciplines goes unread by journalists and other media professionals (Walker in Tumber 2000). This is not to suggest, as many would have it, that journalists are anti-intellectual. Rather, as Lloyd (1999) indicates, practitioners tend to get on with 'the hard reality of practice' rather than get sidetracked into abstract thinking. Of course, the theory/practice binary is misleading because all communicative practice involves intelligent action, whether or not journalists want to call their work that or interpret it in explicitly theoretical terms. This paper takes up Lloyd's invitation to consider the linkages between American pragmatism and journalistic method. It canvasses the issue of anti-intellectualism in journalism before moving to critically appraise Lloyd's proposal and the historical linkages between American pragmatism and journalism theory. Reference is also made to alternative ways of thinking about the intellectual work of journalism.

Introduction

In a recent article, entitled 'Can we make journalists better?', journalism scholars Theodore L. Glasser and Lise Marken (2005) turn to the North American philosophy of pragmatism to help sort out current problems of journalistic practice and press performance. This reflexive turn may well appear totally impractical to journalists, whose working lives are dictated by demanding news routines, the vicissitudes of living in the 'permanent present' (Schultz 1999), and the ever-increasing pressures of technological change and market competition. Yet, it is precisely the direction recommended by the distinguished Australian journalist and journalism educator Clem Lloyd (1939-2001) towards the end of his academic career. Drawing on J. Herbert Altschull's (1990) comprehensive history of ideas in US journalism, Lloyd proposed that the pragmatic method offers useful tools for understanding the search for truth that is, in his words, 'the fundamental aspiration of the journalist's methodology' (Lloyd 1999, p. 7). Further, in one of his last major research projects, entitled 'Missing Theories of News: Ideology and Pragmatism in Australian Journalism and an Assessment of Journalistic Practice over Time', Lloyd proposed that pragmatism offers 'a conceptual framework for improving professionalism, ethical standards and performance' (Lloyd in Sykes 2002, p. 15).

This paper tests these claims by critically examining three aspects of classical US pragmatist philosophy that captured Lloyd's imagination against the backdrop of a broader discussion of the relationship between theory and practice in journalism. This author is not, in the end, persuaded to Lloyd's view that American pragmatism is the philosophical framework that best explains journalists' "can-do" approach to news work. The quest for so-called 'missing theories' is misleading because it reproduces rather than resolves outdated and unhelpful ways of thinking about theory and practice in journalism. Instead of approaching theory and practice as antagonistic forms of knowledge, or looking for ways to bridge the divide by connecting theoretical insights to practical experiences, this paper argues in favour of a strategic approach to practice-based knowledge production (see Van de Ven and Johnson 2006).

Yet, Lloyd's research initiative is salutary and repays serious attention. American pragmatism is energising research on key questions in contemporary journalism studies, including the definition of core concepts such as 'news' and 'good journalism' (see, for example, Glasser & Marken 2005), the relationship between theory and practice (see, for example, Iggers 1999), and the rationale for change in journalistic practice (see, for example, Anderson et al. 1994). It therefore merits further investigation. In addition, there is good reason to highlight and pursue Lloyd's underlying commitment to research on the history of ideas in journalism because it demonstrably extends the understanding of Australian journalism (see also Lloyd 2002). By interrogating his approach to theory, I aim to better understand the possibilities and limitations of how ideas work in journalism and, in that way, to celebrate Lloyd's significant contribution to Australian journalism.

The research discussed in this paper forms part of a larger investigation into excellence in Australian journalism. The broader project involves systematic reflection about how journalists and journalism scholars examine and discuss their own worldviews, as well as those of significant others in the news field (including the public, sources, newsroom colleagues, PR people and media executives). This paper confines itself to critically evaluating Lloyd's proposition that the linkages between North American pragmatism and journalistic practice provide a theoretical framework for thinking about journalism, the work of journalists and, by extension, excellence in journalism.

