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Understanding the Third-Person Effect

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Understanding the Third-Person Effect

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We are bombarded with media messages throughout our day, from television news, advertising, and entertainment, to newspaper content, to outdoor advertising as we travel, to a variety of potential content accessed via the Internet. If asked, we would likely deny being influenced by these media messages, so as not to appear naïve or gullible. Let's not mention the brand name products we purchase, the issues of current events that we discuss with others, or the tear that came to our eye during a particular poignant episode of our favorite television program. No, we're not influenced.

However, when asked if we think others are influenced by media messages, we're quite likely to quickly agree that yes, they are influenced. Maybe when we consider these "others," we might think of people with less knowledge, fewer skills to resist those media messages, or perhaps instead children who might be more vulnerable to mass media content in some way. Unless it is a media message that would be good to be influenced by—perhaps a public service announcement for some prosocial activity—then maybe we're all influenced by those messages.

Additionally, we sometimes respond to this perception that media affect others, in our own behavior, such as supporting censorship of violent television or graphic sexual content (saying "we're protecting children"), or cheering for reform of political campaigns (saying "if the candidates weren't so negative, more people would come out and vote"). In another political realm, perhaps we're the political campaign who advocates we need to respond to a negative advertisement that attacks our candidate so voters won't be as influenced by the attacking ad, but will have our information to consider as well.

The accuracy of one's perception, how the media may actually affect others, is quite irrelevant in this formula. It is the reacting to the anticipation of the influence of media on others (Gunther & Storey, 2003)—not a direct reaction of media content but rather a reaction to the anticipated effect on others—that is the focus of the third-person effect. In the political campaign example above, it is not necessary that we know that negative ads influence voters; rather our belief or expectation that they do may be the motivating factor behind a candidate's choice to respond in an advertisement of his or her own.

These examples outline the perspectives of the third-person effect, first described by Davison (1983). The third-person effect is the perceptual distinction that the media will be not influential upon oneself, but rather they will be influential on others. Additionally, this belief of the media impact on others may motivate us to act or respond in such a way, not because we ourselves are influenced, but because we think others might be. Not only may this perception distinction explain people's support for limiting free expression on a variety of issues, but it may also have implications in public policy and broader societal factors.

This essay will outline the origins of the third-person effect, as well as review contemporary research on the subject. Additionally, I will review specific components related to the third-person effect, discuss some theoretical connections that have been proposed to explain this hypothesis, and conclude with a discussion of future directions of this research and this perceived effect of mass media.

1. Defining the third-person effect

Davison (1983) defines the third-person effect hypothesis as the likelihood that "individuals who are members of an audience that is exposed to a persuasive communication (whether or not this communication is intended to be persuasive) will expect the com-

munication to have a greater effect on others than on themselves" (p. 3).

The measurement of the third-person effect typically involves asking people two different types of questions, one focused on the perceptions of the

influence of media on oneself, and the other on the perceptions of influence of the media on others. A third-person effect is found if people report that others are influenced more than they themselves are by the mass media.

Such comparisons are often computed as difference scores, as the rating of influence on oneself and the rating of influence on others are subtracted from each other (for instance, Banning, 2000; Brosius & Engel, 1996; Gunther & Mundy, 1993; Price, Tewksbury, & Huang, 1998). However, Tiedge, Silverblatt, Havice, and Rosenfeld (1991) make the distinction of first person effects, the perceived influence on oneself, and third-person effects, the perceived influence on others. Comparisons between the two ratings are made to identify any significant differences, which would suggest a "third-person effect." The third-person effect involves directionality, in the sense that others are seen as being influenced more than oneself. When the media influence oneself more than others, it is typically termed a "reverse third-person effect," although Tiedge and colleagues may instead define that as a dominantly first-person effect.

The third-person effect involves an evaluation of the influence on oneself, as well as the influence on others. While respondents may be making a distinct comparison between how they answered a question phrased for themselves and a question phrased regarding others, it is not clear whether these estimations are accurate. Davison (1983) asks "is it possible that we do not overestimate effects on others so much as we underestimate effects on ourselves?" (p. 14).

While it may be useful to determine whether overestimation or underestimation occurs, or perhaps that a combination of both occurs in third-person effects, the accuracy of perceptions of the effect of the media, while it has been explored (Gunther, 1991), seems generally irrelevant. In the broader schema of understanding the third-person effect, the accuracy of the perception may not matter as long as the perception has the potential to influence other attitudes or behaviors, such as those supporting censorship of media content. True, if people knew their perceptions of others or themselves were inaccurate, they may not hold such perceptions, but the power of the third-person effect is that people do have those perceptions of themselves and others, and the perceptual differences between "me" and "them" has the power to influence attitudes, as well as behavior.

A. Roots of third-person effect research

Davison found what he termed the third-person effect in a number of small experiments often dealing with politics (1983). In one experiment, graduate students identified that information about a New York politician would influence the vote of New Yorkers in general more than it would influence themselves. (In this study, 48% of respondents reported New Yorkers would be influenced more than themselves.) A second experiment found subjects were more likely to perceive children today being influenced by television advertising than they were to report themselves being influenced by television advertisements as a child. A third experiment found that while 72% of subjects reported the results of the 1980 New Hampshire primary election would not influence their vote for U.S. president, 52% said it would influence Ronald Reagan's results considerably, and therefore must be affecting others. A fourth experiment studying the potential effect of charges that Ronald Reagan would pursue a "hawkish" foreign policy in office found that two thirds of respondents said other people would be influenced more than themselves. These small studies were the kernels that formed Davison's hypothesis.

Perloff (1996) says, "The third-person effect is a contemporary notion, rooted as it is in the relativity of perception, and committed as it is the centrality of perceptions in public affairs" (p. 3). However, Davison (1983) cites a number of historical observations in his sociological research that provided the basis for forming the third-person effect hypothesis. Davison suggests the third-person effect may have been taking place in the following historical incidents:

- During World War II, the Japanese dropped leaflets over U.S. locations in Iwo Jima, areas that had white officers and black troopers. The leaflets made statements that it was a "white man's" war, and tried to persuade blacks to give up or desert. The day after the leaflet drop, the troops pulled out, which Davison suggests could have been based on the perceptions of the white officers that black troops would desert.
- In studying the role of the West German press in forming Bonn's foreign policy, Davison asked journalists how much influence editorials had on readers. Many journalists concluded the editorials didn't affect themselves but would influence the ordinary reader.
- Davison discusses the results a number of studies conducted about the impact of attitudes on African

Americans and Caucasians who watched the miniseries of Alex Haley's story "Roots" aired in January 1977. While whites who watched the series were predicted to have greater tolerance and sympathy, blacks who watched the show were predicted by others to be angry, bitter, and hostile. However, many respondents, both black and white, reported only a feeling of sadness after seeing the series and did not report the emotions others predicted them to have.

- Davison suggests the third-person effect may have played a role in the switch by many manufacturers from aerosol production to use of spray or squeeze containers, which followed a *New York Times* report in September 1975 about the potential effect of aerosol on the earth's atmosphere. He suggests one reason for the switch may have been predictions that the public would reject aerosol cans in response to such stories.

Baughman (1989) also suggests the third-person effect may explain why people have advocated controls on the news media historically. The third-person effect may have played a role when Walter Cronkite referred to the Vietnam war as "this is a war we cannot win" and also announced on the evening news, "it's all over." President Lyndon Johnson's course of action regarding the war changed (and potentially his decision whether to run for reelection in 1968), possibly due to his perception that the American public would believe Cronkite's statement and turn against the administration to a greater degree than it already had (Ranney, 1983). Such an effect may influence any political candidate's decision to respond to negative political advertising if he or she believes the public has been influenced by that attacking advertisement. It may also underlie the roots of support for censorship of media content, including violent television programming, sexually explicit content, and perhaps political advertising.

B. Contemporary third-person effect research

Not only does there appear to be historical precedent for the third-person effect, but research since 1983 has found overwhelming support for the third-person effect in many studies; in fact, nearly every study that has specifically tested the third-person effect hypothesis has found support for this difference in perception of media effects. Glynn and Ostman (1988) found that respondents in general reported that both themselves and others were influenced by public opinion, that others were not necessarily more susceptible to being influenced by public opinion than oneself. This study

specifically examined the influence of public opinion, however, not the specific influence of mass media as conducted in most third-person effect studies.

Not only do we have anecdotal evidence that suggests the third-person effect operates in general from Davison's (1983) research, the third-person effect has also been found in testing a wide variety of topics, including the influence of various media elements, such as news coverage (Cohen, Mutz, Price, & Gunther, 1988; Harikadis & Rubin, 2005; Neuwirth & Frederick, 2002; Perloff, 1989; Price, Huang, & Tewksbury, 1997; Reid & Hogg, 2005; Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985). Advertising messages have also been the focus of much third-person effect examination (Chapin, 2000; Cho & Han, 2004; David & Johnson, 1998; David, Morrison, Johnson, & Ross, 2002; Duck, Terry, & Hogg, 1995; Gunther & Thorson, 1992; Henrickson & Flora, 1999; Huh, Delorme, & Reid, 2004; Meirick, 2004; Price, Tewksbury, & Huang, 1998; White & Dillon, 2000).

While some studies have examined the third-person effect in the context of perceived effects of general television programming (Golan, 2002), it has also been found in testing the perceived influence of specific television programs such as the ABC mini-series "Amerika" (Lasorsa, 1989; Perloff, Neuendorf, Giles, Chang, & Jeffres, 1992). International research has examined the third-person effect in relationship to viewing the Australian soap opera "A Country Practice" (Gibbon & Durkin, 1995), as well as "Rebelde Way," an Argentine soap opera aired in Israel (Tsfati, Ribak, & Cohen, 2005).

Television violence as a particular media category has also been found to lead to third-person effects, where respondents report believing violent media is more influential on others than on themselves (Hoffner et al., 2001; Lometti, Ashby, & Welch, 1994; Rojas, Shah, & Faber, 1996; Salwen & Dupagne, 2001; Scharrer, 2002). Some studies (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2002; Nathanson, Eveland, Park, & Paul, 2002) have examined more specifically the third-person effect and parents' concern for the effect of televised violence on their own versus other children. The influence of pornography has also been examined to explore perceived effects of such media content (Gunther, 1995; Lee & Yang, 1996; Lo & Paddon, 2001; Lo & Wei, 2002; Rojas, Shah, & Faber, 1996; Tewksbury, 2002; Wu & Koo, 2001).

Research has also examined the influence of political campaign factors, such as political advertising

or campaign coverage in American elections (Cohen & Davis, 1991; Lang, 1995; Meirick, 2000; Ognianova, Meeds, Thorson, & Coyle, 1996; Paek, Pan, Sun, Abisaid, & Houden, 2005; Rucincki & Salmon, 1990; Shah, Faber, Youn, & Rojas, 1997; Stenbjørre & Leets, 1997) as well as those from campaigns and elections in other countries, such as Australia (Duck, Hogg & Terry, 1995) and Taiwan (Hu & Wu, 1996; 1997).

In addition to the numerous studies described above that explore one particular aspect of media messages, a handful of studies have examined the third-person effect by either a variety of media, or perhaps media content more generally. For example, Duck and Mullin (1995) look at positive media issues, negative media issues, and public service announcements in Australia, while Innes and Zeitz (1988) studied the effect with regard to political campaigns, media violence, and drunk driving campaigns, also in Australia. Lambe's (2002) examination of the third-person effect as a possible explanation for supporting censorship measures involved assessing one's willingness to censor a variety of cases of expression, including pornography, hate speech, political speech, and defamatory speech. Reid & Hogg (2005) examined the influence of both categories of news media (*National Enquirer*, *Wall Street Journal*) as well as television entertainment ("Friends"). Cho and Han's (2004) work examined the perceived effects on oneself versus others for advertising (beer and liquor) as well as news (reports on AIDS and smoking). Their study is also noteworthy as it is a rare attempt at cross-cultural third-person effect research comparisons, in that they compared responses of Americans to South Koreans, and found a greater third-person effect for these media messages among Americans than South Koreans.

1. "Effects" of desirable vs. undesirable media.

It is clear the third-person effect has been studied and found regarding a variety of media messages. A key factor that may contribute to the third-person effect is perceptions of the media content itself. If one sees being influenced by mass media as an undesirable event, he or she may be likely to perceive oneself as not being influenced by such messages, but think that others may not be able to make such a distinction, may be more naïve, and therefore more influenced by such messages. We might be more resistant to being influenced by advertising, especially if we perceive it as pure manipulation or propaganda, but we may not make such a judgment of news content.

Brosius and Engel (1996) found third-person effects for both German advertising and news, although they distinguish between the types of effects found for each. They suggest that people perceived advertising as detrimental or undesirable as a source of influence. We see ourselves as rational consumers and reject any attempts at influence. When it comes to news, however, the public may perceive those who pay attention to news and learn from it well informed and well educated. Brosius and Engel suggest that we find greater third-person effects with advertising than we will for news for this reason. Gunther and Mundy (1993) found greater third-person effects when a message was presented as an advertisement than when it was presented as a news article. In contrast, however, Hoorens and Ruiter (1996) found no significance of message type on the third-person effect between content presented as a newspaper article or an advertisement in Belgium.

The third-person effect has been studied predominantly in cases in which the perceived media influence would be socially undesirable, and the third-person effect is explained by the concept that people do not admit to being influenced by undesirable media elements such as product advertising. However, a number of studies (Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1995; Duck & Mullin, 1995; Eveland & McLeod, 1999; Gunther & Thorson, 1992; Gunther & Mundy, 1993, Peiser & Peter, 2000) examine the difference in perceived influence of socially undesirable media content and socially desirable media content. Some third-person effect studies (Peiser & Peter, 2000; Shah, Faber, & Youn, 1999) include specific measures that examine respondents' own perceptions of the desirability of the messages.

Duck, Hogg, and Terry (1995) found respondents perceived that they were more influenced by Australian advertisements evaluated as more positive and socially desirable than those that were undesirable. Gunther and Mundy (1993) studied the benefit likelihood of a topic and the potential third-person effect, and found stronger third-person effects for messages that were perceived as more harmful. Gunther and Thorson (1992) tested third-person perceptions with product advertisements as well as public service announcements and found support for the third-person effect in product advertisements, but a lack of support for it with public service announcements. They found for many respondents a reverse third-person effect in which people reported they would be more influenced by the public service announcements than others would be. Duck and Mullin (1995) found traditional third-person

effects with what were perceived to be “negative” messages and also found third-person effects with “positive” messages in Australia, but found reverse third-person effect with public service announcements. Hoorens and Ruiter (1996) also studied perceived impact of desirable vs. undesirable messages and found that desirable messages were more likely to influence oneself than others and undesirable messages were more likely to influence others than oneself. These results suggest self-enhancement or social desirability may play a role in third-person perceptions.

2. How common is the third-person effect? It should be noted that third-person effects are not found for all respondents in every study on the third-person effect. Typical proportions of research participants who report that “others” are influenced by media more than themselves range from 35% to 69% in previous research (Atwood, 1994; Chapin, 2000; Davison, 1983; Gunther, 1991, 1995; Lasorsa, 1989; Mutz, 1989; Price & Tewksbury, 1996). A reverse of the third-person effect, in which respondents report being influenced more by the media than others, is typically found in proportions of 5% to 20%.

