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Reviews

The reviews pages are edited by Tor Clark. If you have a book you would like to review or have come across a new book we should know about please get in touch. Also if you have recently had a book published and would like to see it reviewed, please contact Tor on tclark@dmu.ac.uk

Journalism and Politics provides a theme to the latest Reviews section. Professor Ivor Gaber, a well-known figure at AJE gatherings, offers a fascinating and topical insight into Stephen Cushion's investigation of the changes which have taken place in TV politics, shedding light on how the format has developed and its implication for the practice of political journalism and audience engagement.

As the 2016 American presidential election gathers pace, Richard Jones offers a timely look back at a classic episode which changed political journalism forever in Matt Bai's account of how Gary Hart's quest for the Democratic nomination for the US presidency in the 1980s ended up focusing more on the personal than the political.

The serious issues around media plurality and democracy, which of course centre around political journalism, are examined in Steven Barnett and Judith Townend's new edited collection, which offers a useful and timely new resource in an under-researched area for Journalism courses.

Meanwhile prolific book editor and regular JE reviewer John Mair delves into the fascinating career of former top BBC executive Roger Mosey, which progressed from local radio to BBC editorial supremo, via the Today programme and the London Olympics coverage, with some politics thrown in for good measure.

For those of you needing some comic relief from all the politics, Michael Foley comes to your rescue, recommending Michael Frayn's journalism novel, *Towards the End of the Morning*, set in the Fleet Street of almost half a century ago, to offer a little context, and not a few laughs, to Journalism students and their tutors alike.

The Reviews section is, as ever, grateful to its small but enthusiastic band of reviewers and invites all JE readers to suggest books about Journalism for review, or better still offer to review relevant works themselves. As ever, all and any offers will be gratefully received at tclark@dmu.ac.uk

Tor Clark, Reviews Editor

A classic from the Journalism bookshelf

Towards the End of the Morning by Michael Frayn

Review by Michael Foley, Dublin Institute of Technology

I started my career in Fleet Street, and it was still the Fleet Street of Michael Frayn's novel, *Towards the End of the Morning*, even though Frayn set his book ten years before I had my first pint in the King and Keys in 1978.

Most national newspapers had moved out by 1967 when *Towards the End of the Morning* was set, but there was still the *Express* and the *Telegraph* actually on Fleet Street and by the time I arrived there lurked, up side streets major newspapers, the *Evening Standard*, *The Sun* and the *Mirror*. Times Newspapers and the *Guardian* were up Gray's Inn Road, *The Times* in Blackfriars, but all within pub distance.

The Irish Times office, where I laboured as a freelance, was at 85 Fleet Street, which was, as many old hacks will recall, the HQ of the PA and Reuters. I, as a very young journalist, revelled in jumping into a taxi at the Houses of Parliament, having just covered Northern Ireland Questions, nonchalantly giving my destination as either the 'PA building,' or 'Reuters,' depending on how I saw my career developing and which one would most impress the taxi driver.

But it was still the Fleet Street of Frayn's very funny novel. Lorries delivering newsprint blocked side streets, pubs were full most of the time because somewhere someone was always coming off a shift, and there was the improbably named drinking club, the City of London Golf Club. In Bouverie Street, Fetter Lane and Shoe Lane you could hear the rumble of printing presses and the comings and goings of reporters with notebooks and newspapers under their arms and printers moving from one office to the next.

Towards the End of the Morning tells the story of a few journalists working in a miscellaneous department – crosswords, nature notes, church notes - of a newspaper that could be the *Guardian*. While the Fleet Street of the novel seems ageless, the lunchtime pints, expenses, the gentlemanly pace and the assumption that everyone would join the NUJ, and journalism's obsession with itself, there are subtle changes taking place. Darcy, the head of department is seeking ways out, but while everyone seems to think they have to out by 40, with a book deal, Darcy is looking towards television and a new fangled thing called celebrity. There is the new sub, Erskine Morris, representing the flash modernity of the 1960s – he even has an electric typewriter - who talks about the great future newspapers have and that he might even buy a title.

If one could only recommend one novel about journalism to students, would it be Waugh's *Scoop* or Frayn's *Towards the End of the Morning*? I would plump for Michael Frayn. He is funnier and more humane and *Towards the End of the Morning* tells a story that still resonates - if the reader has imagination.

Towards the End of the Morning by Michael Frayn, Faber and Faber; First published 1967. This edition with an introduction by the author, 2000. ISBN 0571204244.