Profession: Journalist

Lloyd made history in 1989 when he was appointed as the foundation Chair of Journalism at Wollongong University, following a successful career in political journalism that began at Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* in 1955 (Sykes 2002). Australia's first newspaper, *The Sydney Gazette*, had been established in 1803 yet it took almost two centuries before journalism achieved sufficient recognition as an area of academic research and teaching in Australian universities for the appointment of the first journalism professors. Lloyd was appointed in the same year as John Henningham at the University of Queensland (Australian Journalism Review 1989). Both academics were staunch advocates of the North American model of professional education for journalists, although Henningham favoured accredited undergraduate journalism degrees (Henningham 1994), while Lloyd preferred postgraduate vocational study, and set up the first Australian Graduate School of Journalism (Sykes 2002).

Lloyd is perhaps best remembered for his comprehensive and insightful institutional histories of the federal parliamentary press gallery (*Parliament and the press* 1998), and the Australian Journalists' Association (*Profession: Journalist* 1985) but, as colleague Jolyon Sykes (2002) notes, his magnum opus on the history of Australian news remained unfinished. Henningham (1988) had called for research on the historical development of the occupation of journalism following a bicentenary audit of Australia's media history that failed to locate a single study focusing on this topic. Lloyd was clearly enthused by the prospect of redressing that gap in the literature, and part of that enthusiasm was evidently linked to his interest in North American philosophy of pragmatism and the ideas it offered for the task of theorising and evaluating journalism (see Lloyd 1999, Sykes 2002).

This paper therefore takes up Lloyd's invitation to explore the heuristic potential of North American pragmatism for Australian journalism. There are four parts to the analysis: first, Lloyd's interest in pragmatism is linked to the literature on journalists, intellectuals and Australian public life. The recurrent theme of anti-intellectualism in Australian intellectual history is first identified and discussed before moving in the second section to some of the literature on media intellectuals and journalism's contribution to public culture. A critical discussion of Lloyd's interest in pragmatism --- based on his only published article on the topic, forms the third part of the paper. Finally, some alternative ways of conceiving the relationship between theory and practice in journalism are canvassed and there is brief work-in-progress report on researching ideas in Australian journalism.

Australia's intellectual history

One way of situating Lloyd's interest in pragmatism is to place it in relation to the literature on journalists, intellectuals and Australian public life. The history of Australian thinking about journalism conceptualises the questions to be asked such as whether intellectual frameworks (philosophies) matter or not in journalism, whether intellectual traditions have practical consequences for press performance, and so on.

There are a number of significant intellectual histories of Australia, including Brian Head and James Walter's *Intellectual Movements in Australian Society* (1988), S. L. Goldberg and F. B. Smith's *Australian Cultural History* (1988) and *Communication Traditions in Australia* (2001) by Graeme Osborne and Glen Lewis. The claim that Australia is an anti-intellectual society recurs frequently in this kind of literature about Australia's intellectual life (see, for example, Head 1988, p. 12). Journalists are commonly identified as part of the problem of anti-intellectualism (see, for example, Wark in Dessaix 1998, pp. 26-27). Thus, while anti-intellectualism is not the prime concern of this paper, it is a topic that requires some consideration. However, the author could not locate any study that researches the history of anti-intellectualism in Australian culture or media with the same kind of zeal as Richard Hofstadter's classic, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (1963), Daniel Rigney's theoretical essay, *'Three kinds of Anti-Intellectualism'* (1991), or Dane S. Claussen's more recent study, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Media* (2004).

The value of such research for thinking about the role of ideas in journalism can be demonstrated by a brief outline of these three pieces of scholarship. Hofstadter argues anti-intellectualism, a 'complex of historical relations' that in part expresses itself in 'resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind and those who are considered to represent it' (1963, p. 25), has been a defining influence on U.S. culture. He documents its various manifestations in religion, politics, business and, significantly, educational institutions which are perceived to be conduits for and accelerators of anti-intellectualism rather than a force for intellectual growth, the acquisition of knowledge or cultural invigoration. Mass media are curiously absent from his analysis. Rigney (1991) extends Hofstadter's chronological account by proposing a typology of the anti-intellectualisms endemic to U.S. culture ("religious anti-rationalism", "populist anti-elitism" and "unreflective instrumentalism"). He briefly considers the mass media and proposes "unreflective hedonism" as a fourth type of anti-intellectualism that may well capture its culture (1991, p. x). However, the research task of investigating the