The remaining proportion of research participants who report no difference between the effect of media on themselves and others, suggests consensus in perceived media effects and ranges in the above cited studies from 19% to 60% of respondents. This consistency may be similar to findings regarding the false consensus effect, in which people overestimate how much others are like themselves (Ross, Greene, & House, 1977). While the false consensus effect has not been explored regarding effects of mass media, we would expect such research to suggest that people see themselves influenced the same as other people. This consensus could be framed either as “myself and everybody else are not influenced by the media” or that “myself and others are influenced to some degree, but we are influenced equally.”

3. Measuring the third-person effect. The third-person effect hypothesis has been tested by different methods. Survey research has found different estimates of the mass media’s effect on one’s own opinion and the opinions of others (for example, Davison, 1983; Huh, Delorme, & Reid., 2004; Reid & Hogg, 2005; Tiedge, et al., 1991).

A typical approach to measuring the third-person effect is to phrase questions about the effect of mass media on oneself, measured on perhaps a five-point

Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The question would also be reworded to reflect the effect of mass media on “others,” either defined as varying levels by social distance, or perhaps as a single comparison group (i.e., “others in the community”). These scores are then compared to identify significant differences between effect on oneself and effect on others (for example, Paxton, 1996; Salwen and Driscoll, 1997; Shah et al, 1997; Tiedge, et al, 1991). When levels of social distance are considered, a difference score may be calculated between the reported effect on oneself and the effect on the various groups (or definitions) of others, with comparisons in those difference scores being examined to identify whether larger differences are perceived as social distance increases from the respondent (for example, “other students” being close in social distance versus “others in general” being further in social distance). Additionally, Price and Tewksbury (1996) studied the impact of question order on the third-person effect findings, and found no significant differences between asking the “self” question followed by the “other” question or the reverse order of those two items.

Experimental investigations have used different mass media messages as stimuli; for example, some have used real or fictional news stories as stimuli (e.g., Perloff, 1989; Gunther, 1991; Cohen, et al., 1988). Others have used persuasive messages as stimuli in testing the third-person effect hypothesis (e.g., Cohen & Davis, 1991; Gunther & Thorson, 1992; Banning, 1998). The third-person effect hypothesis has been supported by either informative or persuasive stimuli, and Davison (1983) suggests any message is persuasive regardless of whether it was written to persuade or not, and that the third-person effect can occur with either type of stimuli. The measurement scales and statistical analyses to compare the perceived effect on oneself and others as used in surveys on the third-person effect are also common in experimental designs (for example, Mutz, 1989; Innes & Zeitz, 1988; Austin & Pinkleton, 1994; and Fuse & Chang, 1998).

Some studies have involved both surveys and experiments to test the third-person effect hypothesis. For example, Paek and colleagues (2005) conducted simultaneous surveys and an experiment on the effects of attack advertising and found support for third-person effect hypotheses using both methodologies.

4. Behavioral component of third-person effect. In addition to describing a difference in the perception of the effects of mass media on oneself and others, Davison (1983) suggests that this differentiation in perception may also influence one’s behavior, in that:

the impact that they expected this communication to have on others may lead them to take some action. Any effect that the communication achieves may thus be due not to the reaction of the ostensible audience but rather to the behavior of those who anticipate, or think they perceive, some reaction on the part of others. (p. 3)

Perloff (1993) criticized most third-person effect studies for not measuring actual behavior. Only a handful of studies to date have examined this next step of the third-person effect—whether such perceptions can potentially affect people’s behavior. Such studies have typically examined this behavioral component by relating the third-person effect to support for restrictions on the media.

One area where the behavioral component has been examined is attitudes toward censorship of pornography. Gunther (1995) found that the magnitude of perceptual bias (in terms of media effects on oneself versus others) was related to opinions favoring restrictions on pornography. Similarly, Lee and Yang (1996) found third-person perceptions were related to pro-censorship attitudes regarding sexually explicit media in Korea. Rojas et al. (1996) found differences in the degree of third-person effects related to pro-censorship attitudes of television violence and pornography.

The third-person effect has also been examined as a means to understand censorship of music. McLeod, Eveland, and Nathanson (1997) examined the relationship of the third-person effect to support for censoring song lyrics that varied from self-censorship, federal regulation, and banning sales of such songs. They found third-person perceptions to be related to support for censorship, although they do not elaborate whether that relationship varied by the type of censorship questioned.

The third-person effect is also related to support for restricting advertising of “vices,” such as cigarettes, beer, liquor, and gambling (Banning, 2001, David, Liu, & Myser, 2004; Shah, Faber, & Youn, 1999). Borzekowski, Flora, Feighery, and Schooler (1999) examined the third-person effect in the context of exposure to pro-smoking messages through promotional materials with seventh grade students.

Lometti, Ashby, and Welch (1994) did not ask questions by which comparisons between perceived effect on oneself vs. others could be made, but asked respondents whether they held restrictive attitudes toward television programming and why they felt that way (in an open-ended question). They found when respondents objected to particular television content

being on the air, 54% of those responses referred to a concern for other people (primarily children), while 46% addressed personal or moral reasons why particular material should not be aired.

Paxton (1996) examined support for media rights rather than support for censorship. He found as people believed others would be strongly affected by the media, they were more likely to support restricting the media, and the less people saw themselves affected by the media, the more likely they opposed restrictions. However, no direct comparison of third-person effects (when others are affected more than themselves) was examined for correlations to protecting media rights.

In a study regarding news and behavioral ramifications of the third-person effect, Gunther (1991) found that the third-person effect was not related to the amount of money awarded in damages to a subject of a defamatory news story. Perloff (1999) notes that while the third-person effect has been found to predict support for censorship of pornography, music, television violence, and advertising, the findings are mixed when considering news and political communication.

While the third-person effect has been found in connection with supporting limits or restrictions on a variety of media content outlined above, a number of studies have linked the third-person effect to support for restrictions on reform of campaign content. For example, Hu and Wu (1996) connected the third-person effect and behavioral responses in an election setting. They found those who reported a third-person effect regarding the influence of election poll reports on voting decisions were likely to support a policy prohibiting poll reports during the election in Taiwan.

Rucincki and Salmon (1990) found a weak relationship between the third-person effect and support for independent monitoring of campaign news stories and political advertisements, although it was in the direction that suggested greater third-person effects produce greater support for monitoring. Salwen (1998) found that as the perceived influence of media on others increased, so did support for restrictions on campaign news stories and advertisements.

Shah et al. (1997) found third-person effects regarding negative political advertising to be related to support for censoring such content, although this pattern was found when others were described as “younger voters” but not when others were labeled as “other adults.” They did not, however, find such a clear connection between third-person effect regard-

ing general political advertising and pro-censorship attitudes.

While much third-person effect research that examines the behavioral component has done so in the context of support for censorship, Tewksbury, Moy, and Weis (2004) found the effect influences other types of behavior. In examining the influence of the third-person effect in the context of preparing for Y2K and the possi-

ble millennium bug that might affect home computers as well as retail and banking, they found that those who believed others were more affected by Y2K-related messages than themselves expressed less anxiety and were less likely to take any steps to prepare for possible ramifications. These findings suggest further implications of the third-person effect beyond behavioral responses that may be specifically linked to mass media.

2. Components of the third-person effect

In addition to examining the third-person effect regarding different types of media content, and studying the behavioral component of the third-person effect, research has also examined a number of other variables to gain further understanding of the third-person effect and how it operates for different people differently. Social distance, perceived knowledge, and media exposure are three factors examined in context of the third-person effect.

A. *Social distance*

Davison (1983) says,

the concept of reference groups may prove useful in explaining the third-person effect. Are people "like me" or "different from me" seen as being more affected by persuasive messages? Or is the degree of similarity not a relevant factor? If perceived congruity of others' attitudes and values with one's own is a factor in the selection of normative reference groups . . . then one would expect there to be little exaggeration in the perceived impact of a communication on members of such groups. (p. 12)

Cohen et al. (1988) were the first to manipulate experimentally who were the "others" as respondents were asked to assess media effects upon other Stanford students, other Californians, and public opinion at large. They found that the third-person effects were greater as the "others" became more broadly defined.

Third-person effect research has often described others as "most people" or "others in general" (Austin & Pinkleton, 1994; Gibbon & Durkin, 1995; Glynn & Ostman, 1988; Gunther, 1995; Hu & Wu, 1997; Innes & Zeitz, 1988; Lasorsa, 1989; Matera & Salwen, 1997; Paxton, 1996; Price & Tewksbury, 1996; Rojas et al., 1996; Rucincki & Salmon, 1990; Salwen & Driscoll,

1997; Stenbjerre & Leets 1997; Tiedge et al., 1991; Willnat, 1996). Research has also more specifically defined others as others who support a candidate or issue position (Cohen & Davis, 1991; Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1995), or in varying levels as Cohen et al. (1988) examined such as other students, others in state, others in general (see also Gibbon & Durkin, 1995; Hoffner, et al., 2001; Gunther, 1991; Park, 1997; White, 1997). Sometimes the "others" are identified as a single individual as the average person (Duck & Mullin, 1995; Hoorens & Ruiter, 1996), or one's closest friend (Duck & Mullin, 1995). Tewksbury's (2002) research compared the third-person effect when the "others" examined varied by group size and found that estimates on others increased with group size, and when group size was held constant, greater third-person effects were found when others were described as being more socially and geographically distant from the respondent.

Perloff (1996) distinguishes two possible conceptualizations of social distance with regard to the third-person effect: as a continuum of similarity ranging from "people just like me" to "people not at all like me," or as a continuum of heterogeneity and size ranging from "my closest group or community" to "my largest group or community."

Davison (1983) suggests it may be likely for people to perceive close others not to be affected by media, just as oneself is not. He says regarding censorship, "Even the censor's friends are usually safe from pollution. It is the general public that must be protected" (p. 14).

The concept of social distance in third-person effect research has similarities to concepts of social comparison. In the process of social comparison, we compare ourselves to varying others, some who are superior to us in some ways, others who are inferior to

us, and others whom we might typify as “average” (Wills, 1991). That self-other difference may be a form of social comparison, in which one compares the effect of media on oneself as compared to other people. When considering “others,” it is not clear whether people automatically assume a person is similar to themselves or different from themselves in the process of estimating media effects as in the third-person effect (Atwood, 1994) or in other evaluations. Eveland, Nathanson, Detenber, and McLeod (1999) also suggest these social distance perceptions may be due to a self-serving out-group bias by respondents, in which one’s own group is evaluated more favorably than out-groups.

A number of third-person effect studies since Cohen et al. (1988) have found the third-person effect varies by level of social distance of “others.” Gibbon and Durkin (1995) found that when others were defined at greater distance from the self, the difference between the effect on self and others increased. Brosius and Engel (1996) found when the third person was described as psychologically close, the difference between effect estimates for the self and others was smaller than when others were described as psychologically distant. While the third-person effect did diminish in the case of close others, they note it did not vanish completely. Duck and Mullin (1995) found greater media effects perceived when the other was of greater distance (“the average person”) than when the other was closer (“your closest friend”). Gunther (1991) found greater effects on others when others were defined as larger, more broadly defined groups of others. White (1997) found as similarity to the respondent increased (most similar being other students at the same university, then other college students in the state, then other state residents as least similar), the size of the third-person effect decreased.

B. Perceived knowledge

The exploration of cognitive distance attempts to manipulate research subjects’ perceptions of their own knowledge in relationship to other people. The variable of self-perceived knowledge has been explored independently of the concept of cognitive distance in a number of third-person effect studies.

Also known as subjective competence, perceived knowledge is not actual knowledge about a particular topic, which is defined instead as objective competence. Subjective competence has been defined as the perception of one’s own ability to understand events (Krosnick & Milburn, 1990), and as confidence in one’s abilities to form opinions on particular topics

(Rapoport, 1982). Measures of objective competence have not been positively related to the third-person effect (Price & Tewksbury, 1996; Willnat, 1996). However, the results regarding self-perceived knowledge and the third-person effect have been mixed.

Davison (1980) commented on this concept of perceived knowledge. He said,

In a sense, we are all experts on those subjects that matter to us, in that we have information not available to other people. . . . Other people, we reason, do not know what we know. Therefore, they are more likely to be influenced by the media. (p. 9)

Lasorsa (1989) found that perceived expertise was positively related to the third-person effect, although objective competence was not. He concludes, “what may drive the third-person effect is not so much one’s possession of specialized knowledge and skill but merely that one perceives oneself in that regard” (p. 374). Hu and Wu (1997) found perceived self-expertise on campaign issues had a positive direct effect on the third-person effect of media reports on the campaign in Taiwan. An earlier study by Hu and Wu (1996) found that greater perceived self-expertise on election issues contributed to third-person effect of election poll reports on voting decisions. Salwen and Dupagne (2001) found self-perceived knowledge to be a stronger predictor of the third-person effect than other factors including media use or demographic variables.

However, not all third-person effect studies that have examined perceived knowledge have found a connection. McLeod Eveland and Nathanson (1997) did not find a positive relationship between perceived knowledge in violent rap music and the third-person perception. They suggest such a relationship may exist when “perceived knowledge is an overestimate of actual knowledge” (p. 168). Driscoll and Salwen (1997) found relationships between third-person perceptions and their measures of general current events knowledge and what they term “technical knowledge.” Connors (1996) found no relationship between perceived knowledge and the third-person effect in an examination of the issues of student financial aid and worker’s compensation, issues likely to vary regarding reported self-expertise by student respondents. Salwen, Dupagne, and Paul (1998) found self-perceived knowledge to be related to the third-person effect on the issue of television violence, but not on the issues of televised trials or negative political advertising. They also found that perceived knowledge predicted support for

restricting television violence and televised trials, but it was not related to support for restricting negative political advertisements.

Salwen and Driscoll (1997) examined the relationship of self-perceived knowledge with the third-person effect. They suggest “the individual’s perception of his or her knowledge provides the individual with the confidence to see him or herself as smarter than other people and less vulnerable to harmful messages” (p. 15).

Rucincki and Salmon (1990) suggest while education level may not directly predict the third-person effect, “education may enhance feelings of superiority rather than fostering greater accuracy” (p. 363), and that education “serves to distance individuals from others in a way this is flattering to the self and disparaging to others” (p. 363). So the perception of educational differences or intelligence may be enough to influence the third-person effect.

C. Media exposure

Past third-person effect research has found mixed results regarding the relationship of general media

exposure to the third-person effect. For instance, Rucincki and Salmon (1990) found general television use and self-reported attention were unrelated to the third-person effect, and that greater exposure to television was associated with greater perceived effects on oneself. Innes and Zeitz (1988) found that light viewers of television reported the greatest difference between the influence of media on themselves and others, while such perceptual differences were smallest for heavy viewers of television. While media exposure may be related to the third-person effect to some degree, it may not be related to the behavioral component stated in Davison’s (1983) conceptualization. For instance, Shah et al. (1997) did not find media use to be a significant predictor of support for censorship in political advertising.

Examining specifically news media exposure, Salwen (1998) did not find general news media use to be a significant predictor of the third-person effect but did find specifically newspaper use to predict third-person effect. He suggests that newspaper use may “provide people with the confidence to evaluate themselves smarter than other people” (p. 23).

3. Explanations for the third-person effect

Davison (1983) asked in his article in which the third-person effect is first described, “Why are exaggerated expectations about the effects of communications on others so common?” (p. 14). In reviewing why the third-person effect may occur, a number of theories have been discussed and examined.