All The Truth Is Out by Matt Bai

Review by Richard Jones, University of Huddersfield

Before Bill Clinton, there was Gary Hart. Charismatic, intelligent and youthful, he was the overwhelming favourite to win the Democratic nomination for the 1988 presidential election. But then his campaign was spectacularly derailed by a piece of investigative journalism.

It was the *Miami Herald* which discovered a woman, not Hart's wife, coming and going from the candidate's Washington townhouse. An infamous photo was published of the woman, actress and former beauty queen Donna Rice, perched on Hart's lap on a yacht. In the snap, the politician wore a T-shirt bearing the boat's name, *Monkey Business*. Both Hart and Rice said they were just friends, but the Senator's hopes of the White House were over forever.

In *All The Truth Is Out*, long-time *New York Times* political writer Matt Bai (now with *Yahoo*) revisits the scandal, and argues it led to a significant change in how the American media covers politics. Before Hart, reporters would look the other way when a John F Kennedy or Lyndon Johnson took mistresses. Since then, almost everything has been fair game.

Bai shows America's collective memory of the scandal isn't quite how it played out. In response to rumours about his private life, Hart is well remembered for his hubris in challenging a journalist to 'follow me around', only for the *Herald's* Tom Fiedler and his colleagues to do just that. In reality, the quote appeared in a *New York Times* article on the same day the *Herald* published its story and was a complete coincidence.

The *Herald's* reporters don't come out with spotless reputations. Lurking in the bushes outside Hart's place, they forgot to stake out his back door, so couldn't have known for sure whether Rice had really stayed the night or not. Then, they confronted Hart in an alleyway, writing up the whole escapade in a breathless third-person narrative, just like their heroes Woodward and Bernstein. What did or didn't happen on the *Monkey Business* wasn't exactly Watergate, but it was still enough to bring down a major political figure.

The post-Hart focus on a candidate's 'character' rather than policy positions has, Bai suggests, contributed to the dreary soundbites of the modern professional politician, and a lowering of the standards of American political debate. Presidential candidates are no longer allowed by their handlers to bat complicated issues around in long, late-night, chats with reporters. For their part, journalists and their editors are generally much less interested in explaining those policy positions, too. There's no room for nuance on 24-hour news, much less Twitter. In this context, perhaps we shouldn't be surprised it's non-politicians like Donald Trump and Ben Carson who have been making much of the running in this current US election cycle.

Not that this is all Hart's fault. What happened to him was bound to happen to somebody, sooner or later. The fact it had already come around once by the time Clinton became embroiled in the Gennifer Flowers scandal during his run for the presidency four years later, helped him survive it. Bai reveals around 1990, Clinton had met Fiedler, and asked him where he thought journalists would now draw the line over reporting a candidate's extramarital affairs. When the media came at him, Clinton was ready for it.

The book ends with a poignant final act, Hart in a long semi-retirement with his wife at his remote Colorado home, occasionally sharing his foreign policy insights with Clinton in particular, but never getting the call to return to public life in a major role. He seems to have been too proud to ask for a job, even as politicians involved in far worse scandals were

rehabilitated. Bai argues if Hart had given the now familiar tear-filled public apology on a TV sofa, he could have come back. But even a quarter of a century later both Hart and Rice still refuse to confirm or deny anything that may, or may not, have happened, something Bai clearly admires.

This book would be particularly useful for students on undergraduate modules that deal with the reporting of politics, investigative journalism, or journalism history more generally. It fills in some of the 'what happened next' in American journalism for when students have finished *All The President's Men*. The tale of the *Herald's* pursuit of Hart offers a classic case study for ethics seminars.

Shortly after the book's publication last year, the long exile finally ended when Hart was appointed by his friend John Kerry to be the new US special envoy to Northern Ireland. But even if he manages to achieve some progress there, Hart will always be the 'Monkey Business guy'. If it means intelligent, thoughtful people like him are put off standing for political office, it makes America and the rest of the world all the poorer.

All The Truth Is Out by Matt Bai, Alfred A Knopf, 2014, ISBN 978-0307273383, RRP £17.76, 263 pp.

Media Power and Plurality: From Hyperlocal to High-Level Policy, edited by Steven Barnett and Judith Townend

Review by Tor Clark, De Montfort University, Leicester,

When ITV, several years ago, provocatively suggested it could no longer afford to produce its teatime regional news magazine programmes across the UK it caused an outrage among politicians, bemoaning the threat to diversity and plurality the proposed closures would cause at local level.