mass media's contribution to U.S. anti-intellectualism is left to others. Claussen (2004) takes up the challenge and investigates that question through a study of popular magazine coverage of higher education since World War II. He finds ample evidence of the mass media's impatience with theories and ideas, perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the startling absence of any reference to the necessity for an ideas' culture in the sample media material. No link is made between 'reflective thought' and the activities of 'intellectuals or typical citizens in a modern democracy' (2004, p. 186). Claussen concludes that anti-intellectualism is an inherent feature of U.S. media and that it has significantly constrained discussion of higher education issues, at least in the surveyed popular magazines. Interestingly for our purposes here, he signals the need for further research to establish whether the worldwide export of U.S. media practices (and, we can add, the professional journalism model) has been accompanied by a parallel spread of U.S.-style anti-intellectualism (Claussen 2004, p. 204).

Research for this paper indicates that a 1950 *Meanjin* essay on the 'Cultural cringe', by Melbourne literary critic and cultural analyst, Arthur A. Phillips (2006), provides a seminal moment in Australian thinking about the cultural impact of intellectual traditions. Phillips coins the term 'cultural cringe' to describe what he sees as a particularly Australian attitude of deference to English literature, art and science, a deference rooted in a misplaced inferiority complex about local intellectual culture (Phillips 2006, p. 4). He writes evocatively of the 'minatory Englishman' who, figuratively speaking, sits 'in the back of the Australian mind', a silent but harsh critic that must be placated (Phillips 2006, p. 8). Phillips argues that national cultural development is the best response to the cringe, and he is passionately supportive of those writers of his time who created local literary journals such as *Southerly* (1939*)* and *Meanjin* (1940), describing them as 'the guerrilla force…of pro-Australians' (Phillips 1988, p. 136)! Yet, buried in that essay is another anti-cringe recommendation that seems to have been overlooked, that is, the need for research about anti-intellectualism. Phillips suggests that Australian intellectuals should leave aside the litany of insults they typically aim at their fellow citizens and, instead, investigate whether in fact they do have poor reading habits, pursue mediocrity in all things, or choose political leaders on the basis of 'popular prejudice' (Phillips 2006, pp. 5-6).

This paper, which investigates the role of ideas in journalism, provides a first step toward a more comprehensive account of the mass media's contribution to Australia's intellectual life, including the unexplored issue of anti-intellectualism in journalism.

The Australian Media: 'An Uncomfortable But Potentially Exciting Space'

Moving now to the literature on the media and intellectual life, we find the concept of media intellectuals appears only recently in debates about Australian public culture. Queensland film and television scholar, Albert Moran, introduces the term in his case study of the intellectual work of communications media for *Intellectual Movements in Australian Society* (1988). Moran defines the media as 'an uncomfortable but potentially exciting space' of intellectual possibilities, and he further defines the media intellectual as a 'cultural worker whose tasks of enquiry are conducted in a definite conceptual framework, and whose commitment always includes the capacity to question his or her own position' (1988, p. 109). Moran prefers this restrictive category to a generic notion of the media intellectual as anyone committed to enquiry because he is keen to differentiate between those parts of the media space that are conducive to and supportive of intellectual and creative practice, and those that are driven by market pressures. He writes:

> Very broadly speaking, state-funded media organizations, like the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Film Australia, offer greater freedom and at times positively encourage intellectual and creative work. In market-oriented media, on the other hand, there is generally less space for these kinds of work. It is widely believed that the marketplace tends to encourage an unthinking populism, but certain distinctions are in order. Since the Second World War, those newspapers that have traditionally been perceived as constituting a 'quality' press—most notably Melbourne's *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*—have moved away from a stuffy, although literate conservatism in both editorial attitudes and format, towards liberal-pluralist positions. These developments…have opened wider spaces for critical analytical writing on the parts of staff and contributors (Moran 1988, p. 109).

Moran encourages us to interpret the cultural worker's conceptual framework in relation to his or her immediate organisational setting. In this way, he emphasises media ownership and control (the media's political economy) as the fundamental determinant of its level of intellectual work. He directs our attention to two factors—the largely state-sponsored provision of spaces for intellectual ideas and debate, and the recruitment of intellectuals to work in the media—as the mass media's main contribution to Australia's intellectual life.