Attribution theory has been perhaps the theory most frequently used to explain or explore the third-person effect (Gunther, 1991). Considering the third-person effect in the context of attribution theory, researchers conclude that people assume others do not take account of situational factors regarding a message and are likely to be influenced by it, while they themselves are aware of situational factors and are impervious to being influenced. Gunther (1991) says “attribution theory is pertinent to the third-person effect simply because of the consistent bias in estimating the situational response” (p. 357). Duck, Hogg, and Terry (1995) discuss the third-person effect in the context of attribution theory, as utilized also by Rucincki and Salmon (1990), Hoffner, et al. (2001), and McLeod, Detenber, and Eveland (2001).

Ego involvement is another theory related to the third-person effect (Perloff, 1989). Perloff suggests that for people who are highly involved in a particular issue, because of a strong prior position, people will not be influenced by a message, regardless of the message’s persuasiveness. Perloff says such people will perceive the media as biased against their position, for which he finds support in pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian viewers’ evaluations of news coverage regarding the war in Lebanon.

Brosius and Engel (1996) discuss the third-person effect in the context of impersonal impact, as studied by Tyler and Cook (1984), as well as Gunther and Mundy’s (1993) concept of unrealistic optimism as possible explanations. They also recommend the study of potential related concepts to the third-person effect, including the false consensus effect, the false uniqueness effect, the spiral of silence, and pluralistic ignorance. Glynn and Ostman (1988) test the Tyler and Cook impersonal impact hypothesis with specific regard to the mass media, although they found the

respondents did not see themselves as less likely to be influenced by public opinion.

Glynn and Ostman (1988) also suggest a link with the third-person effect to Fishbein and Ajzen's notion of generalized and personalized beliefs. Glynn and Ostman say "people may see themselves as being in control (and hence not as susceptible to any type of effects), whereas they may see others as having less control over both positive and negative events (and hence, more susceptible to effects)" (p. 306). Rather than perceive consensus with regard to people and the mass media, the arena of media effects may present such differentiation with regard to control over events, in this case, being influenced by the media. Third-person effect research has found that people often see themselves in greater control over being influenced by the media than others, thus leading to what may be an overestimation of the effect of the mass media on others.

Biased optimism, as defined by Gunther and Mundy (1993), is similar to Weinstein's (1980) unrealistic optimism. They defined biased optimism as the "tendency for people to think they are less likely to have negative or undesirable experiences than others" (p. 60). Gunther (1995) also says "people are motivated to reinforce self-esteem by perceiving themselves as smarter or better off than the majority of their peers, and thus they see others as more vulnerable to media content" (p. 28). Salwen and Dupagne (2003) examined the third-person effect and biased optimism in the context of experiencing Y2K problems when we reached the year 2000. Duck, Hogg, and Terry (1995) also discuss the potential understanding of the third-

person effect through Weinstein's (1980) concept of people's imperviousness to influence.

Self-identity and self-enhancement have also been discussed as possible explanations for the third-person effect. Gunther and Thorson (1992) suggest that the self-identity model may explain third-person effects, in that social desirability motivates people to say that they are not influenced by media. Hoorens and Ruiter (1996) suggest that self-enhancement may provide an explanation for the third-person effect, and that the third-person effect "should occur only for media messages that are generally believed to be undesirable to be influenced by" (p. 601). Huang (1995) suggests that concepts of self-esteem, self-enhancement, and a self-serving bias may be important as explanations of the third-person effect, although research hasn't tested the relationship of these factors with third-person effect. Beyond factors involving just the self, Atwood (1994) explored how social comparisons might influence third-person effects, suggesting people may see others as less competent than themselves.

Pluralistic ignorance has also been mentioned as having a potential connection to the third-person effect (Brosius & Engel, 1996; Davison, 1983; Glynn, 1989; Gunther & Thorson, 1992; Innes & Zeitz, 1988). Davison (1996) asks about the third-person effect "how do they [people who do not overestimate the effect of persuasive communication on others] differ from those who tend to exaggerate communication effects? Why do some people underestimate—or overestimate their own persuasibility?" (p. 115).

4. Future directions of third-person effect research

Early third-person effect research examined the presence or absence of third-person perceptions in a variety of situations and messages, such as libel cases (Cohen et al., 1988), prosocial advertising (Gunther & Thorson, 1992), television violence (Lometti et al., 1994), pornography (Rojas et al., 1996), rap lyrics (McLeod et al., 1997), as well as political messages as examined in this study (for example, Cohen & Davis, 1991; Hu & Wu, 1997; Lang, 1995; Rucincki & Salmon, 1990; Shah et al., 1997). There is reasonable confirmation from this level of research that there is support for the third-person effect hypothesis in a vari-

ety of settings, with a variety of topics and types of media. Research in the third-person effect then advanced beyond these preliminary examinations when scholars began exploring this "behavioral component" that was suggested even in Davison's (1983) original description of the third-person effect. Most of this behavior-related research has found relationships between the third-person effect and behavior, in the form of support for censorship or pornography (Gunther, 1995; Lee & Yang, 1996; Rojas et al., 1996), restrictions on song lyrics or sale of potentially objectionable music (McLeod et al., 1997); and on political

communication (Hu & Wu, 1995, Rucincki & Salmon, 1990; Salwen, 1998; Shah et al., 1997).

However, even this level of research has not studied actual behavior, but rather opinions about what people's behavior would be—would they support censorship of pornography, should political advertising be restricted, etc. Epley and Dunning's (2000) research on self-serving assessments and feeling what they call "holier than thou" provides suggestions for what the next level of third-person effect research should pursue. Their research on self-serving assessments compared predicted behavior made by research participants, and *actual* behavior, such as donating money to a charitable organization. They found in a number of small experiments participants predict they would be more likely to perform various "selfless acts" than their peers, when in studying actual behavior their predictions were consistently less accurate for themselves than others. What this research may suggest to the study of the third-person effect is linking the study of the behavioral component of the third-person effect to the examination of actual behavior. For instance, if respondents report having greater support for some form of censorship of what they perceive to be "dangerous" media content, would they be willing to sign a petition to their local elected officials, or volunteer for an organization working to somehow change or restrict media content? Epley and Dunning raise the question whether the consequences or actions are immediate or remote, and they suggest that people may overestimate the impact of self-interest when such concerns are remote, but not when they're immediate, when they are actually behaving. This approach should be explored in the context of the third-person effect and mass media settings.

Third-person effect research needs to go beyond just discussing these theories to develop research projects that actually test these concepts at an operational level. Much research proposes alternative theoretical explanations, using the same types of observations as "support" for that particular theory. Unfortunately, much contemporary third-person effect research is neither furthering theoretical explorations of these concepts nor advancing the third-person effect as a theory in and of itself. Most research is still at the stage of finding support for the third-person effect hypothesis in different contexts, with different types of messages, different types of media, etc. Without further direct exploration of some of these explanations, they remain only ideas in literature reviews, not concepts that have

been found in research to have some type of direct relationship with the third-person effect.

Another area that deserves further exploration in third-person effect research is regarding the perceptions and behavior of policymakers. Yes, it is important whether the third-person effect influences perceptions and subsequently behavior of citizens, who may then work to censor particular messages they fear are influential. This "behavioral component" of the third-person effect may be most disconcerting not regarding typical citizens, audience members, or voters, but rather policymakers themselves and their perceptions of media influence, and their ability to affect policy on media content (Lasorsa, 1992). Davison's (1983) and Baughman's (1989) historical accounts of behavior possibly motivated by the third-person effect involve in many instances policymakers or other key decision makers, rather than general audience members. For instance, do political candidates in an election respond to negative political advertising with their own attacks or at least a response because they were offended by the accusations made, or because they believe the public might believe what the negative advertisement told them, and that might influence their voting decision? It is most likely a combination of the two.

If research does in fact find that policy makers and corporate executives are influenced by the third-person effect, then the accuracy of those perceptions should be of great concern, although the importance of accuracy was discounted in the introduction to this essay. While third-person effect research has not explored the accuracy of the perceptions, pluralistic ignorance research does conduct such accuracy checks (e.g., Major, 1997; Miller & McFarland, 1987; Sallot, Cameron, & Weaver-Lariscy, 1998), which might be useful to duplicate in third-person effect research.

A final area that merits further attention in third-person effect research is cross-cultural examination of this hypothesis. While there has been third-person effect research conducted in foreign countries (for instance, Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1995; Gunther & Storey, 2003; Hu, 2000; Hu & Wu, 1996, 1997; Innes & Zeitz, 1988; Park, 1997; Peiser & Peter, 2000; Willnat, He, Takeshita, & Lopez-Escobar, 2002), cross cultural third-person effect research needs to compare the third-person effect in different cultures. Is there something unique about Americans and the third-person effect? Perloff (1999) also suggests the need for such cultural exploration, in that the third-person effect may operate differently in a western culture that emphasizes individuality and

uniqueness as compared to an Asian culture that emphasizes collectivism and interrelatedness of people to their social environment, and so far Cho and Han's (2004) work is a rare contribution to this discussion.

An important methodological area that needs further examination in future third-person effect research is the operationalization of the third-person effect. Most current third-person effect research is simply replicating the measures used in past third-person effect research and is not attempting to develop other possible measures.

In the case of examining the third-person effect with policy makers (and specifically political candidates), methodology is a key concern. Will politicians or campaign managers admit that they needed to respond to a negative advertisement attacking them because they fear the advertisement had an effect on the voters? If posed as a possible response option in some type of closed-ended measure, it is unlikely that people would "admit" to this guiding their decisions. More qualitative measures are needed to explore the third person effect. For instance, Lometti et al.'s (1994) study offered open-ended questions to why people wanted television content they saw as objectionable

taken off the air, and then coded responses for possible third-person responses, such as "people will imitate that behavior" or "people will think that behavior is acceptable." Another qualitative measure that might be useful specifically in the context of studying political campaigns is an observational study that places the researcher in the campaign offices. This way, rather than asking decision makers "Did you respond to that advertisement because you thought it influenced the voters?" researchers could observe the decision making process in a campaign, and identify instances in which media effects are mentioned, and used as a factor in decision making.

There are a number of anecdotal instances that demonstrate the third-person effect, and research on the third-person effect hypothesis consistently finds support for it. But is that truly how people think about the media, especially in situations when they consider whether they support censoring it? If we didn't ask people these questions, would they really think about how the media affect them, or how the media affect others, at all? As Perloff (1999) asks, "Do people even compare themselves to others when thinking about media effects?" (p. 371).

Editor's Afterword

Dr. Connors' paper on the third-person effect concentrates on studies of how that phenomenon affects our interpretations of mass media effects, but she also correctly notes that it is a factor in all human communication. All of us necessarily interpret our perceptions of the world from our own limited perspectives. When we try to understand how others view and react to the same experiences we must bring into play clues from many sources, inevitably seen through the prism of our own prejudices and self-interest. Judgments of that sort may be more or less correct, but they also can be problematic in the extreme.

There is little doubt among researchers that the third-person effect exists and is pervasive in our uses of the mass media. Connors cites studies that show varying degrees of both third-person effects and "reverse third-person effects," depending on such factors as the "positive" or "negative" evaluation of the messages, social distance between the individual and the particular "third-person" under consideration, the relative "subjective competence" of self and the third-person, and their relative levels of media exposure.

Of particular practical interest is work done on censorship and on how media exposure affects children. Another area that might be fruitfully explored is third-person effect in religious communication. Drawing together these themes and applying to them the findings of studies on social distance and perceived knowledge which Connors discusses in Section 3, above, an historical research project might be suggested concerning the growth, florescence, and decline of forms of theological and moral censorship in the Catholic Church from the 15th to the 21st century.

Medieval society in Europe was tightly controlled, more by kings and nobility than by the Church, but doctrinal orthodoxy was also considered necessary—although difficult to enforce at the local level. The clergy were not well educated, but usually were better educated than the laity in their parishes or dioceses, and their self-perception of greater knowledge must certainly have affected their attitudes towards the laity, pushing them to an oracular stance that often went beyond the requirements of their legitimate teaching role in the Church. That role certainly provid-

ed structural reinforcement for the third-person effect among them, sometimes pushing them toward exaggeration and distortion.

The advent of printing with moveable type, in the 15th century, made printed materials widely available to an increasingly literate population. Suspicion of the new technology by Church leaders and its vigorous use to spread the reformers' doctrines led to the first Index of Prohibited Books, finalized in 1564. By 1948 the Index comprised over 5,000 titles, including, as some critics have claimed, "most of French literature." By 1966 it had become merely of historical interest.

The urge to censor remains operative in the Church, as in other organizations governed by significant philosophical or religious principles that need protection. It is most manifest in regard to the film and television industries, driven by the strongly felt need of many adults to protect children from what the adults see as moral and/or psychological ill-effects. Although the influence of third-person effects in these efforts at censorship cannot be safely denied, they are not central to the motivation of the censors, who are trying to protect the public from dangers as they perceive them. Even well-motivated efforts to censor films and television have been frustrated by the difficulty of establishing criteria relevant for the vast range of types of media audiences; so they usually are reduced to advisories, arranged by categories ("general patronage," "adults," "X," etc.), and addressed to parents. In societies in which parents are able to exercise little effective control over their children's media use such efforts are practically moot.

Third-person effect is neither good nor bad in itself, but it is always present and can skew even the best-intentioned interpretations of the way others may or may not be reacting to media exposure. Therefore anyone who assumes any kind of "watchdog" role over others' media behavior would be well-advised first to strive to understand the factors that will influence their own interpretations of that behavior.

—W. E. Biernatzki, S.J.

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Book Reviews

Baldasty, Gerald J. E.W. *Scripps and the Business of Newspapers*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1999. Pp. xii, 217. ISBN 0-252-0255-6 (hb.) \$42.50; 0-252-06750-0 (pb.) \$16.95.

In my 14th year of teaching the history of American Mass Media at Creighton University, I have finally learned in detail about the founder of the first major American newspaper chain, E.W. Scripps. In retrospect, it seems odd that such a significant figure gets so little play in journalism history compared with more colorful peers such as Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. However as I read this interesting portrait of Scripps' journalistic, management and business practices, the reasons for his relative obscurity became clearer.

In some ways journalism is a lot like baseball. If you want to get noticed, head for the Big Apple. Scripps preferred not to be noticed. He kept a deliberately low profile (p. 3), created small newspapers of no journalistic note, and avoided the New York market that historians focus on. Instead he located most of his numerous papers in smaller communities in the Midwest and West where costs were lower (p. 5). It was part of a journalistic and managerial strategy that make Scripps a surprisingly interesting and somewhat paradoxical figure in media history.

