After 80 years of experience with university-level programs journalism educators still find themselves caught between the often opposing pulls of industry and the academy. Recent attempts to "re-invent" journalism education, however, demonstrate that there exists a solid tradition upon which educators can build.

"The liberty of the press—'tis like the air we breathe—while we have it we cannot die," (Goldstein, 1983:3).

We may be more restrained than the early 19th Century English Whigs who drank this toast, but we are probably just as convinced that the quality of our lives depends to a very great extent on the quality of our media. Knowledge is not only power; today—in the so-called Information Age—it is the fountain of the good life and the source of most of the things we treasure.

And as the quality of the information we need in our increasingly complex society takes on ever greater importance, so does the competence of the people who provide us with that information. We need to be able to trust our sources of information; we want our journalists to be thoroughly competent and responsible.
Such an insight was partially at the root of Joseph Pulitzer's proposal in 1892 to the trustees of Columbia University in New York City that he endow a university program in journalism education. Pulitzer, who knew from experience how easy it was to let market considerations dominate news judgment, hoped that a university education would be the antidote. But equally important to him was raising the status of the profession. "My idea is to recognize that journalism is, or ought to be, one of the great and intellectual professions; to encourage, elevate and educate in a practical way the present, and still more, future members of that profession, exactly as if it were the profession of law or medicine," (Dennis, 1988:11).

With the memory of the Pulitzer-Hearst yellow journalism battles undimmed, the trustees of Columbia were reluctant to accept Pulitzer's offer. Journalism was not an entirely reputable calling. It smacked of bohemianism and adventurism, and respectable people, following Queen Victoria's lead, were not inclined to receive journalists socially (Williams, 1957:93). Pulitzer's plan was interpreted in some quarters as being akin to a proposal to launder dirty money. However, $2 million carries a convincing argument and Columbia's guardians were eventually persuaded that a professional school of journalism might indeed be a good thing.

Because of all the footdragging, Columbia was not the first university to institute a school of journalism. When it finally opened its doors in 1912, the University of Missouri had had a school in place for four years.1

Unrivalled Prestige

Columbia, however, set the tone of journalism education for years to come. For example, when Canada's first schools, at Carleton and the University of Western Ontario, were established in the mid-1940s, both followed Columbia's lead. As an Ivy League school in the media capital of the world, Columbia's prestige was unrivalled. And it seemed to take to heart the university ethos, pledging its allegiance, not to the industry, but to the public interest. It seemed a foregone conclusion that journalists would acquire the cachet of the university-trained professional man (Pulitzer had no use for higher education for women)2 and journalism itself would move out of the realm of trade schools to the more lofty heights of medicine, theology and law. To expedite this process, Columbia in 1935 became a graduate school offering only professional training.

Meanwhile, other schools began offering graduate courses in journalism that emphasized a more traditional scholarly orientation, thereby sowing the seeds for endless future debates about the nature of journalism education.

At the same time as journalists were making these efforts to raise the status of their calling, doctors and lawyers were engaged in a similar process of professionalization—but their efforts were met with a much greater degree of success. Today, nobody disputes the right of doctors and lawyers to call themselves
professionals, and their schools and faculties enjoy nearly unanimous social and academic prestige. Journalists, however, are still not recognized as true professionals and their academic institutions are often stigmatized as trade schools. As if to add insult to injury, the media industry itself often joins in that chorus of damnation. Journalism education, to the eternal lament of its practitioners and advocates, has ended up as neither fish nor fowl; it feels itself unloved by the industry and tolerated, barely, by the academy. It is little wonder then that journalism educators these days are going through yet another round of the intense navel-gazing that has characterized the profession from the beginning.

Everette Dennis, the executive director of the Gannett Center for Media Studies at Columbia University, four years ago headed a task force that took the most comprehensive look yet at journalism education (Dennis, 1984). As he sees it, "journalism education still falls uncomfortably between two stools—the university and the industry," (Dennis, 1988:19).

That is an awkward position at best, and in the end, anyone attempting to occupy that space is bound to fail. No one can serve two masters without earning the contempt of both, and that, in a nutshell, is what seems to have happened.