Moran's analysis runs the risk of interpreting professional media work in narrow and reductive terms as a by-product of larger, structural factors. Nonetheless, his definition of media intellectuals remains suggestive because he allows for the possibility of professional agency and reflexivity amongst those working within different media settings, even though he does not theoretically explore the relationship between institutional structure and individual agency that would enable such flexibility.

In his book, *Speaking their Minds—Intellectuals and the Public Culture in Australia* (1998) Melbourne broadcaster and writer Robert Dessaix extends this kind of analysis by canvassing the broader category of 'public intellectuals'. They are socially-engaged thinkers who debate matters of public policy in a range of forums where they speak and write as citizens communicating with other citizens (1998, pp. 3-29). Dessaix departs from the conventional vision of the ABC and the 'quality' press as the premium ideas' factories of Australian culture in two significant ways. First, while concurring with Moran that the ABC and the major metropolitan dailies provide essential forums for publicly disseminating ideas, Dessaix is more attuned to the political, financial and conceptual problems associated with putting ideas into action via state-funded media. He reminds us that the elite 'ideas media', such as ABC Radio National and SBS Television, attract very small audiences and are constantly vulnerable to government funding cuts and policy shifts. Second, he draws our attention to criticisms—forcefully expressed by 'young' media intellectuals such as Mark Davis (1997), McKenzie Wark (1998) and Catharine Lumby—that technological innovation in the media, along with changing notions of 'ideas' and 'culture', requires fresh approaches to both conceptualising and operationalising the media's role in intellectual life. Lumby, for example, reminds us that media experiences are now less text-based than they used to be, and for many young Australians that means engagement with intellectual culture is not about reading and contemplation but navigating 'from one conjunction of images and text to another, along connecting pathways of meaning' (Lumby in Dessaix 1998, p. 94).

Lumby (2004) admits to being an unusual participant in this debate about the media and intellectual life in a recent essay, entitled 'Outside In: Journalists and academics in the public sphere'. She pursues the topic in both her newspaper feature writing and her scholarship. She argues that 'the boundaries between journalism and academia…are more porous than they've ever been' (2004, p. 207) but that few on either side seem open to the resultant 'intellectual traffic' or the inevitable critiques of both the journalistic mediation of ideas and, on the other hand, the political and cultural purpose and value of scholarly expertise. In Lumby's view, this reluctance to engage in the kind of self-reflexive dialogue that is characteristic of postmodernist thinking is a major impediment to more robust public debate. She says:

> The public sphere today is not one where traditional hierarchies of expertise and knowledge are respected. Those who get their message out are those who understand the structuring elements of media discourse and use them. Academics are used to being approached by journalists and having their ideas translated into the language of the

> media. Its time academics started translating their own work and learning a new mode of speech (Lumby 2004, p. 217).

Lumby is suggesting here that the philosophy of postmodernism may well assist academics to understand the media and get more media-savvy in their dealings with journalists. Although this line of inquiry is beyond the scope of this paper, it merits further reflection and investigation.

Pragmatist Philosophy and Journalistic Method

What, then, are journalists and journalism academics proposing to contribute to the intellectual life of the nation? Returning now to Lloyd, we find it is classical pragmatism, rather than postmodernism, that fired his imagination and this paper now turns to examine and evaluate his proposal for adopting philosophy as a theoretical framework for analysing journalism.

This is not the place to detail the history of, or debates about, the philosophical school of pragmatism but the following concise description of its initial intellectual project will provide a reference point for the discussion that follows. Pragmatism can be understood as a reformist movement in philosophy that originated in the United States of America in the late 19th century with the work of C. S. Peirce (Haack 2004). Describing himself as a logician, Peirce was concerned to apply a new more scientific method of reasoning to age-old questions about truth and knowledge (Peirce 1960). Thus, 'in the Critical Common-sensism of Peirce's mature philosophy…the scientific inquirer is seen as submitting the instinctive beliefs of common sense to criticism, refinement and revision' (Haack 2004, p. 8). Interesting, one of Peirce's staunchest critics from the start was another logician, Betrand Russell, who both opposed what he saw as the relativism of Peirce's method and proposed, instead, that a focus on language (clear expression) would enhance philosophers' attempts to understand the world (Russell 1905, Haack 2004).