It was a reaction welcomed by many journalists and even more locally-based politicians. It raised the issue of media plurality more prominently than had previously been the case despite shrinking of local and regional news providers over previous decades.

Sceptics pointed out local MPs were only making such a fuss because they needed to get themselves on regional TV to ensure recognition among their constituents. They also suggested the BBC ran more popular, often more professional-looking programmes covering the same geographic areas and often exactly the same stories. Those in the regional press also added those very stories had often been broken and already featured prominently in local newspapers. No matter. The legacy of this issue was it significantly raised the political profile of media plurality and, whatever their motives, at least politicians had an understanding and stake in the issue.

Though it might seem as the media grows exponentially the issue of media plurality has become unnecessary, this new collection of articles, stresses how the need to ensure a diversity of opinion and information has never been more necessary.

This is a timely contribution to an area often taken for granted or overlooked, and its reach extends from the very local to international affairs. The authors each focus on specific areas and issues. They analyse the existing situation and current problems, and mostly

suggest solutions towards greater guarantees of plurality. These solutions are interesting, but not without practical difficulty.

The four-part structure of this work is helpful. The first is an 'overview of the policy landscape' emphasising the UK. Barnett, a regular expert contributor to national media on this topic and the BBC in particular, contributes a useful chapter on protecting public service broadcasting.

The second part focuses on the place where arguably plurality is of the greatest and most pressing importance – the regionals and local media in the UK. The third part looks at media policy-making through international case studies and the final section offers comparative international case studies.

The editors have assembled a diverse cast of academics and other informed contributors to illuminate the landscape of plurality, including Raymond Kuhn (on media plurality in France), Peter Humphreys (on media policies in Europe) and Philip M Napoli (on US media policy-making).

The stand-out chapter for me was by Martin Moore, Director of the Media Standards Trust, and looked at lack of plurality at the smallest level, locally. In comparison to the issue of regional TV news mentioned above, where the threat was that plurality became a BBC monopoly, Moore points out in a growing number of areas (he uses the example of Port Talbot in south Wales) even the monopoly has vanished, to be replaced by an absence of locally-produced news. The impact for this on civic participation and democracy is a troubling scenario. The value here is that while this issue has been recorded in a piecemeal fashion as it has developed in trade press and the like, Moore has pulled the issues together in a compelling exposure of the crisis in parts of the UK regional media, a crisis of civic engagement and democratic participation receiving little attention.

The issues are laid out well throughout the book and solutions proposed. State intervention in proactive media policy to ensure plurality is much discussed, as is a US-style model of news media as charitable enterprises. Both these remedies deserve greater exploration in the UK, but despite the need for them, it seems unlikely these initiatives are or will become Government policy priorities. Perhaps it is time to rattle the cages of those local MPs again?

It is easy for those of us with entrenched interests in the plurality of journalism to become depressed by the issues raised in this book, but ultimately its value ought to be to give plurality greater exposure to students, academics, policy-makers and the wider public. For these reasons, this text deserves to be on the reading lists of as many Journalism, Media and Politics courses as possible.

Media Power and Plurality: From Hyperlocal to High-Level Policy edited by Steven Barnett and Judith Townend, Palgrave, 2015, Hardback, 228pp

Getting Out Alive: News, Sport and Politics at the BBC by Roger Mosey

Review by John Mair, journalist and academic, co-editor of *The BBC Today; Future Uncertain*.

Life as a BBC executive is like being a frog on a pond full of lilies. You start off on a small leaf then you hop to another, getting bigger and bigger until you either drown or become a prince. Former Director General Mark Thompson is the latter, now president of the New York Times. Roger Mosey is the former. Eventually he ran out of lilies to grace and is now Master of an Oxbridge college.

It never pays to stay in a job for life in the Corporation. Two years hop, then two years hop again all the time saying: 'This is the best job I have ever had' and decrying ambition. That's for the troops and the wannabe presenters.

Mosey had a humble start in broadcasting as a community producer at Pennine Radio, a commercial station. That home town station did not delay him long. Soon he was off to BBC local radio as a reporter then producer at BBC Radio Lincoln and Northampton. He got the management bug and it has never left him.