It is time, says Dennis, to reinvent journalism education.

The Quebec Experience

One attempt at reinvention was made not too long ago in Quebec, when journalism educators began looking into the possibility of consolidating the three French-language university-level journalism programs into one central institute of journalism education. They were dissatisfied with a state of affairs which, they felt, scattered already scarce resources, allowing nobody to do an adequate job. The existing programs were all 30-credit minor options within other departments, where, lacking a power base of their own, they were grossly underfunded and understaffed. At the Université de Montréal, the program was part of the evening extension department and was staffed almost entirely by part-time instructors. At Laval and UQAM, the programs were located within the communications studies departments, which had other priorities and orientations. For the most part, the journalism educators were professional journalists who moved easily between media jobs and the university. The communications professors tended to be full-time academics with little or no media experience. There was a strong suggestion of two solitudes in these camps, a classic example of the industry-university cleavage Dennis finds so problematical in the United States.

Meanwhile, in English Canada, journalism programs seemed to be enjoying considerably more autonomy and prestige. None of the seven university-level programs was a minor appendage of a communications studies department, and two, Carleton and Western, were constituted as free-standing professional schools
with comparatively large budgets and faculties. Even relations with the industry seemed better. Graduates of the English-language program seemed to find jobs more easily, perhaps because the vocational side of their training was more intensive and more attuned to industry needs.

As these differences became more apparent, especially after the establishment of a nation-wide association of directors of journalism schools in 1983, the conviction grew that the system had to change if journalism education in French was to make any serious impact in Quebec. As one educator put it: "English graduates are gradually taking over everywhere, but the French schools are insignificant."3

Hence the proposal for a central institute of journalism education which would draw in all the interested parties—the professionals and the academics, the industry and the university. Meetings were organized to examine and compare the merits of the journalism education systems in English Canada, the United States and Europe. Nothing concrete was decided, but a preference seemed to be arising for an institute modelled somewhat along the lines of the Centre de formation professionnelle des journalistes in Paris, which offered graduate-level professional and vocational training. The bubble burst, however, when the Bourassa Government, presumably after sounding out the industry, declined to underwrite a feasibility study for the venture.

Laval's Jacques Guay was understandably upset by the decision. It means, he wrote, that the training of journalists will remain dispersed and disorganized since no one school has the necessary resources, and it will be carried out without any meaningful contact with the industry, (Guay, 1987:17).

But that seems to be the way the industry prefers it. As a senior editor at a Quebec City daily newspaper recently asked: "Why do we need it?" (Raudsepp, 1988).

On-the-job Training

The prevailing attitude seems to be that things are all right as they are. Editors are content to hire political science and sociology graduates with passable writing styles. Whatever polishing they need can be done on the job. According to one young francophone graduate of a journalism program: "There is still the feeling that the best education is on-the-job training and that you learn so much more hanging around bars and drinking with old pros," (Raudsepp, 1988).

The only problem with that philosophy is that few media organizations have their own training programs these days. Most do hire students for summer internships, but these cannot be counted as true training programs inasmuch as the students are expected to be competent from day one and usually replace vacationing staff. There are some programs, such as the one at La Presse, which are supervised
by an editor who provides pointers and feedback to the cub reporters, but even in such cases there is little training beyond matters of style.

Laval journalism professor Florian Sauvageau is one of those who worries that the emphasis on a grammatically precise and literary style tends to be at the expense of reporting skills. "To have a beautiful wrapping and nothing inside is only manipulation" (Rajotte, 1988: 18). That feeling is shared by UQAM's Jacques Larue-Langlois, who would like to double the amount of time journalism students spend learning their craft. The training process for journalists, he says, has to be carried out methodically by experienced educators whose horizons are not blocked or blinkered by industry needs and who are receptive to new developments in both theory and practice. "Some of the professionals, who may have many years of experience, but have never taken a journalism course, imagine there is nothing further to learn," says Larue-Langlois, (Raudsepp, 1988).