Lloyd was inspired by C. S. Peirce's method of reasoning, as well as the related ideas of two other early exponents of pragmatism. They were William James (2000) and his view of philosophy as a tough-minded worldview committed to finding truth by reference to everyday experience, and John Dewey (1966) with his interest in democracy as an ethical ideal that encourages high standards of conduct and morality. It is important to note here, in passing,

that while these concerns with truth, ethics and democracy overlap with journalistic concerns, the classical pragmatist philosophers did not pursue these connections in their own work.

Lloyd's exposition of the ideas of these scholars, at first reading, raises more questions than it answers. There is an initial series of strong and interesting claims. First, Lloyd asserts that journalism's problems are fundamentally philosophical because they involve core questions about truth and the meaning of news. Second, he states that a neglected body of U.S. research addresses this topic by exploring the ideas behind North American journalism. Third, he highlights that part of the research that discusses the philosophical school of pragmatism and its relevance for understanding the typical U.S. journalistic worldview. This framework is followed by a survey of the above stated aspects of the work of James, Peirce and Dewey before Lloyd is 'forced' by so-called 'pragmatic considerations of length and deadline' (1999, p. 14) to truncate his analysis and conclude with a brief but suggestive list of topics for future research.

The strength of the article lies in Lloyd's conviction that there is a powerful affinity between the classical pragmatists' ways of thinking and those of many journalists and his enthusiasm for persuading others to this view. This is most evident when Lloyd opines that the nature of the journalistic method has nowhere been more 'aptly and precisely' expressed (1999, p. 13) than in James' argument that 'the day's contents oblige a rearrangement' because facts do not merely exist and can be deceptive (James in Lloyd 1999, p. 13). It is also conveyed more indirectly through Lloyd's selection of quotes to explain pragmatism. Three examples are illustrative of his approach: on ethical orientation, 'standards of right derive from society, and science can help evaluate right by whatever relations promote the good' (Diggens in Lloyd 1999, p. 4); on method of reasoning, 'in order to ascertain the meaning of an intellectual conception one should consider what practical consequences might conceivably result by necessity from the truth of that conception' (Peirce in Lloyd 1999, p. 6); and on worldview, 'for the philosophy which is so important in each of us is not a technical matter; it is our more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means' (James in Lloyd 1999, p. 8). In each case, philosophy is interpreted not as abstract thinking but as commonsense guidelines for action that are relevant to journalism. This claim of relevance is particularly interesting, because there is a sense of a Eureka moment, and because, arguably, it rests more on Lloyd's credibility than on the evidence he presents. Like J. Herbert Altschull (1990), the author of the history of ideas that originally inspired the turn to pragmatism, Lloyd speaks as a veteran

newspaper reporter turned scholar, and it is worth noting that this is a position that carries the highest authority in a field like journalism studies, where academic research has never been seen as useful in solving practical problems in daily news work.

On the other hand, the difficulty with this good news story is that Lloyd, like many specialist reporters, appears to have been somewhat captured by his sources and his viewpoint seems to have narrowed as a result. Pragmatism is advocated more than critically appraised. The nexus between pragmatic theory and journalism is acknowledged as 'essentially an American phenomenon' (1999, p. 4), but the task of testing out its pertinence or otherwise to thinking about Australian journalism is left undone.

Yet, it would be unfair to leave an evaluation of Lloyd's proposal without further examination of the ways that North American pragmatism might inform discussions of Australian journalism. Lloyd was in the preliminary stage of his work on this topic and, elsewhere, demonstrated concern to distinguish the particular characteristics of Australian news history and journalistic practice from the British and U.S. intellectual traditions that have influenced its institutional and conceptual development (see Lloyd 2002).