That stage proved too small, so off to network radio, where his talent outed on The World at One. Mosey is an interventionist producer/editor. Little presenter power for him. From WATO to the flagship Today. Early morning starts but a programme that speaks into the ears of the UK's ruling classes daily.

Editors either come out of Today smelling of roses or in a career coffin. Roger has always had a bouquet about him. Off he went to help set up the new-fangled Radio Five Live, mixing news and sport in a unique blend. It worked. 'Radio Bloke' found an audience. More fragrant perfume for Roger.

And so to television and, with no experience of that medium, the editorship of television news. Mosey imposed his taste and refused to transmit execution videos, substituting stills instead. That editorial edict did not prove universally popular in a TV newsroom.

Soon time to hop again to a new lily, this time to be head of sport in a department which was losing the rights to sport like so much ballast in a balloon going down. Grandstand had to be confined to the great television graveyard in the sky. Instead the BBC concentrated on doing its limited remaining portfolio well.

A shrinking department was no home for a Mosey so the London Olympics beckoned. Mosey became the BBC supremo for a fortnight of brilliant television. London 2012 was a triumph on the track and on the screens as the BBC delivered on its promise of 'every minute of all the action anywhere'.

The London Olympics showed the BBC at its magnificent best. Mosey and Olympic veteran Dave Gordon delivered a broadcasting treat only later spoiled by their peers in BAFTA deciding it was more PC to give the big gong to Channel Four's Paralympic Games coverage.

Roger had alighted on his biggest lily to date and should have jumped onto the bank and away

But, as ever, just one more job beckoned. He wanted to be director of television, in charge of the whole shooting match. It was not to be, Danny Cohen got that gig. Roger shunted off to be editorial director of the whole Corporation, a la Mark Byford but without the Deputy Director General courtesy title. Time for an exit. Selwyn College Cambridge fell into his lap. The frog was off to a new pond.

But release from the Corporation meant a looser tongue. No need to toe the corporate line all the time. Post-BBC Roger has become a bit of a hired gun for some non-BBC-likers. He is against the Corp's size, now, and against the perceived bias, now.

Hence this book, a sort of love song to the BBC and a career on the broadcasting pond with some barbs thrown in. Very well written it is too. But with friends like this so critical, how can the BBC survive the greatest existential threat in its 93-year history with a Prime Minister intent on 'closing them down' and a Secretary of State whose motto seems to be: 'Private, good; BBC bad!'

The BBC, one of the great inventions of the twentieth century, may have survived the machete assaults of the Tories but in what shape? Time for some other big bullfrogs to come to it defence.

Getting Out Alive; News, Sport and Politics at the BBC, by Roger Mosey, Biteback, 2015. ISBN 978 1849548311

News and Politics: the rise of Live and Interpretative Journalism by Stephen Cushion

Review by Ivor Gaber, University of Sussex

The current controversy over the BBC's coverage of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn makes Cushion's book a timely and important contribution to our understanding of the role of television's coverage of politics within the fast-shifting ecology of contemporary news media.

Cushion, who has been writing extensively about television journalism in recent years, seeks to place the notion of 'mediatization' at the centre of debates about broadcast coverage of politics. Mediatization is an approach to the study of political communication which posits that the media are not just neutral vehicles for communicating political news and information but also shape and frame the processes, and narratives of politics both as an activity in itself and of the society where that activity is located.

So, for example, the notion of 'political leadership' becomes one no longer based around the political and personal skills of an individual per se but becomes primarily focused around that leader's ability, or lack of, to use the media effectively, and also the extent to which he or she is used by the media to shape a positive or negative political persona. The negative framing of Labour leader Ed Miliband at the last election is a particular case in point.

Mediatization, as a concept, is particularly relevant to political coverage because politics accounts for more moments of 'live' television than any other topic. The two-way gives the reporter great scope to introduce his or her own interpretation of events, as opposed to the scope he or she has when doing a standard television news package.

Cushion covers the way politics has been covered in fixed-time television news bulletins, comparing changes over time and place over the last 40 years in the US, the UK and Norway on both public and private channels. He analyses the formats of television reporting including newscasters reading to camera, reporter packages, interviews and his particular focus, 'the live', which includes either, or both, the reporter delivering his or her interpretation of the 'story' straight-to-camera, or the newscaster and the reporter in the field having a semi-scripted interview about current developments.