**Dialogue of the Deaf**

Between the journalism schools and the industry, it's a dialogue of the deaf, sums up Alain Rajotte, a student journalist at UQAM.

Similar attitudes, of course exist outside French-language newsrooms, too.

When today's senior journalists were entering the ranks 20 or 30 years ago, journalism education was the exception rather than the rule. For many, the only schooling they received was in the school of hard knocks. Quite a few, as a result, are convinced that universities are ivory tower institutions for pointy-headed social misfits who can't make any contribution to journalism until all the airy-fairy ideas they have acquired in their misspent university years are knocked out of their systems by a year or two of on-the-job training. These old-line journalists, some of whom are not necessarily old-timers, seem to reserve their bitterest vituperation for journalism schools and educators. The schools only exist so that "failed journalists can get jobs," one anglophone editor of a daily newspaper said recently. Another believes strongly that the only use of journalism schools is to "train PR types and bureaucrats," (Raudsepp, 1988).

And more than a few working journalists, it seems, are suspicious of journalism education on the grounds that its main purpose, as one editor put it, is to get "control of the agenda," (Raudsepp, 1988).

In an industry that is extremely sensitive—in the name of press freedom—to any centralizing or regulating tendency, journalism education may well seem to point in that direction. And for many in the media industry, the kind of certification of competency that professional training implies is only a step away from the licensing of journalists. This, of course, is a legitimate concern, especially since the movement to professionalization in this century has always tended towards
such exclusiveness. The issue is not one that is likely to go away in the foreseeable future.

The industry's concern has to be seen in the light of nearly 500 years of press history, during which time there has been an almost constant effort to subvert press freedom on the part of governments and special interest groups everywhere. We wouldn't countenance it if the government denied anyone, consumer or contributor, access to the press; and it is surely just as much a violation of press freedom if access is denied by a special interest group such as a professional body. This may well be the best reason for journalism to avoid entrenchment as a profession with its own admissions standards, procedures and disciplinary body.

**Academic Scrutiny**

The industry is quick to perceive this kind of threat, perhaps because it is equally a threat to its autonomy, but it is somewhat slower off the mark when it comes to criticism that the industry itself has become a special interest group. The movement to newspaper monopolies, cross-media ownership, concentration of ownership and conglomerations, for example, has not been wholly in the public interest, as the Kent Royal Commission and other studies have pointed out. Much of this kind of scrutiny and critique of the media has come from the academy and has not endeared journalism educators to the industry.

Nevertheless, the industry has gradually come to realize that it is to a certain extent dependent on journalism schools for filling its job vacancies. As Montreal Gazette publisher Clark Davey said some years ago: "What the academic community sets great store in are two things: publication of learned papers and the academic degrees that the faculty has. I don't think that either of these aspects is nearly as important as maintaining a much closer relationship with the industry. If journalism is seen to be a poor relation somehow academically at some universities, that doesn't concern me as much as the fact that some journalism courses are seen to be irrelevant by the journalism business."  

Davey, himself a graduate of Western's journalism program, has been one of the staunchest supporters of journalism education in Canada, and his newspaper's owners, the Southam chain, have also been more supportive than most. But as with so many things, the future is being invented in the United States and it is there that one sees the full extent of the industry-university connection. Even a quick flypast confirms that virtually every significant media owner in the U.S. has ended up with his name emblazoned over the portals of some school. And equally large sums of money have been given to endow scholarships and academic chairs and to support research.
Close Ties

These connections have not been without their attendant problems, and Canadian educators who envy such close ties and, especially, the financial support, would do well to reflect upon the experience of Kurt Lang, former director of the School of Communications at the University of Washington.

In 1986, the Allied Daily Newspapers, an association of 55 regional dailies in the Pacific Northwest, proposed a program to improve co-operation between the industry and area journalism schools, citing concern about the quality of journalism graduates and "the overemphasis at some institutions on theoretical research," (Atwood, 1988:8). Allied established an ad hoc committee for journalism education and proposed to distribute questionnaires to the schools and follow these up with campus visits. Schools that ended up with a "recommended" status after this scrutiny would receive financial aid and scholarships and would be eligible to participate in a wide array of professional programs sponsored by Allied.