Indeed, the author was drawn back to Lloyd's (1999) proposition because of the discovery of repeated references to pragmatism in the journalism studies' literature. For example, Glasser and Marken (2005) draws on the work of contemporary pragmatists Richard Rorty and Sissela Bok to define and analyse core concepts in journalism (what is news? what is good journalism?); Iggers (1999) devises a pragmatist ethical theory for journalism; and Anderson's team, following Dewey's interest in conversation as 'the prototypical communication condition of a democratic public' (1994, p. 21), suggests journalism's future depends on speaking less and, instead, listening more to citizens' voices and concerns.

Reading this literature, it becomes clear that pragmatism is energising journalism studies because it seems to offer a means of 'smartening up' journalism. In each of the above cases, philosophical inquiry is seen to provide new answers to the problems of journalism, and pragmatism is seen to have particular heuristic potential because of its perceived affinities with journalistic ways of thinking. It is interesting to find that one of the driving motivations behind the development of this specific philosophical turn in journalism studies seems to be the interest to find a bridge between scholarship and practice, a practical theory if you like,

that will provide the means by which journalists themselves can participate more fully in the discussion of journalism's future. Interesting, this effort resembles Lumby's move to encourage academics to become more media-savvy, a resemblance that can only be noted but not explored in this paper. Glasser and Marken (2005) put that case for providing intellectual resources to assist journalists to move beyond their habitual defensiveness most succinctly when they say:

> Any effort to "make journalists better", we believe, must begin with a commitment to prepare journalists to talk openly and eloquently about what they do and why they do it, an articulation of the purpose of the press that amounts to more of an explication of journalism than a defense of journalists' (Glasser & Marken 2005, pp. 264-265).

This effort merits closer analysis, particularly because it comes at a time of ever-increasing pressures of technological change and market competition that seem to conspire at every turn to encourage the 'dumbing down' of journalism.

How, then, can we explore this idea of 'practical theory' for 'making journalists better' in more detail and move forward in assessing whether or not intellectual frameworks matter in journalism, or whether they contribute to 'smartening up' the public discussion of journalism practices? At its worst, the term 'practical theory' can be seen as an attempt to by-pass abstract thinking altogether in favour of a common-sense approach to ideas. That is, theory-less theory. For example, as Altschull (1990) notes, when asked U.S. journalists tend to associate the philosophy of pragmatism with 'practicality' rather than with science (p. 25). To be fair, confusion between the everyday usage of the term 'pragmatism' and its special philosophical meaning is common and not confined to journalists; it was in fact foreshadowed by C. S. Peirce in the early 1870s when he first introduced the word (Haack 2004, p. 3) and, according to pragmatist historian Susan Haack, the problem of equating pragmatism with an ordinary concern for expediency rather than principle has intensified rather than diminished as time has passed (Haack 2004, p. 4).

Altschull (1990) attempts to rescue pragmatism from this confusion by talking about it as the 'operating philosophy' of journalists, a philosophy that comprises 'a complex of ideas…arrived at through the assimilation, usually unnoticed, of intellectual concepts that form the basis of Western civilization' (p. 2). Thus, 'practical theory' becomes a *modus operandi* or method of work that is theoretically informed, but poorly understood and articulated by its practitioners. In Altschull's view, the philosophy of pragmatism accurately

captures this method of work because, as conceived by C. S. Peirce, it focuses on the 'practical consequences of ideas' and offers a method of reasoning that is open-minded and committed to the search for truth (Peirce in Altschull 1990, p. 224). Altschull further suggests that by studying pragmatism, journalists will gain a clearer picture of the ideas that inform their own practices, and those of their sources, colleagues and publics (1990, p. 3). Lloyd shares Altschull's interest in this kind of 'practical journalism theory', as evidenced in his claim that, 'Journalists perceive themselves as doers, not thinkers: pragmatists, not theorists. Yet what they do is shaped by theory, whether evident to them or not. They consider themselves pragmatists because their work is judged by ends, not by means – by outcomes, not inputs' (Lloyd in Sykes 2002, p. 15).