In this book that was published in hard back in 1999, Baldasty examines the hallmarks of Scripps' journalism including his:

- cost cutting strategies
- avoidance of competition
- limitations on advertising

- advocacy of the working class and support for unions
- stress on news content for the common reader

The author also assesses Scripps' legacy and lasting influence on American newspapers. Scripps emerges as both hardheaded and supremely realistic, yet determined not to surrender to the influence of big business on editorial content. He was a strong supporter of reforms to benefit the working classes but his first rule was that his papers had to be profitable. He stated that:

There is no good in a newspaper pretending to have courage and honesty without it being backed up not only by cash surpluses but by daily profit. The fool martyr who destroys himself and his newspaper for the sake of only being honest, can do no good to the country and can do much harm by teaching his fellows that honesty is a poor business policy. (p. 149)

Scripps' was almost fanatical about cost control. No expenditure at any of his papers escaped him. For example, he challenged purchases of excessive numbers of lead pencils and brooms and even forbade buying toilet paper! A staff member argued that this was false economy because employees used old newspapers, clogging pipes and creating plumbing bills (p. 49). Scripps created his wire service, the Newspaper Enterprise Association, because he had calculated that non-local content cost less to produce than local copy (p. 54). Scripps paid lower salaries than his competitors but created stock plans that gave loyal employees a share of profits (p. 66). Consistent with Scripps' editorial advocacy of labor unions, all of his printing-related employees were unionized and his newspapers carried the union label (p. 118). Considering his other extreme cost-cutting measures, this example of practicing what you preach was somewhat surprising and impressive.

Scripps was a wily manager whose success was based on another cost-saving measure—avoiding head-to-head competition with stronger rivals. He started newspapers in markets that had room for circulation growth because of un-served working class readers (p. 74) and avoided street sales in favor of carrier delivery to draw less attention from other papers (p. 76). Most interestingly, his papers avoided trying to take advertisers from competitors, even assuring existing papers that this would not happen (p. 78). He wanted numerous ads from small businesses rather than big ads from a few major advertisers—the opposite of most newspapers. Scripps believed that competing with other papers drained capital, time and attention, thus undermining

his low cost strategy (p. 70). However he tried to drive out newspapers that also sought to serve his working class target market (p. 87).

As already noted, nothing strikes a modern journalist as more unusual than Scripps' determination to limit the influence of advertisers over his publications because he believed that advertising-dominated papers were the tool of the elites, not the masses (p. 100). He regarded large advertisers as “bullies” and believed that big business was corrupting the American press (p. 89). He refused ads from department stores to avoid their demands for lower rates than smaller advertisers and limited advertising to half of his newspaper content, preferably 40% (p. 93). He placed final control in the hands of editors rather than business managers-publishers (p. 95) and refused news coverage favors to advertisers (p. 96).

Avoiding large advertisers allowed Scripps' papers to operate under a “searchlight philosophy” that focused on the problems of the working classes with special emphasis on labor unions, working conditions, strikes, child labor, and the like (p. 105). The papers supported Progressive Era reform legislation (p. 106) and devoted a majority of their business coverage to business greed, corruption, monopolies, and trusts (p. 108). Labor unions often encouraged members to subscribe, giving Scripps the reader segment he was targeting (p. 118). News articles were to be short, bright, and lively (p. 121) and Scripps' papers featured cartoons, short stories, and graphics (p. 134).

So what impact did Scripps have long term on American journalism? Very little, when it comes to news, far more on newspaper structure and business practices, according to Baldasty. He notes the drawbacks stemming from the “relative poverty” of Scripps papers. “Competitor newspapers provided nearly three times as much local news as did Scripps newspapers, and his publications, as local news became increasingly important, were not well positioned to compete for readers' attention” (p. 152). The author says that Scripps' stress on low costs limited the quality of the papers. “The editor who met the mandatory 15% profit requirement each month was a success and little attention was paid to the news product unless it diverged greatly from the chain's general principles” (p. 153). Sadly for American journalism, this appears to be Scripps' greatest legacy. I found many parallels between Scripps' style of journalism and that of contemporary chains such as Gannett that also grew from a large base of small papers in smaller communities.

Today's newspaper chains also tend to stress cost control and profits at the expense of excellence in news coverage. This year when I teach my unit on the pernicious impact of growth of chains on local news coverage, I'll be able to provide enhanced historical perspective on the trend.

I would especially recommend this excellent, readable book to professors and students of media history because it fills a significant gap in our understanding of the evolution of the American newspaper. It is a useful antidote to the "only in New York school" of media history and a reminder that more Americans nationally at the turn of the century were more likely to get their news from a Scripps paper than *The New York Times*. Media history researchers should find the appendices and extensive bibliography useful as well. Baldasty's final analytical chapter on Scripps' legacy alone is worth the cost of the book. The cartoons and graphics show rather than tell readers about this important aspect of Scripps newspaper copy.

—Eileen Wirth
Creighton University

Davis, Helen. *Understanding Stuart Hall*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004. Pp. ix, 222. ISBN 0-7619-4715-9 (pb.) \$32.95.

This introduction to the work of British cultural studies founder Stuart Hall attempts to give the reader access to Hall's thought through a combination of biography and bibliography. Roughly chronological in orientation, each chapter presents one or more key events in Hall's life or career, then situates his thought in response to those events. Davis also discusses one or two important texts in which Hall had articulated his thinking.

Hall's experience as a Jamaican studying in London gave him an insight into class, color, and popular culture that he never abandoned. Early political action, contact with journals, and a concern for popular culture led to his connection with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, which in turn led to collaborative (and more institutionalized) responses.

Communication scholars will be particularly interested in Davis's third chapter, "The media in question," which addresses Hall's work on news, hegemony, broadcasting, and encoding/decoding. In addition, she introduces Hall's work with Althusser as a way of reading Marx. The theme of communication returns at several places in the book: Chapter 4, "Wrestling with the angels," traces the development of Hall's thinking, wrestling with Althusser and questions of ideology.

Within this perspective, Hall returns again to the functions of the mass media as they intersect with the functions of the state.

Later chapters follow Hall as he moves to the Open University and the editorial board of *Marxism Today* (for which Hall demanded and received an exemption of the requirement of Communist Party membership). The journal took on a more mainstream role in British politics as Hall developed the concept of Thatcherism to describe the Conservative Party successes in the 1970s and 1980s. Later the journal served as a site for debate for the new Labor Party movement under Tony Blair. Throughout, Hall moves between political activism and theory, attempting to explain these significant changes in terms of ideology, by applying Gramsci's notion of hegemony as well as Althusser's more psychoanalytic approach.

In addition to these things, Hall develops an understanding of "the politics of representation" (Chapter 5), examining the question of race in a Britain facing debates about policing, hooliganism, and unemployment. In the midst of this intellectual ferment, Hall experienced the rise of feminism and its impact on the Birmingham Centre.

Where students of communication will know Hall primarily in terms of his encoding/decoding theories of audience and his work with cultural studies, Davis shows more interest in the larger sweep of his thought, particularly in the ways in which he develops and applies Marxist categories to contemporary social reality. Hall deserves credit for introducing many of those concepts to communication study and so, even though this book treats communication briefly, it is a valuable resource to situate a major scholar's work.

There are end notes, a bibliography, and an index.
—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.
Santa Clara University

Doyle, Gillian. *Media Ownership. The Economics and Politics of Convergence and Concentration in the UK and European Media*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 2002. Pp. 192. ISBN 0-7619-6680-3 (hb.) £65.00; 0-7619-6681-1 (pb.) £19.99.

Gillian Doyle examines recent British regulatory initiatives in the area of mass media, specifically the 1996 Broadcasting Act and the 2000 White Paper on communication. Doyle's overarching concern is with pluralism, from the vantage point of democratic citizenship. In her view, the "UK case provides a revealing account of the pressures and difficulties faced by

national policy-makers in seeking to negotiate the conflicting public interest policy priorities surrounding media ownership” (p. 8).

The book begins by examining the concept of pluralism. In the area of mass media, pluralism is often taken as a synonym for diversity. It can be conceptualized as a function of the (economic) size of the market, diversity of suppliers, consolidation of resources, and diversity of output (p. 15). Regulatory measures aiming at ensuring pluralism thus usually seek to prevent “excessive” market concentration in order to prevent overrepresentation of certain political opinions or forms of cultural output and to exclusion of others. Part I of the book concludes with the discussion of industrial and economic policy aims, specifically: fostering of competition, efficiency, and the prevention of monopolistic organizations and practices.

In Part II, original data about recent British media expansions are presented and discussed. Chapter 4 deals with monomedia expansions, while Chapter 5 examines those across different media sectors. While media expansion within individual types does indeed lead to greater economic efficiencies, there is “little evidence that cross-ownership of broadcasting plus newspaper publishing is likely to yield significant efficiency gains or that it would contribute positively to economic welfare” (p. 82).

Part III presents the development of the current media and communications regulation in the UK. Doyle grimly states that

since a reliance on competition law has so obviously failed to prevent the accumulation of excessive concentrations of media power in the UK newspaper industry, it is difficult to feel confident that switching from upper ownership limits to a competition-based approach in broadcasting markets . . . will achieve any better results in the television or radio sectors. A regulatory approach to ownership based primarily on competition and on economic and commercial considerations is not designed . . . to protect pluralism and democracy. (p. 137)

The last part of the book is devoted to media ownership policy in Europe. Chapter 9 presents the patchwork of approaches aimed at promoting pluralism within individual European states, from the “mechanistic” capping of upper ownership limits to a public interest test approach. The overall trend appears to favor behavioral regulation which aims at reducing the possibility of abuses of a dominant position. Other

approaches include direct subsidies to economically weaker media, separation of ownership from control, and the commitment to maintaining a national public service broadcasters. These measures are needed because “a market-led media economy . . . cannot be expected to give rise naturally to the open and diverse system of media provision which is essential for the preservation of pluralism” (p. 153).

—Peter Lah, S.J.
Saint Louis University

Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon and Jonas Heide Smith. *Playing with Fire: How Do Computer Games Influence the Player?* Göteborg, Sweden: NORDICOM [Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research], 2005. Pp. 39. ISBN: 91-89471-27-X (pb.) £10.

This brief report summarizes research on children, youth, and computer games. Because of wide international concern about the topic, NORDICOM has made this report, originally written for the Danish Media Council for Children and Young People, available in English.

Rather than taking the perspective of the dangers of computer games, the authors divide their discussion into “research which poses the basic question, ‘What do people do to media?’” and “research which poses the basic question, ‘What do media do to people?’” The former approach focuses on the user and the ways in which gamers understand what they do as they play. The latter, more akin to the “media effects” tradition, reports on studies that address changes in the gamers.

For each section Egenfeldt-Nielsen and Smith provide an overview of the research tradition and methodologies, summarize the current state of knowledge, and then offer a critique of the perspective. For an American reader, the first section (on active users) proves very helpful, since many of the European studies summarized are not well known in the U.S. These include longitudinal studies, qualitative work with gamers, and survey research. Among other findings, Egenfeldt-Nielsen and Smith note that children negotiate meaning with the games and often take from them concepts opposed to what the games themselves teach.

The report on the active media or media effects studies includes a number of major examinations of aggression, self-esteem, anxiety, addiction, social relations, and gender and age differences. While there is more to report from these studies, the overall conclusion is depressingly familiar to communication

researchers: "Whereas some researchers think they have found clear signs of aggressive behavior caused by computer games, others have not been able to replicate their results and still others have been strongly critical of the methods used in the studies" (p. 33).

In their overall conclusion, the authors note that the two traditions they report disagree about the answer to the question, "Do computer games do the players any harm?" with the active user group reporting a negative answer and the active media group more likely to answer positively. Breaking down the question into subsets, the authors find some evidence in the active media group for violent games leading to violent behavior, some indications of addictive behavior in some users, and some evidence of added vulnerability among younger gamers. The general conclusion is worth quoting:

On this basis, it is not possible to say anything conclusive about the potentially adverse effects of violent games. The empirical evidence is too limited and the criticism of the extant research too serious. It is, however, part of the picture that the lack of clarity is not exclusively attributable to the lack of research results or to the dubiety of research results. To just as great an extent, the disagreement is due to academic disagreement about how to understand and quantify the effects of a given medium.

We can say that the question of the extent to which computer games in general have an adverse effect on all or on many gamers is too broad for a specific answer. (p. 34)

The report includes a full bibliography, but no index.

—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

Fraim, John. *Battle of Symbols: Global Dynamics of Advertising, Entertainment, and Media.* Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Daimon Verlag, 2003. Pp. xiv, 418. ISBN 3-85630-620-X (pb.) \$21.95.

In *Battle of Symbols*, John Fraim analyzes a number of archetypal symbols and their expression in contemporary cultures. The framework for his exploration is provided by the author's visit to Disneyland which ended on September 11, 2001, and by two parallel Christmas 2001 celebrations in New York: one held on the ruins of Ground Zero, the other held at the newly opened exclusive Prada shopping center a few blocks away.

In the first part of the book, Fraim introduces the idea of a cyclical nature of symbols. He suggests that symbols are products of a cyclical interplay between two dominant forces: unification and differentiation.

Applied to the 20th century America, he suggests that September 11, 2001 marked the end of the pluralism phase which also coincided with the end of post-modernism. At the beginning of the new millennium, the multiplicity of symbols, among whose expressions was the segmentation of the population for the purposes of marketing, is set to cluster again around a single, dominant symbol.

From a symbolic perspective, America can be viewed as the first nation to attempt reconciliation of the duality symbols of alignment and the differentiation under the common roof of one culture. Throughout American history, these two symbols have perpetually clashed in the constitutional ideals of equality (symbolized by the Democratic Party and mass culture) and freedom (symbolized by the Republican Party and a segmented culture). (pp. 82-83)

The second part explores the globalization of symbols, their dualities, clash, and commonalities. Traditional symbol dualities include: West and East, Masculine and Feminine, Future and Past, Place and Space, Above and Below. Contemporary dualities, on the other hand, are: Electricity and Fire, Spirituality and Religion, Physics and Biology, Pyramids and Networks, Production and Consumption, Old and Young Generations, and so on. At the end of Part Two, Fraim points to several alignments of symbols that can be observed today, ranging from hybrid symbols to technology and lifestyles, which pervade the entire globe and span diverse cultures.

Part Three is aptly headlined Battle of Symbols. After having described the forces of symbol production (Madison Avenue, Hollywood) and dissemination (media and communications), the author suggests that the U.S. faces the pressing challenge of understanding the symbols that are produced by its culture:

America had become the greatest creator, communicator, and manager of symbols. A final challenge was understanding its symbols. Understanding was essential in the global "battle of symbols." But understanding was the most difficult task of all . . . especially for a nation that had made symbols so powerful and ubiquitous to the world yet so invisible to herself. (pp. 332-333)

Understanding is lacking both with respect on one's own (U.S.) culture and with respect to other cultures. Unfortunately, the often bemoaned introvert (ethnocentric, provincial) character of the American cul-

ture finds little corrective in the production and dissemination strategies of contemporary media organizations. Since the end of the Cold War, major mass media organizations have consistently tied their purses for quality international coverage.

To a scholar or practitioner of communication, the latter part of *Battle of Symbols* has perhaps the most immediate use value. Its focus on symbols provides a welcome complement to a predominantly rationalistic approach to the study of media content, effects, and dissemination.

—Peter Lah, S.J.

Fuery, Patrick and Kelli Fuery. *Visual Cultures and Critical Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. v, 137. ISBN 0-340-80748-2 (pb.) \$27.50.

Visual Cultures and Critical Theory functions as something akin to a dicey *Cliff Notes* version of the radical French ideas that have held such sway in literary departments since the 1970s. The authors, Patrick and Kelli Fuery, cite the leading lights of post-structuralist thought: Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Derrida; and, arguably, several lesser lights, Julia Kristeva, and Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

The authors' premise is that spectator, image, and culture are separate entities that "shape each other in a system of reciprocity" (p. xiii). Or in what sounds like a loose transmogrification of Foucault's idea that power shapes the subject, the Fuerys maintain, "It is important to recognize that images do not simply exist—they must be made visible. This rendering visible of the image is part of the creation of a spectator" (p. xii). Thus artisans create images, which in part create both culture and spectators. The point is to stress process and avoid the pitfalls of treating dynamic and evolving relationships as static.