Although several educators spoke out against the coercive nature of the program, only the faculty at the University of Washington flatly rejected it as a "thoroughly bad idea." Lang, who had spearheaded the opposition to Allied's plan, was dismissed from his post some months later, ostensibly in a routine personnel shuffle.

What Allied was basically attempting to establish, dangling its largesse as a carrot, was an accreditation system which it could manipulate for its own ends, and no matter how legitimate those ends might be in their eyes, such interference is a threat to the academic freedom that is basic to the university tradition, and by extension, to the public interest.

It should be noted, however, that there is an official "Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications" in the United States which certifies colleges that "have measured up to high standards set by leaders in education and the professional media." The 89 colleges that currently make up this list are known as the "Journalism Ivys" and include many of the best-known journalism programs in the country.

Still, nearly three-quarters of the 343 schools which offer at least a bachelor's degree in journalism or mass communications are not participants in the program, and not always because they do not measure up. Some have questioned the relevance of the criteria used for accreditation and others have wondered whether such a process may not in fact interfere with academic freedom since it gives an outside interest, namely the media industry, a say in curricular decisions. Some are also opposed to what they see as a standardizing mechanism in journalism education. Truth, as John Milton pointed out so many years ago, seldom appears whole or in one guise. It has to be pieced together from diverse sources, using diverse
methods, (Milton, 1931). If journalism educators are to take their task seriously, it can be argued, they have to resist centralizing and homogenizing tendencies.

Accreditation

Advocates of accreditation see the issue very differently. For them, it is purely a matter of ensuring that minimal standards of competency are met. Interestingly enough, it was the diversity of programs and the "pretty arbitrary" range of elective courses that led Prof. Jason Zasursky, dean of the school of journalism at Moscow University, to make a similar criticism of American journalism schools:

"A certain flexibility in the choice of subjects is all very well, but it does not, unfortunately, provide the necessary basic level of knowledge. It doesn't provide for a standard which in the given context, should not be thought of as a levelling process, but as a required level of training," (Zasursky, 1978:4).

Prof. Zasursky's 1,256 students, for what it's worth, are required to take half of their core courses in political theory and ideology, (Schillinger, 1988:34).

Another trend in the United States that may have a lesson for Canadian journalism educators is the movement to establish ever larger and more all-inclusive communications schools. Some of these monster schools now have nearly 4,000 students, with almost half of them enrolled in non-journalism courses such as public relations and advertising. Some observers, however, are not at all convinced that, apart from bringing in more state funding through per capita grants, this trend is good for journalism education.

Purists are concerned that a journalism ethic dedicated to the pursuit of truth cannot flourish side by side with endeavours oriented towards commercial advantage. The fear is that, instead of leading to a potent cross-fertilization of fields that would expedite the generation of knowledge, the welter of conflicting value systems, theories and practices will end up rendering journalism studies into cacophonous impotence.

Intellectual Strangers

Already, as a recent survey indicates, U.S. journalism and mass communications faculties are "divided into several cultures of intellectual strangers." About 30 per cent, the survey found, are "industry isolates", oriented almost exclusively to industry interests and activities; 20 per cent are "academic isolates", with little or no contact with the industry; 40 per cent are "electrics", relating to both sectors; and about 10 per cent are "outliers" who relate to neither sector. The dialogue of the deaf clearly extends into the academy.
The fear that some of these developments have run away from themselves is patently behind Everette Dennis's call for a re-invention of journalism studies. And insofar as there is a need for an overhaul of the structures and curricula of some programs, he is right. But it seems to me that it would be hard to find a better guiding light—or a better bedrock of principles—for journalism education than James Carey's 1979 exposition of the "university tradition," (Carey, 1980).

Carey, dean of the College of Communications at the University of Illinois (Urbana), took dead aim at the professionalization of journalism he saw taking place around him. In his analysis, which he shares with Ivan Illich and Christopher Lasch among others, the trend to professionalization in general is seen as inimical to human freedom and development. Not only has professionalization eroded the moral basis of society, but it has fostered a set of social practices that are "thoroughly anti-intellectual and anti-ethical.