Yet, the idea of pragmatism as a 'practical theory' needs more development if it is to provide the theoretical resources for reviewing and evaluating journalism practice. This development could take various forms, including the most obvious path of a closer reading of classical and contemporary philosophical texts. For this paper, however, a different way forward has been chosen, one that returns to Lloyd's initial assertion that philosophy provides answers to journalism's problems. Let's just pause to consider that assertion for a moment. Can theory bridge the gap to practice, as Lloyd asserts and, if so, how? Lloyd suggests pragmatism provides relevant and journalist-friendly answers to long-standing, complex and recurring metaphysical questions in journalism (what is truth? what is news?), questions that have proved problematic in the past because they have never been answered in ways that make sense to journalists, or are readily applicable in professional contexts and, as such, they have revealed the gap, some might say gulf, between theory and practice in journalism. I'm reminded here of Julianne Schultz's (1999, p. 259) wry observation a few years ago that news is what the editor says it is.

Can theory bridge the gap to practice? The relationship between theory and practice is the research question of the moment in many professional fields --- and of course, here in Australia, interest in this topic is growing against the backdrop of the new Research Quality Framework with its official recognition of professional practice as a separate research domain. Van de Ven and Johnson (2006) are two scholars in management studies who argue that scholars working in professional fields such as business, engineering, public administration, law and journalism typically see their mission as 'developing knowledge that can be translated into skills that advance the practice of the professions' but, they go on, this

mission remains an 'elusive ideal' largely because in their view, the relationship between theory and practice is often misconceived (2006, p. 802). These authors respond to the problem by proposing 'engaged scholarship' (2006, p. 803) as a means for bridging the theory-practice gap and advancing theory and practice in professional areas, and they differentiate this third approach from two more common ways that the theory-practice gap has been framed in the past. Their three frames are:

> a) know-how or practice is seen as a derivative of research knowledge and so the gap is viewed as a knowledge transfer problem or, in other words, a problem of how best to translate and disseminate theory in ways that will inform and enhance practice;
>
> b) theory and practice are seen as distinct kinds of knowledge with separate ontologies (truth claims) and epistemologies (methods of reasoning) so the gap is seen as unavoidable even though theory and practice might be as complementary rather than antagonistic kinds of knowledge;
>
> c) the distinction between theory and practice is tackled by strategic engagement; the gap is viewed as a 'knowledge production problem'. In other words, bridging the theory-practice gap requires a particular mode of collaborative inquiry in which the distinct and different insights of scholars and practitioners are drawn together to create new kinds of knowledge (Van de Ven & Johnson 2006, pp. 802-803).

It seems to me that Lloyd adopts the traditional approach to the theory-practice gap, as summed up in the first frame: he sees pragmatism as a theory that can enhance journalism practice because it seems to be directly transferable, relevant and accessible to journalists. It's a practice-friendly type of theory. Yet, Van de Ven and Johnson (2006) suggest, and I agree with their suggestion, that this is not the only way, nor necessarily the preferable way, of addressing the gap between theory and practice. Problem-definition should be a more collaborative process, just as the investigation of problems should take advantage of, rather than ignore, the different perspectives of different stakeholders in journalism, that is, of academics and practitioners. The aim of research is not just to enhance practice but also to enhance our production of knowledge about the field and its practices as well as our capacity, as scholars and journalists to extend public debate about problems in journalism. In summary, it seems to me that its not a matter of finding a bridge or theory to close the gap between journalism research and practice, but actually constructing the bridge in partnership with those who want to make it work. I agree with Lloyd that its time for more intellectual work in journalism; I just have a different view of what the work is and how it needs to proceed.

Work in Progress: Researching ideas in Australian journalism

The final part of this paper offers a brief work-in-progress report about research underway on the topic of excellence in journalism. My part of this project takes its lead from Altschull's persuasive argument that all journalists need to be aware of the intellectual traditions that have shaped their society because one way or another those traditions shape journalism. He states, 'No job or profession requires a higher order of cultural literacy than does journalism' (Altschull 1990, p. 6). This paper has explored one proposal for understanding the journalistic worldview; the broader project asks the question, 'what is good journalism?' and examines the ideas that have influenced Australia journalism either as they have been expressed in the collective efforts of journalists and news organizations to institutionalise certain principles, standards and guidelines; or in the editorial projects and priorities of high-profile individual editors and journalists.

