

Oration for Gary Younge
To be held at 3pm on Tuesday 23 July 2019
by Professor Vicki Squire

Vice-Chancellor

It is a great pleasure this afternoon to introduce our honorary graduand, the nationally and internationally acclaimed journalist: GARY YOUNGE.

Gary Younge is currently *The Guardian's* editor-at-large. He also writes a monthly column for *The Nation* magazine, has made radio and television documentaries on subjects ranging from gay marriage to Brexit, and is the author of five books: these include the award-winning, *Another Day in the Death of America*, 2016, dealing with the killing of young black people in the USA. He is one of the most highly respected British journalists, with a truly global reputation.

Gary began his career in journalism immediately after completing his BA in French and Russian at Heriot Watt University. In his final year (1992), he won a bursary from *The Guardian* to study journalism at City University and began to work for the paper in 1993. In 1996 he was awarded the Laurence Stern Fellowship, enabling him to work at the *Washington Post* for three months. He spent several years reporting from around the world; in 2003 he was appointed *The Guardian's* US correspondent, based in New York and Chicago, returning

to London to take up his present position in 2015. He has won prestigious prizes in the UK and the USA for his journalism, most recently Broadsheet Feature Writer of the Year at the Society of Editors Press Awards, 2018, for a year-long series of knife crime, and Feature of the Year from the Amnesty Media Awards for an article in the same series. From 2001-2003, for three years running, he won best British Newspaper Journalist in Britain's Ethnic Minority Media Awards. His books have also received critical acclaim: several have been shortlisted for major prizes and in 2017 *Another Day in the Death of America* won the J. Anthony Lukas Prize.

Gary was born in Hertfordshire to Barbadian parents. He is one of Britain's most senior Black journalists, working in a media which, in the UK, is still predominantly white. Early in his career, Gary laid down his own markers: writing his first column, which he wanted to be about Bosnia, he was told instead to write about 'black stuff'. His response was to refuse 'either/or': 'The most important thing about diversity in the media,' he says, 'is not having black people in high places, it is about the need to have different voices telling different stories.' Gary is a journalist who goes out and talks to people, listens to their answers and examines what is happening here and now. He writes about race, justice and inequality; he examines political systems, with political integrity; he speaks to important contemporary concerns. What he most cares about, he says, are the poor and the marginalised: naming him Foreign

Commentator of the Year in 2015, the director of Harvard’s Shorenstein Center said, ‘It’s the powerless on whose behalf he writes.’ He is a robust, honest writer, with a turn of phrase that lingers in the mind: a recent article about the Grenfell Towers disaster, for instance, speaks of ‘the brazen arrival of the four horsemen of late-stage capitalism: inequality, austerity, deregulation and privatisation.’

Gary Younge has a long list of honours and awards. He has honorary degrees from USA and UK universities; he was Visiting Fellow at Brooklyn College, CUNY, from 2009-2011; he is an Honorary Fellow of Cardiff University and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. His work is of the highest quality but tethered to supporting social justice and equality – in fact, a perfect embodiment of what the University’s 2030 Strategy, Excellence with Purpose seeks to promote.. We are delighted to welcome him to Warwick.

Vice-Chancellor, in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, GARY YOUNGE.

629 words