"The great danger in modern journalism," he says, "is one of a professional orientation to an audience: the belief, usually implicit, that the audience is there to be informed, to be educated, to be filled with the vital information and knowledge whose nature, production and control rests with a professional class. This knowledge is defined, identified, presented based upon canons of professional expertise over which the audience exercises no real judgment or control. And in this new client-professional relationship that emerges the same structures of dependency are developed that typify the relations of doctors, lawyers and social workers to their clients," (Carey, 1980).

The University Tradition

The antidote to this menace, he says, is "to extirpate much of the professional spirit of our curricula. We must do that in order to re-assert the university tradition, in order to reassert the general ethical and intellectual point of view against all the claims of specialization that would overwhelm it," (Carey, 1980).

It is encouraging that a recent proposal for an integrated journalism curriculum by G. Stuart Adam, finds its major inspiration in Carey's orbit. Like Carey, Adam wants journalism education to be a preparation for enlightened and responsible citizenship. He wants it to show individuals "how to know and benefit from the great works of thought and art so that their private lives will become rich and their acts of citizenship informed. The vocational aims, which are also a part of the university's mission, should be ancillary and dependent on the success with which the other two aims are achieved," (Adam, 1988:5).

Equally satisfying is Adam's recognition that journalism must be organized and developed as an academic discipline in its own right, not as an appendage to communications studies. As noted already, the source of much of the diffuseness and many of the divisions in journalism education has been its inclusion, side by
side with the conflicting value systems of theorists, PR practitioners and popular culture addicts, as a sub-field of communications. Journalists must, indeed, learn about communications theories and the media systems and contexts in which they will practise their profession, just as they should know something about media history, media law, media ethics, etc., but that is not reason enough for Journalism to be subsumed holus-bolus as a sub-field of any of these disciplines—or vice versa. There is something rather fanciful, thus, in Adam’s reasoning that major chunks of communications studies are more properly a sub-field of journalism, one of five along with philosophy of journalism, professional practice or "operations", criticism and methodology.

Adam’s primary intention, however, is not to provoke jurisdictional quarrels, but to bring journalism studies into the academic culture by incorporating the "university’s methods of classifying, analyzing and communicating knowledge," (Adam, 1988:8). It’s not so much a question of re-invention as of re-packaging, because, as he admits, all of the elements that would constitute his integrated field of journalism studies already exist in a kind of "oral tradition" and need only to be formalized.⁸

**Academic Culture**

Journalism, of course, has already made valiant attempts to be accepted by the academic culture. For the better part of the last two decades, journalism educators and researchers in the academy have churned out boxcar loads of publications based on arcane and abstruse social sciences methodologies, many of which were little more than ritualistic articulations of the self-evident.

Academic culture, in case it needs to be spelled out, can be just as much an introverted dead-end as professionalism, especially if it is not informed by anything other than its own narrow specialisms. Adam’s orienting of journalism studies towards the humanities—i.e. Carey’s "university tradition"—is therefore of signal importance.

One major issue that Adam begs in his "re-invention" of the field, is that of the appropriate level at which journalism studies should be situated. The implication in what he says, however, is that as a unified discipline at the heart of the university tradition, it must have a strong presence at all levels, just like Literature, History or Political Science.

These other fields, however, are not involved in professional or vocational training, at least not in any direct way. Journalism education, on the other hand, would not make any sense without its vocational aspects. If journalism education is implemented at the undergraduate level, it has to include vocational training and that fact by itself is the source of countless problems. What, for example, should be the ratio of "academic" to "workshop" courses so that students are not
shortchanged in the quality of their general education or vice versa? Can we, in fact, devise an integrated field of journalism, as Adam sets out to do, which serves all the ends of a general education as well as of professional training?

Graduate Programs

However, such issues—and most of the other problems of journalism education as well—become much less relevant when journalism is situated at the graduate level, after students have already acquired their basic education. Students at that level are generally more mature, better informed and better motivated. Because they already possess a degree in one of the many disciplines now found in the university, they will bring to bear on their journalism studies a diversity of insights, methods and values which will discourage homogenization of practices and encourage independent thinking.