To serve their purpose of explicating what they term "the visual," the authors have cast about a highly circumscribed theoretical corpus for suitably malleable concepts. This leads to several difficulties. The concepts they borrow were not designed to unravel film and the like. (This, the authors acknowledge, presents a challenge.) But these expropriated ideas are handled with such deference as to suggest an eternal and self-evident validity. The authors fail to show these concepts as other than opaque literary devices, once fashionable in the more esoteric reaches of academia.

Among the concepts they hook, if not reel in, are the "rhizome," "*chora*," "the Symbolic," and "the

abject." One that seems to have gotten away is the "rhizome," Deleuze and Guattari's botanic metaphor. *The Random House Dictionary* (1981) defines rhizome as "a rootlike subterranean stem, commonly horizontal in position, which usually produces roots below and sends up shoots progressively from the upper surface." The authors apply the rhizome to city spaces. As the spectator walks through the seedy, and the ethnic city districts, the act of wandering produces the rhizome:

The pornography shops and the Chinese and Vietnamese restaurants they sit beside are defined as Other by the censoring city, but their connection to each other (through exclusion) and to the dominant city (through patronage and popularity) produces the heterogeneity of the modern city itself. By approaching this as a rhizome we observe Deleuze and Guattari's point regarding the de-centering process into "other dimensions and into other registers." The rhizome acknowledges the city as a visually heterogeneous space and breaks down the idea of a centre. (p. 114)

Not exactly. This confuses the metaphoric with the literal to no real purpose. In the physical sense, a city's center is geographic. And certainly an artist's—or some such—quarter may be situated within the geographic center and be termed "marginal." But to say a stroll through various districts "breaks down the idea of the centre" is dubious; as is terming pornography shops the "Other" of the dominant order: The filthily lucrative pornography industry is now very much mainstream.

Elsewhere the authors comment on the physical dimensions of a character in the movie *Casino*, "he is a short man whose stunted height represents his lack of cultural growth and adaptation" (p. 55). Is the reader to understand this as a clear-sighted fact rather than a glimpse of the authors' inner recesses?

Such examples raise concerns about the liberties the authors take in expounding cultural phenomena by shoe-horning these into concepts created for other purposes. Central to the explication of abstract concepts is a clear working definition, which is often tied to an imaginative demonstration of the concept's applicability. Examples must be found, and metaphors created. Several famous examples pertinent to the concerns of *Visual Cultures and Critical Theory* come to mind: Lacan's use of Poe's "The Purloined Letter" as an extended metaphor of psychoanalysis' concern with uncovering the hidden; and, to introduce *The Order of Things*—his inquiry into the conundrum of representing visual objects through language—Foucault made use of

Velazquez's masterpiece, *Las Meninas*. However, too often, the examples the Fuerys marshal are so incongruously fluffy they collapse under the weight of the ideas *Visual Cultures and Critical Theory* claims to elucidate. For example, to explain the French twist given to Freud, the authors summon *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*:

This sense of the abject in *Buffy* raises the issue of phobia and its connection to the abject in Kristeva's work. . . . What Buffy is frightened of is what she can't name. Buffy is afraid of the void of her mother, and the position she has been thrown into by her friends and Dawn (her sister). . . . Buffy condenses her cultural abjection and corporeal abjection into Spike as a signifier of both. . . . What makes Buffy abject is not that she desires Spike (as a clear expression of such feelings would actually signify that she can name her desire and therefore retain her identity, system, and order of vampire slayer intact), but that what she desires (her mother and a fulfillment of the void she feels from the separation from her) cannot be symbolized and is displaced onto Spike, who is a referent for the abjection she feels (pp. 47-48).

But Buffy exemplifies only so much. There is more ground to cover. Namely, in Kristeva's delineation of the abject "there is an acknowledgment of an inherent connection between" the abject and "what is central to the Symbolic order" (p. 50). To draw this connection, the authors use the comic strip protagonist, Calvin, of *Calvin and Hobbes*. The Fuerys see a great deal percolating beneath the surface in a four-panel strip of Calvin joyfully sloshing about in a mud puddle after overcoming his initial feeling of repugnance:

We can see that Calvin's response to the muck is both recognition of the muck's position in the Symbolic order, recognition of Calvin in response to the muck, and how, both combined, they should respond and function within a Western culturally defined context. . . . [Calvin] is repulsed but compelled to integrate himself with what he sees as abject in order to disturb and test the boundaries and limits of his subjectivity for himself and within the Symbolic. . . . it is clear to see how an image as simple as a comic strip conveys the social and cultural ideologies that position and frame interpretation via constructed abjection. (p. 50)

Perhaps it is fitting and just that Kristeva, a turgid writer of great ambition and the toast of the 1960's

Parisian intelligentsia, should be resurrected by a TV vampire and suffer her theories articulated by a mute line drawing. However, by harnessing some of the worst excesses of French literary theory to the puerile—*Rambo* and *Terminator 2* typify the citations—the authors unwittingly commit parody and smother their project in unintended mirth.

—Tony Osborne
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Gauntlett, David and Horsley, Ross (Eds.). *Web.Studies* (2d ed.), London: Arnold, 2004. Pp. xiii, 327. ISBN 0-340-81472-1 (pb.) \$19.95.

The editors of this anthology on the culture of the Internet—substantially revised from the first edition that appeared four years earlier—aimed to create a work that "treated Internet media like any other popular media that appeals to people (without, of course, forgetting about the things that made it unique)" (p. 3). Thus, the editors were confronted with the same interesting challenge faced by the writers of a number of books now jockeying for adoption in courses that introduce new media to undergraduates: defining a young field, its boundaries, and its central research themes. The distinguishing feature of this survey of the field is its emphasis on the *culture* of the Internet, and more specifically on online communication by various subcultures (rather than by major institutions or at the most frequented Web sites).

Part One is composed of three chapters that offer introductions to the history of Internet studies, Internet research methods, and major themes in the field (including new opportunities for self-expression, community-building, identity formation, commercial influence, and impacts on politics.) Part Two, which makes up half the book, examines online culture and the identities offered to users on the Internet. The section includes chapters on the Internet and self-presentation on personal homepages, the construction of masculinity, online fan communities, youthful feminism, filmmaking, online sex, digital art, lesbian pornography, self-help, and fascination with cultural and physical others. Part Three touches on Internet law and economics, with chapters on media conglomerates' marketing and distribution strategies on the web, ways of thinking about the digital divide, intellectual property, and music file sharing. Part Four examines the Internet's contributions to politics, including democratization, war reporting and propaganda, global organizing for women's rights, community development among Native Americans, and the politics

of virus writers. A concluding chapter considers the future of the Internet.

The strengths of this collection are its attention to the diverse subcultural outskirts of the Internet as well as its summaries of the field. The range of subcultures represented is broad, from fans to high artists to women's organizations worldwide and more. Yet the introductory chapters that organize the field may be more valuable over time. Laura J. Gurak's introductory chapter clearly relates the history and central themes of research on computer-mediated communication and the broader field of Internet studies over the past two decades. She sees researchers consistently drawn to four unique features of the medium: its speed, reach, anonymity, and interactivity. Nina Wakeford's chapter on the range of research strategies and methods that scholars have used to study the Internet is especially useful to students (or faculty) contemplating their own studies of online content.

At the same time, one hopes that further editions of *Web.Studies* will be improved upon in several ways. The essays in the present volume describe "a cross-section of interesting cultural and social things happening on the net" (3) but rarely attempt to connect with communication or cultural theory. Modeling the application and adaptation of theory to new media would be especially useful to students. In addition, in a volume devoted mainly to analyzing content and its production, there is room for more research on how Internet users interpret and act on what they find online. As Wakeford notes, this is an important and productive part of the field. Finally, there are some central issues and themes of new media research not included in the present edition that might be incorporated in the future, including online privacy and security, e-government, the Internet's impact on education, the transformation of journalism, debates over how to conceive of the cultural or knowledge industries and those who work in them, the influence of the Internet on the culture of physical spaces (digital cities, outsourcing, various "Silicon" places where Internet technology is produced), and so on.

Web.Studies, or chapters from it, would be most appropriate for undergraduates in introductory courses in new media or cyberculture. It contains lists of helpful web sites at the end of each chapter, a glossary of Internet-related terms (from accessibility to WYSIWYG), a bibliography, and an index.

—Chad Raphael
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Gumpert, Gary and Drucker, Susan J. (Eds.) *Take Me Out to the Ballgame: Communicating Baseball*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc. (2002), Pp. viii; 469. ISBN 1-57273-302-0 (pb.) \$32.50.

There really is no other sport like baseball. No other sport allows each team to determine the dimensions of its playing surface. In baseball, the defense controls the ball, and officials intervene after virtually every act. No other sport seems to integrate the one-on-one battles of its participants within the team game. Baseball has no time clock, almost no contact among players, and no penalties—you're either safe or you're out. And, no other sport seems to evoke the emotional, cultural, and intellectual response like baseball. What is it about this sport? Writers have given us ways to understand its minutia through countless statistics books and histories (Elias Baseball Analysts); the passion in literature (Malamud 1980; Kinsella 1982), or the desire to deconstruct its intellectual elements (Will, 1991; Lewis, 2003). As James Earl Ray's character Terrance Mann in *Field of Dreams* put it,

The one constant through all the years . . . has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It's been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt, and erased again. But baseball has marked the time.

Another constant in American culture is the obsession with studying baseball. Gumpert and Drucker's collection of baseball essays examines America's pastime (yes, it still is) as a communication phenomenon.

The collection is divided into four sections. "Communicating in Baseball" examines the communication that is produced by baseball. Essayists here address the interplay of linguistic, non-linguistic, and numeric baseball symbols. For example, Buttny and Jensen use conversation analysis to examine the hot stove league, i.e., talk that sustains baseball enthusiasts during the cold winter months (p. 71). Strate draws on the concept of baseball as medium to chain out metaphors of the game (e.g., machine, invention, commercial medium, etc.) (p. 37). Finn's article on baseball statistics preceded the now popular *Moneyball* with an interesting look at sabermetrics, or the new baseball knowledge derived from baseball statistics (p. 95). Statistics are used not only for performance appraisal but also as a language for communicating that performance.

"The Ballpark and Communication" explores the arena of the sport as having a unique effect on the communication that occurs within it. Drucker and Gumpert review the ballparks for their structure, location, and

era in which they were built as nonverbal symbols themselves (p. 201). Baseball stadiums also serve as a backdrop for interpersonal and rhetorical communication. Westmyer and Rodgers engage in rhetorical criticism of newspaper articles to probe the allure of Yankee Stadium and Wrigley field (p. 225).

“Communication About Baseball” examines the modes through which baseball is communicated. Two essays on baseball movies open this section. Most and Rudd identify community and heroism themes and sub-themes that under gird many baseball films (p. 241). They describe the community-building elements of various baseball movies. Their essay also provides a list of baseball movies, some with short plot synopses. Fishman examines 13 baseball movies from the 1990s, ranging from the imaginative *Angels in the Outfield* to the dark thriller *The Fan*. He notes that major themes in the films promote baseball as fun, spirited, and heroic (among other themes) (p. 273). Two other essays in this section address racial issues in baseball (including Lamb and Rusinack’s essay on the Communist paper *The Daily Worker* as tool for ending segregation in baseball, p. 299).

“What Baseball Communicates About Us” describes the ways that changing American values are revealed through communication about, and the enactment of, baseball. Essays here address women as baseball fans (Gibson, p. 357; Ross p. 377), the older fan (Krizek, p. 401), and Jewish baseball stars (Ribalow, p. 429). Friedenbergr offers an historical and metaphorical account of the annual Congressional baseball, one that is surely going to endure as a game of “hardball” (p. 335).

Baseball has an accessibility that makes us keep writing about it. The proliferation of baseball writing in the latter half of the 20th century has contributed in part to the mythology of America’s pastime. As a graduate student, I visited with a young professor about finding my passion in my scholarship. I was considering research into communication and sports. He counseled me not to confuse my passion with something on which I’d like to work hard. One’s passion can be co-opted by the research. That is, if we study baseball too closely, we may lose sight of its beauty and its ability simply to take us to another time and place. Still, this book provides meaningful scholarship and great fun. Gumpert and Drucker’s collection would be a compatible partner in communication and culture classes as well as courses in American Studies, Sociology and other disciplines. This book has separate author and subject indexes.

—Pete Bicak
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Harbord, Janet. *Film Cultures*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 2002. pp. x, 182. ISBN 0- 7619-6520-3 (hb.) \$115.00; 0-7619-6521-1 (pb.) \$37.95.

Pressed to define film, most of us would offer something more than “a series of sequential images on a strip of celluloid.” Intuitively we know that film encompasses more. How much more, we would disagree. Clearly this definition of film as an object does not do justice to the time in a theater or with a video. Harbord, a lecturer in Film Studies at Goldsmiths College, University of London, takes an even wider view, arguing that we simultaneously experience film as a series of cultures, as a multitude of connections to the world.

Within discussions of culture (whether modern, postmodern, aesthetic, European, American, etc.), “film has served as an emblem of the ‘new,’ of mechanical reproduction at the beginning of the 20th century to a culture of immediacy and spectacle at the beginning of the 21st” (p. 1). How has film come to represent so much? In a method she follows throughout the book, Harbord begins her case with a commentary on one or more well-known works, expanding on them to make her points about the web of meanings in which film both embeds its viewer and in which it is itself embedded. In Chapter 1 (“Breaking with the aura? Film as object or experience”) she begins with the attacks on Kantian aesthetics by Bourdieu (1992) and de Certeau (1984). By expanding the role of art and the relationship between the aesthetic, the state, and the individual, these open up a place for film that accounts for its history as both spectacle and narrative, as ordinary and as radically decentering subjectivity. But this aesthetic discourse is only one of many film cultures.

Films also represent institutions, both of production (from huge studios to independent directors to home movies) and of exhibition (multiplex cinemas, arthouse cinema, art gallery). This institutional network defines other cultures, which Harbord elaborates with a commentary on Greenberg’s essay, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” (1940). The sites of film viewing and the sites of film creation point to a series of dialectics operating in contemporary society: art and com-

modity, culture and tourism, experience and seeing, subjectivity and identification. In this culture, film has “relational value,” but also “spatial effects,” since it connects its viewers both to a particular site of viewing and to the place in the film.

Harbord then turns to film festivals as representative of yet another film culture: this one of market-places and organizations. Here we encounter various discourses of film that mark out cultural boundaries through a series of oppositions:

that “art” film is in conflict with commercial forces, that European film struggles against American dominance, that “serious” film festivals are opposed to the cosmeticized industries of tourism and a service economy. The repetition of assumptions gives rise to a certain naturalization of oppositions; such oppositions are productive of types of authenticity, purity, marking off domains from areas of objects by definition impure, inauthentic, and outside. These oppositional markets demarcate not only art and commerce, and in so doing, invoke narratives of the nation in its struggle to reinstate a territorial space within the deterritorializing effects of multinational capitalism. (p. 61)

The average viewer may never directly encounter this film culture, but absolutely depends on it for the marketing and selling of films.