The preliminary work underway examines the role of journalism in Australia's intellectual life through the focused study of the editorial projects and priorities of key figures in Australian journalism history. Journalism historian Patrick Buckridge (1998) has already undertaken work on this important topic. His study focuses on the strategic role of newspaper editors in the intellectual work of the media. He suggests that the intellectual/anti-intellectual dualism has historically provided something of a creative space in which some Australian journalist-intellectuals have chosen to creatively fashion their public persona. In writing about newspaper editors, Brian Penton, J. D Pringle and Paul Kelly, he writes:

> Editors of daily newspapers *may* choose to act as intellectuals, but most do not, and those that do have to invent the ways in which they can be both things at once. The three editors-intellectuals I want to discuss in this chapter made different compromises, struck different balances, and privileged different strategies; what they shared was an intention to integrate the roles of editor and intellectual in an active and creative fashion, and all of them, at some stage in their careers, seem to have made it work (Buckridge 1998, p. 187; emphasis in the original).

Thus, for Buckridge, analysis of Australian journalistic practices will benefit from attention not only to the published ideas and arguments of particular journalists or editors but also to the representations or images of the relationship between intellectual work and journalism found in Australian scholarship. This underscores the importance of pursuing the lines of inquiry mentioned above concerning both anti-intellectualism, and the intellectual work of the media.

In my own work, developed in collaboration with David McKnight, there is an interest in Donald Horne, one of Australia's best-known and internationally acclaimed public intellectuals until his death in 2005. Research is now underway into the neglected topic of Donald Horne's journalistic writing --- particularly his time as editor of *The Observer* (1958-1961). At the very least, Horne's editorial work during this period informed not only his subsequent two stints as editor of *The Bulletin* (1961-1962, 1967-1972) but also the publication of *The Lucky Country* (1964). Arguably, it also can be seen to provide an interesting and important example of journalism practice as social research and knowledge creation.

At a second level, there is interest to look at collective beliefs in Australian journalism, starting with the 1944 AJA Code of Ethics. The slow evolution of ideas about good journalism, reasonable methods of newsgathering and fair treatment of sources can be gauged by the fact that that code has been amended only twice, in 1984 and 1999, the last time following an exhaustive review by a joint union-expert panel. Self-regulation was extended to the newspaper industry in 1976, with the formation of the Australian Press Council and the creation of a Statement of Principles, and reporting guidelines, as benchmarks for industry standards and public expectations of the press. Today, there are also industry codes of practices for broadcast and internet media, administered by the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA), and many news corporations have developed their own individual codes of professional conduct for journalists and other media professionals (see Australian Press Council 2006). The Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Special Broadcasting Service are two other institutions that host comprehensive sets of journalistic benchmarks through their charters, editorial policies, and complaints and review procedures. While much is known about all these separate collective efforts, little work has been done to systematically interrogate the continuity of ideas across the whole journalism field and it is that task that is now in progress.

Conclusion

Lloyd's quest for a missing theory of news is both invigorating and misleading. It is misleading to the extent that it encourages a view that theory alone will provide answers to the problems of journalism. This paper concludes, on the contrary, that the challenge for journalism research lies not so much in finding theories to define truth in news, or even explain journalistic method, but in the more complex and difficult task of understanding how

ideas work in journalism. In other words, the challenge is not to determine whether North American pragmatism, or some other journalist-friendly intellectual framework, provides meaningful answers to universal questions about the proper role of the journalist in society or the nature of truth and excellence in journalism. Instead, taking a lead from Altschull's maxim that 'No job or profession requires a higher order of cultural literacy than does journalism' (1990, p. 6), this paper has taken the position that the more pressing task is to understand the intellectual traditions that have shaped Australian journalism and the different ways that these ideas are given expression in editorial priorities and practices. And that task involves a different kind of research, both theoretical —in the sense that we need theories of practice that assist us to analyse the multiple, messy interactions between abstract and practical knowledge that characterise news work—and practical.

Yet, Lloyd's quest remains ultimately invigorating because in pursuing philosophy, it dares to take the debate about Australian journalism into a terrain where few have previously ventured. Lloyd's ambition was not to ennoble journalism by linking it to philosophy but rather to animate journalists to put aside their habitual, sometimes inarticulate, defensiveness, and talk frankly and meaningfully about the important work that they do and why it matters. For that, Australian journalism has much to thank him for.

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