Graduate students are free of other academic commitments and can devote their full attention to journalism. In this way, they can (and do) easily cover the equivalent of three years of undergraduate courses in just three terms—and at a higher level to boot.

For graduate students who are vocationally inclined, such a program would enable them to enter the job market. For those who wish to work at a higher level, to conduct research or to teach, there should be a second tier of courses leading to a Ph.D. degree.

There has already been considerable movement in this direction in Canada, with virtually all of the university-level journalism programs instituting graduate courses leading to a "first professional degree." In fact, one school, The University of Western Ontario, like Columbia, did away entirely with its undergraduate program, and another, Carleton, has taken steps to implement second-tier graduate programs of a more scholarly bent.

On the whole, the experience with graduate programs has been very successful—for all the reasons stated above—and the industry has welcomed the change as a significant improvement in journalism education. And inspired by the proliferation and success of MBA programs, some journalism educators are already predicting that the trend to graduate schools offering first professional degrees will be the saving of journalism education. Everette Dennis, for one envisions journalism graduate schools with the high profile and power of Ivy League MBA schools, (Dennis, 1988:12).

However, such forecasts and aspirations should be tempered with at least a modicum of caution. Graduate schools of journalism are a good thing but they do not provide all the answers. Just as there can be no one standard of journalism, there should not be only one approach to journalism education. As long as
journalism educators can keep sight of that fact they will remain where the public interest demands that they be—within the orbit of Carey's "university tradition."

**FOOTNOTES**

1. The first courses for "printers" were established by Civil War General Robert E. Lee in 1869 at Washington University. Other pioneering courses were those at Kansas State in 1873 and Cornell in 1875. For additional information, see Emery and Emery, *The Press and America*, 4th ed., Prentice-Hall Inc. (Englewood Cliffs 1978), p.513.

2. See W.A. Swanberg, *Pulitzer*, Charles Scribner's Sons (New York 1967), p.304. Ironically, women have made up about $\frac{2}{3}$ of journalism school enrolments for the past decade in both Canada and the U.S.A.

3. During the summer of 1988, the author informally surveyed senior editors at all the French and English language daily newspapers in Quebec on the subject of journalism education. It was not a scientific sampling of opinion but some of the responses were instructive and have been quoted here. Subsequent references to this survey will be (Raudsepp, 1988).

4. A 1983 survey by the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association that looked into the attitudes of managing editors toward journalism education found the editors generally satisfied, though there were complaints about grammar, spelling, accuracy, curiosity and news values (in that order). The survey found that about half of the 1,900 journalism students who had graduated in the preceding three years had been hired by daily newspapers. In the U.S., where more precise information is available, fully 85% of journalism hirings by daily newspapers in 1986 were from among the ranks of journalism graduates.


7. David Weaver and G. Clevland Wilhoit, "A Profile of JMC Educators: Traits, Attitudes and Values," *Journalism Educator*, Vol. 43, No. 2, Summer 1988, p.39. On the brighter side, the survey did find that the morale of JMC educators seemed higher overall than among other faculty. Also, more than 95% of full-time faculty in the U.S. have at least an MA and nearly half have a PhD.
What is even more remarkable is that nearly 98% had at least one year of industry experience, with a median of seven years. Comparable Canadian figures are not available, but it seems clear that we have a long way to go before our professoriat will equal such standards. The number of PhDs teaching in Canadian journalism schools can probably be counted on one's fingers.

8. Everette Dennis (1988) writes that the often-repeated assertion that "journalism has no body of knowledge" reflects "such colossal ignorance that it should embarrass anyone who utters it. There are libraries full of books on the history, economics, sociology, politics and craft of journalism. There is a vast literature of media studies, both from the academy and from industry researchers. There is a vast legal and regulatory literature as well as material on international communication and other topics. With scores of scholarly and professional journals now in the field, the literature in this country and abroad is almost impossible to fathom, let alone master."

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