In Chapter 4, Harbord returns to the discourses of film marketing, but this time from the perspective of audiences, using the concept of genre as her anchor. Genre constitutes a shorthand for forms of knowledge about audiences, connecting movie practice to marketing research. This film culture goes much deeper, though. Here we meet discussions of “cultural theory that become polarized in the claims for commodity culture as either pluralized or homogenized, and of audiences as fragmented or socially demarcated” (p. 88). Ideas of experience, identity, sponsorship all meet in the audience, which, as so much else in film cultures, is simultaneously a living group and a construct.

Chapter 5’s discussion of the culture of film production in its national and global aspects betrays the book’s British origins, as the case studies of the geographic realities of the film industry balance Hollywood, the various intergovernmental agreements on tariffs and trade, and the British film industry. The historical perspective, though dated in such a rapidly changing industry, serves to illuminate yet another culture introduced by film.

The final two chapters of the book return to aesthetics: first the ways in which viewers encounter the aesthetics of film, as described by postmodern debates, and second, the aesthetics of digital film. While each introduces a particular culture for film, the latter case raises important issues about just what digital imaging accomplishes. Is it a return to the culture of film making of avant-garde artists, or is it a shift from narrative forms to spectacular ones? Harbord provides a compelling analysis rooted in the comparison of *The Matrix* and *Run, Lola, Run*—two examples of the opposite directions of digital film making, what she calls hypertextual film and intertextual film.

Film Cultures is thought-provoking and challenging. By opening film theory up to the many simultaneous networks of relation (that is, the cultures) of film, it asks both viewer and student to take film more seriously. It also asks us to accept that film and culture alike are more complex than they first appear.

The book features both an index and a bibliography.
—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

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Hartley, John. *A Short History of Cultural Studies*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 2003. Pp. ix, 189. ISBN 0-7619-5027-3 (hb.) \$69.95; 0-7619-5028-1 (pb.) \$24.95.

John Hartley attempts and accomplishes a seemingly impossible task—to provide “a short history” of cultural studies. A new and ambitious area of academic investigation, cultural studies has roots in many different disciplines and approaches; at the same time, it has found fertile soil and congenial workers in the larger field of communication studies. That noted, things get more difficult:

[T]here is little agreement about what counts as cultural studies, either as a critical practice or as an institutional apparatus. On the contrary, the field is riven by fundamental disagreements about what cultural studies is for, in whose interests it is done, what theories, methods, and objects of study are proper to it, and where to set its limits. (p. 1)

In many ways Hartley's book serves as an extended definition as well as a history.

As an academic enterprise, cultural studies emerges from many areas, bound by a common interest in contemporary culture and a willingness to analyze itself as part of that culture. The critical (and self-critical) stance is an essential component. Hartley again:

Nevertheless, some continuities and patterns did emerge. Cultural studies was of necessity an interdisciplinary field of inquiry. It drew widely from the humanities and social sciences, from anthropology, textual theory, social and political theory and media studies, with some contributions from history, geography, the visual and performative arts. . . .

Cultural studies was committed to self-reflexivity in its mode of intellectual production, denying innocence or transparency to its own practices. It specialized in margins and boundaries, both discursive and social, and that included its own intellectual and academic status, methods, and corpus. Self-reflexivity extended to a perennial reluctance to accept disciplinary authority of any kind. No orthodoxy was allowed uncontested. (p. 8)

Hartley describes cultural studies as a "philosophy of plenty," focusing interests in the study of "the expansion of difference"; assembling "intellectual concerns about power, meaning, identity, and subjectivity"; promoting "marginal, unworthy, or despised regions, identities, practices, and media"; fostering a "critical enterprise devoted to displacing, decentering, demystifying, and deconstructing the common sense of dominant discourses"; and committing itself to intellectual politics" (p. 10).

With this general background, Hartley presents six chapters or slices of cultural studies. Each more or less stands alone but together the chapters orient the reader to the lands explored by cultural studies. His method combines some historical comment (What texts got this started? Who were the people? What issues energized or exasperated?) with a reading of key texts—in other words, Hartley follows a cultural studies approach in his introduction to cultural studies. Chapter 1 covers literary criticism and introduces the reader not only to key texts, but also to the politics of the founders of this kind of criticism (Virginia Woolf, George Bernard Shaw) and to the publishers (notably Allen Lane of Penguin Books) who made the larger enterprise possible.

Chapter 2 explores cultural studies, mass society, and popular culture. Here, too, a political agenda (the

educational reform acts in Britain and other countries) set the stage. But not only were there "the masses" and the politics of reading (S. L. Bethel, Terence Hawkes); there was also television and the struggle to "read" it (Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Meaghan Morris). The relation of cultural studies to art history forms the basis for Chapter 3. Here we meet familiar figures like John Berger and debates like that of realism versus constructivism. The themes of democratization and capitalism find expression in the art world, as does the harnessing of art for political ends. All of this begins to prepare the reader for Chapter 4 and the introduction of cultural studies' relationship to political economy. Culture itself, Hartley reminds us, is a site of struggle (p. 91) and the Marxist critique of false consciousness plays a key role in the self-critical study of culture. Workers and citizens and texts and policies all appear here, when we meet Stuart Hall (again) and Michel Foucault and the hope of consciousness raising in the work of Richard Hoggart. By this time the Americans are interested: though there is little government policy towards culture, there is a lot of capitalist interest.

Chapter 5 traces the wider and more critical strands of cultural studies: feminism, anthropology, and sociology. Influenced by the study of everyday life by sociologists (Thorstein Veblen, Georg Simmel, Henri Lefebvre, Pierre Bourdieu) and anthropologists (Claude Lévi-Strauss, Marshall Sahlins, Mary Douglas), cultural studies begins examining how *we* (not *they*) live. It also begins to attend to women's lives and women's concerns. Finally, in Chapter 6, Hartley turns the lens on teaching, since cultural studies is an academic phenomenon. Here we find academic politics, but also the unbridled capitalism of the academic book publishing industry, which recognizes and recognized a rich market when it sees one.

Hartley's book is refreshing, breathtaking, and quite a lot of fun. Given its relatively small (175 pages of exposition) size, the book can't do everything, but it does introduce the reader to this rich area of contemporary academic life. And there are occasional missteps. In his section on the critique of false consciousness, Hartley, in an attempt to show its long history, cites Thomas Paine's criticism of the doctrine of Christian redemption. Here, both Paine (perhaps understandably) and Hartley manifest a surprisingly naive reading of theology. Given his description of cultural studies' striving for reflexivity, a more self-critical critique would have been expected. But no one, no matter how accomplished, can master everything.

The book has a good reference list of key texts and an index.

—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

Hills, Jill. *The Struggle for Control of Global Communication: The Formative Century.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2002. Pp. 327. ISBN 0-252-02757 (hb.) \$39.95.

This book is a history of the approximately 100 years between about 1840 and 1940 when the world was being remolded into a global communication system. Jill Hills is concerned about how nation states promoted and regulated the new technologies of the past into serving their own political and economic interests, and she concentrates her attention quite rightly on Britain and the United States as these emerged as the powers of the 19th and 20th centuries that helped create and continue to control this global system. The author provides a good summary to help the reader grasp the conclusion of the book:

In a worldwide liberalized communication environment, separating the interests of individualized countries from those of their companies becomes difficult—free trade can become the ideological vehicle for hiding protectionism, mercantilism, and neocolonialism. . . . Above all, the research reported here teaches us that national regulation is the bulwark of sovereignty. (p. 292)

How she arrives at this conclusion is a detailed account of how the European powers and the United States developed and regulated the telegraph, marine cables, wireless (radio), film, and international news agencies over the century that helped create the global system that we now operate under.

The book is divided between the U.S. and the UK in chapters that detail developments in periods of about 40 years each. Chapter 1 deals with the period from 1840-1890 and sketches in brief detail the development of the telegraph in both countries. More important for this book, however, was the laying of the marine cables for the telegraph, and the impact on its empire for Britain as it emerged as the dominant force in this vital connecting technology. Not only did one British monopoly company, the Eastern, benefit from this arrangement financially, but London became the center of almost all international communication during the entire century under study. Other important developments during this period were the growth of the three large news agencies of Britain, France, and Germany that took advantage of the rapid communications links,

as well as the emergence of an international regulatory body, the International Telegraph Union (forerunner to our current ITU) in the 1860's. One important political effect of marine cables for Britain was to consolidate colonial power in London rather than in the colonies. London also consolidated itself as the financial center of the world economy. Some briefer attention is paid to the U.S. where Western Union emerged as the monopoly on its side of the Atlantic.

Chapter 2 carries on the analysis of cable development within the British Empire from 1890 to 1914 and, how, for the government, political and security considerations were more important than commercial ones whereas the U.S. helped its private commercial interests. In a number of instances, the author traces how marine cables played critical roles in a number of conflicts of the period. As Hills observes concerning the regulatory behavior of the ITU of the period from 1865-1914, it "was still an organization devoted to cartelization, not competition, and was especially concerned with government interests, not those of private companies" (p. 91).

Chapter 3 provides some fascinating detail on the development of radio, called "wireless" because it was seen for many years as the extension of the telegraph. The Marconi companies of both the U.S. and UK played vital roles in the development of radio, first as a means of contacting ships from shore and later as an independent medium for short and long point-to-point communication. In Chapter 4 Hills more succinctly summarizes the activities of the U.S. government in regulating (or not) domestic and later international communication activity. Western Union continued to dominate most domestic and some international telegraph-cable traffic, but AT&T also began to exert its power both domestically and internationally. As a consequence of the growth of these companies and the increasing economic power of the U.S., by 1914 the U.S. had wrested control from Britain for transatlantic cable traffic. Chapter 5 gives an account of how, over the period of the early to mid-19th century until the 1920s, British capital and later technology dominated Latin American countries, despite the Monroe doctrine. After World War I, however, U.S. interests took control of markets for telegraphic communication as well as for the emerging radio and film industries. It is clear from the author's analysis that Latin America remained a largely passive partner to both outside powers.

Chapters 6 and 7 tell the stories of the two countries, the U.S. and Britain, between the wars, 1919-1940. It is a story of both American ascendancy and British holding on to its empire through the develop-

ment of newer technologies for international communication, still primarily through marine cables. It was also during this period that the U.S. and the UK began to regulate the growing medium of radio with very different consequences, a commercial system in the one case and a government controlled, public system in the other. The final substantive chapter deals with the consequences of these two broadcast systems for the two countries as well as for those under their influence (Latin America for the U.S. and colonies for the UK).

A brief summary chapter at the end of the book gives the reader a chance to digest some of the larger ideas that on first reading may have been obscured by some of the abundant historical detail. One conclusion the author emphasizes is the important relation between domestic and international policy and regulation and, of course, the historical ties between government and private communication industries. She is able to draw some compelling lessons from the critical hundred year build-up of the global communication system from 1840 to 1940 and apply them to our current global system. Of note to serious readers is a detailed set of footnotes, an ample but not overwhelming set of references, and an excellent index. It is an example of history that sets the context for our better understanding our current interconnected world.

—Emile G. McAnany
Santa Clara University

Juluri, Vamsee. *Becoming a Global Audience: Longing and Belonging in Indian Music Television.* New York: Peter Lang, 2003. Pp. vii, 155. ISBN 0-8204-5579-2 (pb.) \$24.95.

How can we understand globalization in the lives of consumers? How can we see how local audiences shape international media forms? Do local elites experience the new communication forms in the same way as, say, working class members? These questions and more form the foundation of Vamsee Juluri's study of music television as it led the wave of international television's entrance into the Indian market.

Though the book reports the results of in-depth focus groups and group interviews, its value lies much more in Juluri's accounts of the historical, cultural, and media contexts for Indian music television. But then, the interviews more or less provide an excuse for the more extended comments. Juluri is wise enough to address the issues raised by the qualitative research methods he follows. He interviews 42 people (in nine groups), most of them college-aged and almost all of

them with access to satellite television in 1990's India—hardly a representative sample of the Indian population, but a sample that raises key questions about audiences and their construction of meaning.

The introductory chapter specifically examines the problem of audience studies. The global audience must fit within that tradition of communication studies which has defined and re-defined the audience and its activities. Juluri takes the reader on a quick tour of “ideological audiences,” “resistive audiences,” and—most aptly—“elusive audiences.” All of this, he reminds the reader, takes place under the shadow of postcolonialism and must, therefore, find some clarity in postcolonial studies.

Chapter 1 provides the commercial context for music television in India. Recorded music performances or dramatizations like those found in MTV have perhaps a much longer history in India, when one considers the Bollywood style of film making and the incorporation of musical sequences in the films. Indian MTV is, in some ways, just the music segments of the Indian films. What's new is the connection of this to the music industry, the creation of a youth audience, and the internationalization of the whole thing—something that arose first from the outside as television networks like MTV or Star TV made the attempt to enter the Indian market.

Chapter 2 lets the reader see music television through the eyes of its (Indian) audiences. Much of this viewing happens in the family context with parents watching alongside their children. Music television has its own structure: a VJ certainly, but also music countdowns and person-in-the-street segments. Chapter 3 explores those more. Countdowns were a new phenomenon in the Indian context and audience members had to work out just what they meant, particularly as different networks ranked music television segments differently. To distinguish themselves the programs also made use of local interviews or local color—leading to a reinvented orientalism.

Chapter 4 specifically raises the question of globalization. Through a discussion of *Made in India* (a popular music video), the informants explore what it is to be Indian and seem to begin to regard themselves as a local segment of a global audience. They also begin to see India from the outside and pay attention to “Indian” costumes, dress fashions, dance styles, and “look.” Chapter 5 examines the implications of this experience, the becoming of a global audience.

The book is probably too specialized for a general communication class, but should be quite helpful for

readers interested in global media issues, music television, or communication in India. It has a bibliography and an index.

—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

McFall, Liz. *Advertising: A Cultural Economy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 2004. Pp. vii, 208. ISBN 0-7619-4255-6 (pb.). \$18.99.

The recent convergence of discrete and independently-owned media enterprises—such as book publishing, radio stations, television networks and film studios—has given five corporate behemoths nearly total ownership of the American mass media. One pronounced result of media conglomeration has been the increasing transformation of advertising into programming content. In an endless loop, talk shows popularize a book, which is turned into a movie, whose stars are plugged on television, and so on and so forth.

While media convergence is a late 20th century phenomenon, the tactic of masking advertising as news is centuries old. One of the more enjoyable sections of Liz McFall's *Advertising: A Cultural Economy* contains a passage by Thomas Macaulay condemning this "shameful" practice in 1830. As McFall notes,

Macaulay's irritation was not just with the vulgarity of puffing [advertising]; at least as important was the convoluted network of interests which linked authors, book publishers and periodical publishers and enabled their "despicable ingenuity." . . . These connections between advertising, the press, and the book trade led to the construction of an elaborate promotional machine where the notoriety of authors could be carefully constructed and managed in what would appear to be an independent editorial. (p. 133)

And here is Macaulay laying bare the ruse:

The publisher is often the publisher of some periodical work. In this periodical the first flourish of trumpets is sounded. The peal is then echoed and re-echoed by all the other periodical works over which the publisher or the author, or the author's coterie has any influence. The newspapers are for a fortnight filled with puffs of all the various kinds which Sheridan recounted—direct, oblique, and collusive. (p. 133)

Advertising is a polemic directed at a loose aggregation of fairly well-known mid- to late-20th century writings informed most notably by critical cultural lines of inquiry. McFall argues that critical theorists have yet to grasp advertising in its entirety owing to a superficial

approach: the critical literature on advertising evidences an overriding treatment of advertisements as texts, but ignores the actual practice of advertising, i.e., how real businesses function in real economies.