The argument - and it is a difficult one to refute - is it is in these 'lives' the real power of the reporter lies and thus their presence or absence can be seen as the real driver of the mediatization process. The live piece-to-camera is, in one way, less risky in that it has a large element of scripting or at least memorisation. The two-way, on the other hand, although it usually has a loose semi-scripted structure can lead the reporter into areas of interpretation and speculation he or she might, on reflection, rather not have gone.

An example of this was the now notorious two-way between BBC reporter Andrew Gilligan and the presenter of Radio 4's Today programme in 2003, in which Gilligan suggested the then government had deliberately lied about Sadaam Hussein's non-existent weapons of mass destruction. The consequences of this 'slip' are now well-known, leading to a major inquiry, the resignation of BBC top brass and, some would argue, the hobbling of BBC reporting for the decade that followed.

Cushion's point is now 24-hour news channels, social media and other online forms of

news have displaced the static television news bulletin as principle sources of breaking news (just as the TV bulletins did with newspapers) then the bulletins have had to find a new role. This they have done by becoming vehicles of news interpretation as much, if not more, than they are vehicles of news dissemination. Cushion reveals between 1992 and 2012 the percentage of time of either live pieces-to-camera, or two-ways, on the early evening TV news bulletins on the BBC went up from 2.2% to 10.8% and the corresponding figures for ITV were 9.3% and 14.9%.

This trend has significant implications for the processes of democracy and communication. Despite the fact TV news bulletins now have to compete with many other sources of news, the latest research confirms the trend of the last 30 years - that for the majority of the population these bulletins are still their most used and most trusted sources of news. So, to what extent should we be concerned so much of the political coverage being carried by these bulletins is less reportage and more opinionage (to coin a phrase)?

Cushion suggests this is not necessarily a matter for disquiet, in that the interpretative mode gives the political reporter the space and the time to put into some sort of perspective, and context, the hurly burly of the day's breaking story. And providing this is done with a passion for rigour and fairness, this can be seen as a positive addition to the cornucopia of news offerings now available to the public.

This has been at the heart of the controversy that has raged since Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader of the Labour Party in 2015, when many have criticised the BBC and its political editor Laura Kuenssberg. She has been accused of allowing her own views of Corbyn's suitability to lead Labour to negatively influence her coverage. This controversy reached a crescendo when Kuenssberg persuaded a Labour shadow minister to resign live on the BBC's Daily Politics show. Cushion's book helps us to understand how events such as this can be understood as moments of political mediatization par excellence.

News and Politics: the rise of Live and Interpretative Journalism by Stephen Cushion published by Routledge 182 pp price £90.22 hardback £24.99 paperback

Information for contributors

We accept original articles about journalism education and topics linked to journalism and education that are not offered for publication elsewhere at the time of submission. Articles for peer review should be in the range of 5000-7000 words.

Articles for Comment and Criticism should be shorter at about 3,000 to 4,000 words.

The copy deadline for the next issue is: Aug 30, 2012 but material sent earlier would be appreciated. Articles should be submitted to the editors at ajejournal@gmail.com together with a 100-150 word abstract. Comment and criticism articles can be more polemic and do not require an abstract.

Presentation and submission:

Articles should be produced in Word format, double spaced and set in Times New Roman 12pt with the minimum of formatting. Please **do not** press the "enter" button to put a double space between paragraphs and do not use specialist templates. Referencing should be in standard Harvard form with citations in the form: (Simmons 1955, p404) whilst notes should be set as endnotes.

Book Reviews:

Reviews of appropriate books should be approximately 400 words. We do not accept unsolicited reviews of books, but are always grateful to be given the opportunity to consider a review proposal. Please contact Tor Clarke, the reviews editor, if you wish to submit a review. All book reviews should include author, title, ISBN number, publisher, number of pages and price.

Presentation and submission:

All tables and figures should be produced separately either at the end of the article or in a separate file. Each should be clearly labelled Table 1:..... Table 2:..... Fig. 1:.... Fig. 2: etc and a note inserted in the text identifying approximately where it should be placed.

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Authors should confirm they have cleared all copyrighted work for publication and agree that they will indemnify the editors against claims for defamation, copyright infringement or plagiarism. All authors will be asked to sign a contract confirming this.

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Papers are sent to at least two referees for comment. On return your paper will be accepted, accepted following editing as identified by the referees or refused. Comment and criticism pieces and book reviews will be decided by the editors but may be accepted on the basis that they are edited as identified.

Proofs:

Once accepted, authors are expected to return proofs within 72 hours of receipt.