Anchoring the textual criticism approach is the belief that "advertisements mirror dominant values, attitudes, and habits and are thus prime source material for divining the 'spirit' or 'pattern' of the age" (p. 2). Furthermore, textual criticism holds that ads simply can't be "read" at face-value, because analogous to the psychoanalytical probing of dreams and the unconscious, things aren't what they seem. As a societal mirror, ads refract a distorted image; therefore, words and images must be decoded, which places an inordinate emphasis on interpretive methodologies. As McFall puts it:

Critical fascination with advertisements as source material is motivated primarily not by what they reveal about advertising, but by what they reveal about societies, cultures, and economies. The academy, however, has tended towards the view that these insights are not simply offered up by advertisements, but are to be gained only from specific, technical methods of analysis. (p. 2)

Advertising is comprised of two parts. The first four chapters examine the key critical writings on advertising and their methodological deficiencies. In the following two chapters, nearly half the book, McFall attempts to ground her case in primary source material, such as reproductions of 19th and early 20th century British and American ads, and memos and letters from the men and women who shaped modern advertising.

Worth noting are the questions McFall raises about the range and validity of semiotic analysis: "Is it really adequate to found a critique that reaches far into the nature and organisation of contemporary societies upon textual deconstruction of the meanings of advertisements?" (p. 3). As others have noted, semiotic analysis is a highly subjective and impressionistic affair, which compromises the generalizability of such findings. A good case in point is Roland Barthes' analysis of a *Panzani* foods ad "depicting a string bag spilling out its contents of *Panzani* pastas, parmesan cheese, tomato sauce, and fresh vegetables" (p. 16). In this "text," Barthes decodes a multitude of messages and signs. There are three types of messages, a "linguistic message," "a non-coded iconic message," and "a coded iconic message," into which Barthes reads a series of four discontinuous signs. There are yet more signs,

those generated by the ad's context within a magazine's pages, which cause Barthes to reach "the obscure conclusion that this information eludes signification, as the advertising nature of the image is purely functional. The external system of which advertising is a part is thereby ruled outside the construction of meaning" (p. 16).

And therein lays the deficiency of semiotics for McFall. The "external system," the business of advertising, the actual economic exchange—precisely that which should be central to inquiry—lies outside the purview of semiotics. Thus does semiotics "reify" advertising. In other words, the market conditions, the business decisions, the graphic designers, and the copy editors—all the factors and actors that bring ads into being—are not included in the analysis. Advertisements, posits semiotics, are conceived immaculately.

This neglect of "production-side analyses of the institutions and practices of advertising" McFall detects a "broader disdain" of the market as a "proper" object of analysis (p. 3), as though anything involving money were dirty and best avoided. However, those several instances where McFall gets her hands dirty rummaging company files provide *Advertising* its most interesting material. Using primary data, she argues that plummeting sales and personnel changes at the James Walter Thomson ad agency led to innovations in advertising copy.

The JWT Woodbury facial soap campaign (1910 to 1927) was one of the first to apply insights from the emerging field of psychology. Because soap sales were down, Woodbury cut its advertising expenditures from \$253,000 to \$25,000. In response,

JWT responded by adroitly shifting Woodbury's traditional appeal as a remedy for unsightly skin. The new strategy, which McFall found outlined in the company's account files, "was to be embodied in an emotional appeal which graphically depicted the ultimate benefit resulting from the use of Woodbury's, an appeal selling masculine admiration and feminine envy as much as the product, and epitomized in the now world famous slogan 'a skin you love to touch.'" (p. 182).

Advertising is a modest work. It would be unfair to ask the book to carry more than it was intended to bear; that is, the delineation of an internecine argument about methodology and its attempted adjudication through a smattering of ad agency memorabilia. This is dressed up as a "genealogical analysis," *a la* Michel Foucault. The idea is to bomb present-day "ethocentric" perspectives with such varied and copious historical detail as to create "an escape from the limitations imposed by the con-

ceptual categories we labour under" (p. 103). These assumptions give *Advertising* a cloistered feel. For all the clamoring for history and heterogeneity, McFall proceeds as though no histories of advertising exist because none exist in her ideological enclave.

—Tony Osborne

Parker, Richard A. (Ed.). *Free Speech on Trial Communication Perspectives on Landmark Supreme Court Decisions*. Tuscaloosa, AL and London: University of Alabama Press, 2003. Pp. viii, 344. ISBN 0-8173-1301-X (hb.) \$60.00; 0-8173-5025-X (pb.) \$29.95.

George Mason (father of the Bill of Rights) and James Madison (father of the Constitution) were sitting in heaven analyzing the copies of *Free Speech on Trial* that a recent arrival had sneaked through the Pearly Gates.

"James, old friend, I find this book astonishing," said Mason. "Remember when we drafted the First Amendment? It was so simple. We forbade Congress to impose any restrictions on what people could say. We were concerned about letting people freely criticize their leaders at town meetings or agitating the masses on the town commons. Our descendants certainly consider lots more things 'speech' than we ever thought of. Yet they keep trying to determine our intentions."

"What an interesting observation, George. I felt the same way. I was fascinated to learn that your simple dictum to "make no law" restricting speech freedom now means permission to burn the flag or publish obscene satires on the Internet because they are forms of protected speech. Your amendment certainly has evolved!"

"Indeed it has," said Mason. "This book is clearly written, but I'm scratching my halo trying to figure out why the justices have one set of rules for permissible speech on cable TV and another for the Internet—whatever they are. I must find Franklin to see if he can explain these technologies to me and why the justices would treat them so differently."

"When you find out, please let me know. Meanwhile, I want to reread the chapter about *Hustler* magazine's satire on the Rev. Jerry Falwell. What interesting dilemmas today's Americans create for themselves! I'll have to do that quickly because I promised to loan this book to Jefferson before his next meeting with Adams. They're still debating the blasted Sedition Act and restrictions on speech during wartime. Thomas thought that some of the decisions I told him about in this book would come in handy!"

So the two went their separate eternal ways, both shaking their heads about hair-splitting distinctions that can restrict or expand free speech in a country that professes to make no laws on free speech but has never allowed unrestricted liberty of speech.

* * *

Apologies, dear readers, for this tongue-in-cheek introduction to a review of a heavily footnoted scholarly book of readings analyzing major Supreme Court decisions that document the evolution of free speech in the U.S. I hope my little scenario gives some indication that this book is not merely informative. It's fascinating reading for anyone interested in the arguments over the Patriot Act, (not covered in the book but certainly kept in mind in reading about historically similar cases) whether to restrict obscenity on the Internet, censorship of high school newspapers, truth in TV advertising, and a host of other topics.

Free Speech on Trial consists of essays by 20 authors. In addition to describing the historical context of landmark Supreme Court cases, the authors analyze whether the decisions are based on communication research and theory as well as constitutional and legal principles. For example, authors note that several decisions are based on unsupported presumptions about the impact of communication on audiences. Essays are chronologically ordered rather than arranged thematically so that readers gain a sense of how the definition of free speech has expanded over time due to technological and political circumstances.

Because this was a book of essays, I began reading it in grad student survival mode: read the introduction and the conclusion first. Thoroughly critique enough essays to appear erudite and skim the rest. I abandoned this strategy while reading the first chapter by Stephen A. Smith on two 1919 cases, *Schenck v. United States* and *Abrams v. United States*. It clearly explained what types of restrictions on free speech the Court allowed the government to impose during wartime and how the justices reasoned their way through those. Aha! So here's where Justice Holmes unveiled his famous ban on shouting fire in a crowded theater. Here was another time of paranoia about foreigners subverting America and earlier justices wrestling with the same root questions about how far to extend liberty to dissenters that we face today. I was hooked.

I started compulsively scribbling notes in almost every chapter, thinking of ways to integrate the legal material into my media history course. Why hadn't I discussed *New York Times vs. Sullivan* as part of the

Civil Rights unit? I'll rectify that next semester. After all if Alabama had succeeded in using a seditious libel law to bankrupt the *New York Times* in this 1964 Civil Rights-related suit, the media might have curtailed critically important coverage. Fortunately there was time left in the semester to discuss the draft card burning (*United States v. O'Brien*) and flag burning (*Texas v. Johnson*) cases. Next semester I will certainly add the 1919 cases to my discussion of World War I free speech restrictions. Too bad it was too late for this term.

While I found the overview of the development of free speech doctrine that emerged from the sum of the cases fascinating, this is also a handy reference work on single topics such as obscenity or the different rules protecting speech in different forms of media. Each chapter includes an extensive bibliography and internal source notes. These make it an excellent starting point for additional research on almost any free speech/communication topic. The book also could be a supplemental reader for a course in media law or upper level communication research and policy classes.

When I finished this book, I found myself oddly moved—an unusual reaction to a book of scholarly analysis. In case after case, I saw justices struggling to determine just what speech is and how to protect it even when their personal distaste for *Hustler* editor Larry Flynt or flag burners is obvious. Thanks to this excellent book, I understand the legal and communication issues far better and can share this understanding with my students. Parker must be an outstanding editor because all 20 authors keep jargon to a minimum while integrating complex legal and communication research and theory issues. I recommend this work highly.

—Eileen Wirth

Pinsky, Mark I. *The Gospel According to Disney: Faith, Trust, and Pixie Dust.* Louisville and London: John Knox Westminster Press, 2004. Pp. 267. ISBN 0-6642-2591-8 (pb.) \$14.95.

Hehir, J. Bryan, Michael Walzer, Louise Richardson, Shibley Telhami, Charles Krauthammer, and James Lindsay. *Liberty and Power: A Dialogue on Religion & U.S. Foreign Policy in an Unjust World.* Washington DC: Brookings, 2004. Pp. 119. ISBN 0-8157-3545-6 (pb.) \$16.95.

Faith, morals, governmental power, the media—all play a part in sketching the role of religion in public culture. Yet, in the United States, these tend to coexist rather than interact. Two recent books shed light on

the public face of media and religion, coming at the topic from the different directions: from the side of the communication industry encountering religion and from the side of religion seeking a public voice.

Mark Pinsky, the religion reporter for *The Orlando Sentinel* and author of the best-selling *Gospel According to the Simpsons*, is an active Reform synagogue member who for nine years has worked among evangelical Sunbelt Christians. In Orlando, Disney is the largest company with 50,000 employed, and the Southern Baptist Convention is the leading denomination. The Baptist boycott of Disney in the 1990s, contributed as much toward the “branding” of Southern Baptist Conservatives, Pinsky argues through the ample evidence contained in this book, as it did to brand the corporation as “anti-family values” by the evangelical right. Pinsky’s assignment to the boycott story led him to a deeper examination of the role religion played in the Culture Wars in which Disney’s animated productions and theme parks have been central to the construction of “syncretism” that blended denominational differences, and to the normalization of homosexuality through advocacy by the entertainment industry.

It also led him to write this valuable book about American film history that serves three purposes: as a handbook, a biographical exposition of the role of religion in a Hollywood corporation with global impact on values, and a case study in the construction of social values that fed America’s current culture wars. In a readable, well researched and balanced investigation, based on information in the Disney archives, drawing on personal interviews, analysis of primary resources, and academic research from scholars in the American Academy of Religion, Pinsky explicates the religious themes in 16 films during the Walt and Roy Disney years (1937-1984) and 14 films during the Eisner years (1984-2004); and, in the three concluding chapters, makes the most important political arguments of the book.

Pinsky argues that the Disney brothers’ early childhood experiences of religion in a strict Congregationalist tradition led them to careers producing animated fairy tales with embedded messages of childhood innocence and happiness. Pinsky attributes the social consequence historically. He regards the 16 Disney productions that are American classic tales as parables: for example, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) is about sin and salvation; *Pinocchio* (1940), about proving yourself; *Dumbo* (1940), about mother love; and *Peter Pan* (1953), about faith, trust, and pixie dust. In each chapter he provides a detailed

plot analysis and explication of each film within the framework of religious prototypes and messages about character formation. All the early Disney animated features and shorts communicate transcendence, hope, and the power of belief.

The Christian ethos in the early studio under the Disney brothers changed under the Jewish leadership of Michael Eisner and Jeffery Katzenberg when the company’s values began to “drift,” according to critics, as they produced animated films containing ethnic images that offended non-Christians and fueled the arguments against Disney led by conservative evangelical Christians. He cites, for example, *Aladdin* (1992), where the mysterious Oriental “Other” was sung about in blatantly racist lyrics; and *Pocahontas* (1995), where New Age beliefs of pantheism, nature worship, and multiculturalism, and the exclusion of the baptism of Pocahontas to Christianity led to charges of political correctness in the guise of history. Disney tried to redeem itself in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), where pre-Reformation Catholicism is central to a narrative affirming belief in a loving God and the condemnation of abortion, euthanasia, and racism. Yet because the film was more Catholic than fundamentalist Christian, even this quasi-religious feature met with muted approbation from the religious right.

In the past five years, communication scholars have produced several important books about Disney—this is among the very good ones, as a study that searches film for myth, symbol, social message and cultural impact from a journalist’s perspective.

However, the term Religious Right applies to only some evangelicals, and is too limited to identify a political spectrum of the media democracy: among the puritan, pietistic, and fundamentalist, each has its own public policy agenda and not all are conservative, as collaborating authors in *Liberty and Power* make clear. Moreover, the pervasive importance of religion today in all aspects of society as the dominant intellectual question of the age, and the pervasive moral arguments throughout the political discourse of American public life that link “faith and morals” even in a distinguished Washington DC think tank such as Brookings, do not advise us about how to handle such arguments with skill.

The purpose of this book is to offer such skillful argument. The fourth in the series being produced by the Brookings-Pew Forum Dialogues on Religion and Public Life, *Liberty and Power* brings together four leading intellectual thought leaders on the subject of just war to respond to the two lead essays by Rev.

Bryan Hehir and Michael Walzer. Hehir, a professor at Harvard who has headed Catholic Charities and advised the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops among his other credentials, writes with typical lucidity and logic. The two lead essays alone make the small volume a solid addition to a communication research library, and the four responding essays, reflecting a difference in partisanship are also helpful.

The difficulty of mixing public discourse about “faith and morals,” as both Hehir and Walzer observe, is regarded within the context of history and of the religious leaders who addressed political morality, such as Pope John XXIII, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Jesuit John Courtney Murray. As more recent times and ethnic wars have proved, the three elements of the Westphalian synthesis—the sovereign nature of states, the preference for nonintervention, and the separation of church and state—have all been modified. The use of force against potential rather than actual threats is chief among the modifications in normative moral thinking that alters historical conceptions about the relationships among nations states in justified war. Hehir argues that a coherent theory of war today should begin with a revision of the baseline, nonintervention rule to recognize that the process of globalization has accentuated the interdependence of states and multiplied the range of actors, including terrorists as well as states, as agents of intervention into the status of peace, human rights, and the lives of citizens.

Michael Walzer takes on a Jewish strategy, emphasizing a moral theory rather than the role of faith, arguing that a “faith-based foreign policy would be a very bad idea.” He makes four propositions for a more moral foreign policy. He moves beyond the Catholic just war theory to explore the moral thinking surrounding intervention for humanitarian purposes. He examines the moral realism surrounding explanations for the Iraq War, concluding that the war was neither for redistribution of resources nor for humanitarian purposes. Rather, the old policy of coercive containment against the proliferation of weapons of mass destructions, he argues, had been working, and that the risks of war far outweighed the risks of noninterventionist, coercive containment. Walzer relies on moral reasoning, then, to advance with the same clarity achieved by Hehir through faith that the most powerful countries (and global corporations, one might add) need real partners with the clear-headedness to argue, say no as well as yes, negotiate common policies, and work out compromises.

Trends in communication research concerning the role of religion in public culture, whether in the film and entertainment industry or in public policy, coalesce in the area of working toward achieving a greater moral clarity amidst all the confusion in political rhetoric imitated rather than deconstructed in all aspects of media culture. We live in a time of moral confusion, and communication research scholars can contribute toward clearing up that confusion. Here are two more books that succeed.

—Claire H. Badaracco
Marquette University

Ross, Karen. *Women, Politics, Media: Uneasy Relations in Comparative Perspective.* Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2002. Pp. x, 222. ISBN 1-57273-397-7 (hb.) \$49.50; 1-57273-398-5 (pb.) \$23.95.

As women increased their numbers in many national legislatures in the 1990s, her own experience as a candidate for local office in mid-1990s Britain inspired Karen Ross, Reader in Mass Communication at Coventry University, to write a book about the news media’s and political parties’ treatment of women in politics. Her interviews with women parliamentarians in three countries revealed that party leaders and journalists shared a trivializing focus on women politicians’ appearance and identities as wives and mothers, rarely allowing them to be considered as politicians first, women second.

Most prior research on women and politics has focused on the U.S. context, and Ross summarizes some of it here. Yet the new data offered in this book are drawn from the author’s interviews with women politicians in the UK, Australia, and South Africa. This new evidence is the book’s strength, as Ross has elicited some relatively unguarded, incisive, and often witty denunciations of discrimination against women parliamentarians from the officials themselves. Ross uses her interviewees’ stories and observations to support her two major arguments—that politics has become less of an old boys’ network than many might think, and that the news media harm democracy by discouraging women’s participation (even more than men’s). Ross finds that journalism contributes to driving women from politics by ignoring women politicians’ policy work and issues that women tend to tell pollsters are more salient to them (such as health care, education, and welfare). And, she argues, the news media undermine women politicians by obsessing about their dress and how they balance work and fam-

ily life. Ross's informants perceive women journalists as no more likely to overcome the traditional bias of coverage, given their need to please male news editors, advance professionally, or work within their news outlet's political orientation.

However, the interviews are also the book's chief weakness. Many of the book's arguments about news coverage (and I sympathize with them) would be better supported by systematic content analysis of news stories themselves, rather than simply by the claims of some women parliamentarians *about* news coverage. In addition, despite a healthy list of interviewees included in an appendix, only a handful of them account for the vast majority of quotes here. Moreover, the comparative view between countries that is promised in the book's subtitle never emerges. Instead, we are told that "the experiences of women politicians across different continents is remarkably similar" (p. 4) because patriarchy and capitalism are global phenomena. Yet each country faced unique sets of issues and political dynamics in the 1990s. Most notably, South African women were not merely emerging from the shadows of male rule, but apartheid. Surely, this had some differentiating impact on the relation of women to media and politics. How were white and black women leaders treated by the South African media?

The first half of the book examines women in politics, *sans* media. A brief introduction is followed by a chapter summarizing the literature on women and the political process. Here, Ross canvasses the major theoretical controversies related to gender and politics, such as the distinction between the private and public spheres, the range of feminist political strategies, and the debate over whether women offer (or ought to) a different political culture reflecting traditional maternal values (nurturance, consensus, compassion, and so on). The author also summarizes the empirical literature on how women participate differently in politics, arguments for increasing women's engagement in politics, contemporary barriers to women candidates, and affirmative action efforts to recruit more women to office. Chapter 3 examines evidence supporting and challenging claims that women legislate differently than men and employ a distinct political style, concluding that although women have shifted parliamentary policy agendas somewhat, such change is often limited by women's need to avoid crossing male party leaders and public opinion.

The book's second half focuses on media coverage of women in politics. Chapter 4 argues that media

agenda-setting privileges coverage of male politicians, issues, and formats (such as aggressive television roundtable programs), and that journalism primes citizens to focus on women politicians' appearance, gender, and family life. Chapter 5 discusses ways that women negotiate with the media, attempting to manage coverage to their advantage. Chapter 6 examines the media's role in elections, discussing research comparing male and female candidates' campaign speeches and advertisements for issue focus and tone.

Women, Politics, Media is accessibly written, and could therefore be used in upper division undergraduate courses on media and politics, gender and mass media, and a range of women's studies courses. The book offers a reasonably current summary of work on gender and political communication. References, and author and subject indexes are included.

—Chad Raphael

Schultze, Quentin J. *High-Tech Worship? Using Presentational Technologies Wisely*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004. Pp. 112. ISBN 0-8010-6480-5 (pb.) \$11.99.

The relative accessibility of video projection systems, coupled with software for easily creating presentations has not escaped the attention of churches, leading to a boom in what Eileen Crowley-Horak has termed "liturgical media art." In this brief book, Schultze, a professor of Communication at Calvin College, explores the reasons for and against the use of these new technologies in Christian worship. In addition he offers some good advice to those who would use them.

Beginning with a definition of presentational technologies—"Presentational technologies enable people to project still and moving images, from song lyrics to video clips, on a screen in small to very large settings such as auditoriums and stadiums" (p. 17)—he situates them in the larger history of liturgy. Technology, of course, is no stranger to liturgy, with the pipe organ being one of the more complex pieces of technology commonly found in churches. Nor is technology a stranger to contemporary culture. The challenge comes with the adoption or adaptation of newer visual communication technologies to worship.

To guide church members through these newer technologies, Schultze combines overviews of liturgy (identifying elements common across almost all Christian denominations) with warnings about technology's temptations. We should learn to avoid "quick-fix techniques" (pp. 51-62) but seek to find

ways that these technologies can support the worship tradition of our churches. This demands both a stewardship of worship and technology and a certain wisdom. The range of responses already evident—Schultze includes the results of a survey of 330 churches in Michigan—shows four typical patterns: rejection of technology, wholesale adoption, adaptation to the needs of the congregation, and creation of new uses.

Schultze offers good advice to those congregations considering (or already having invested in) presentational technologies. They should begin with their liturgical tradition and fit the technologies to the tradition; they should develop the roles of a “multimedia ministry”; they should consider church architecture.

The book, addressing church communities, provides excellent technical and practical advice. Schultze supports his arguments with cited references (in endnotes). The book, however, has neither a bibliography nor an index.

—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

Steuer, Faye B. and Jason T. Hustedt. *TV or Not TV: A Primer on the Psychology of Television.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002. Pp. ix, 131. ISBN 0-7618-2433-2 (pb.) \$27.00.

This brief book presents a highly accessible examination of seven, largely psychological, effects of television viewing. Though it focuses on children, the reported effects are drawn from studies with multiple age groups.

The authors begin by recounting an interesting set of case studies: in-depth interviews with four families who have chosen not to have television in their homes. Each family has children (who range from pre-school to high-school ages) and in each case the parents decided to raise the children without television. Sadly, the authors only use quotations from these families as structuring devices: they begin each chapter with quotations to set the theme, which they then develop by reporting some of the literature that develops the initial observations from the families. The reader (or this reader, at least) longs to learn more about these families.

The seven themes covered in the book are time and television; the content of television (violence, aggressive behavior, “mean world,” sex); the question of addiction; television and thinking (attention span, concentration, imaginative thinking, creativity); reading and watching; profits and advertising; and the development of inner resources. The literature chosen

for review represents only a small sample of studies of television and, in each case, is presented so as to seem to support the anecdotal views of the non-television families. Few reported studies challenge the assumptions of the non-television families.

Aimed at a generalist audience, consisting perhaps of undergraduate psychology students, the book provides a sweeping introduction to the study of television. Though many of the cited sources come from communication research, the book does not include any of the more recent critical audience studies nor acknowledge the role that audiences can play in viewing. Somewhat surprisingly, over half (53%) of the references cite research conducted prior to 1990. But the book does do what it sets out to do: introduce some themes. However, for full effectiveness with students (or parents) it should lead into more detailed and more nuanced study.

The volume has a reference list, an author index, and a subject index.

—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

Waite, C. Kaha. *Mediation and the Communication Matrix.* New York: Peter Lang, 2003. Pp. xiv, 179. ISBN 0-8204-6177-6 (pb.) \$24.95.

As Volume 10 in the Peter Lang Digital Formations series, this book blends phenomenology, media ecology, and a look at the social consequences of screen-based communication for the self. Though not completely successful, the book needed to be written and Waite does a service to communication scholars by explicitly raising often overlooked issues. Any individual communication does indeed occur in a wider milieu, something not usually described, much less taken into account. How much that milieu creates the conditions for communication almost never finds its way into the research context.

Waite’s interest lies with “the screen”—for her a generic term akin to “the book,” but in this instance referring to “the various iterations of visual media, as exemplified by film, television, digital display, virtual reality, and IMAX” (p. 1). While scholars have understood the book (both in practice and in theory) for many years, the screen remains new territory, particularly as it combines sound, image, space, duration, and place. Waite’s guides to brave this new world form an impressive front line of media ecology’s founding heroes: Maurice Merleau-Ponty (phenomenology); Walter Ong, Jack Goody, Eric Havelock (orality-literacy studies); Marshall McLuhan,

Raymond Williams (art and television); and Joshua Meyrowitz (medium theory). Individually and collectively, they provide both inspiration and evidence for Waite's key claims.

She makes four claims in the study:

The first claim states that one's knowledge of the world is grounded in perception. The second claim states that one's perception—how one sees, feels, hears, moves—can shape, or structure one's awareness of the social world. The third claim states that communication technologies are altering our sense of sight, touch, hearing, and movement. The fourth claim requires a synthesis of the previous three: altering the human sensorium will have consequences for our shared understanding of the social world. (p. 6)

The book then proceeds to offer a summary of the work of its scholar-leaders and an exploration of the screen.

After the introductions in the first chapter, Chapter 2 turns to the transition from orality to literacy and its impact on the human psyche. This, together with the related printing revolution, acts as a model for our understanding the screen revolution. Chapter 3 examines the screen while Chapter 4 begins to enumerate the social consequences of changing the communication matrix. Chapters 5 and 6 trace the impact of the screen on the psyche (one's changing sense of individualism, for example) and on the body public—the social worlds in which we live. While Chapter 2 rehearses things widely known, Chapters 3 and 4 form the heart of the book's argument and Chapters 5 and 6 the denouement, pointing us towards the social consequences of our culture's widespread acceptance of the screen.

Mediation and the Communication Matrix makes a strong claim, but it does not fully establish it. Waite acknowledges this and defends the work by appealing to the phenomenological process: description, description, description. This is an important starting place, but the reader (or this one at least) longs for more than assertions about the screen. As phenomenology, the descriptions seem too informed by Waite's project. We know where this is going and the examples and ideas take us there almost too easily. These descriptions seem intuitively correct, but too slim to support the claims made to rest upon them.

Here Waite could imitate her inspirations. The cited scholar-heroes distinguish themselves by providing more evidence than we find here, the kind of detailed evidence that allows us to graph just how "writing changes consciousness," for example. In her exam-

ination of the screen, Waite does a wonderful job in marshaling the forces: the figure-ground Gestalt, changing notions of space, shifts of time and motion. However, the conclusions don't take us much beyond McLuhan or Ong or Panofsky. If the screen is so important, then it should have more of an impact and one should be able to describe that impact. But one must start somewhere and Waite has given a starting point.

There is a bibliography and an index.

—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

Williams, Kevin. *Understanding Media Theory*. London and New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2003. Pp. vi, 266. ISBN 0-3407-1903-6 (hb.) \$65.00; 0-3407-1904-4 (pb.) \$22.00.

Anyone looking for a concise review of recent developments in media theory might note the modest size and comprehensive table of contents of this volume and conclude that it is a sort of "Cliff's Notes" of the field. That, however, would be erroneous. It is, in fact, difficult to decide how to categorize this disappointing book. Overall it reads like a sort of extended bibliographical essay that covers such a bewildering assortment of topics so lightly that anyone who doesn't know quite a bit initially may simply walk away confused.

The book's five sections cover the history of media theory, the production process, media content, theories of media effects and audiences, and media change and media theory (p. iii). Any of these topics individually could fill an interesting volume the length of this book. Combining all five topics into one short book is, at a minimum, ambitious. Ultimately this book demonstrated the drawbacks of trying to cover too much ground in too little depth with very little focus.

Chapters generally read like bibliographical essays, summarizing 50 or more years of theoretical trends and battles in various aspects of media research. For the first chapter, this seemed fine—much like the review of literature that one expects to open a work of this type. Most of the trends and authors cited as background to today's media theories would be familiar to readers who have taken at least one communication theory course—probably the only souls who might consider reading this book. The author notes that "the history of mass communication is in one sense a history of the fear of the masses" (p. 24). Some early writers decried the trivia and gossip of newspapers and the low quality of mass culture (p. 24). Between World Wars I and II, media theorists agonized over the ability of media to manipulate their

presumably stupid audiences; they cringed at evidence of how media “hypodermic needles” could turn the masses into mindless dupes of Nazi and Soviet propaganda (p. 29). In this chapter, Williams also quickly reviews the rudiments of behaviorism, the Chicago School, Marxism and liberal free press theory, noting that much early work wasn’t based on empirical research (p. 28).

The first chapter sets the pattern for the entire book. Successive sections and chapters follow a similarly rapid march through complex media theories. For example, Chapter 2 alone purports to summarize empiricism, functionalism, pluralism, structuralism, feminist critiques of media and post-modern revisionism. In this one chapter of fewer than 40 pages, there are brief sketches of the ideas of Gramsci, Barthes, Friedan, and Foucault. A reader who isn’t familiar with a theory in advance is unlikely to emerge much more enlightened. I found myself trying to resurrect my memories of the complexities of Foucault, for example, and found the memories more helpful than the text.

The author apparently has some inkling of the difficulty of trying to digest such a mass of material into such sound bites. There is refreshing candor in admissions such as “the concept of the post-modern is difficult to define” (p. 62). True. But the additional couple of sentences of explanation that followed left me scratching my head.

Post-modernists argue that individual identity is a social construction made up of differing and often contradictory components. Hence individuals are the product of class, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, and so on and hence their identity is neither unitary nor unchanging. Rather it is multiple and changing. (p. 63)

This probably makes sense to someone who understands post-modernism as I do not; it will take more than Williams’ cursory text to clarify the theory’s complexities for me.

Much of the book involves summaries of theories followed immediately by refutations of those theories. It is good to introduce readers to the major theoretical battle lines. However the arguments and evidence are seldom presented in sufficient depth to do much more than baffle a reader without prior knowledge of the debates. It is useful that most chapters conclude with a summary that might best be read before the rest of the chapter. However the summaries include statements of the obvious such as this from the chapter on theories of media ownership. “The concentration of ownership in

the post-war period at the national and international levels is seen as increasing the power of the owners of the means of production” (p. 94) As students would say, DUH!

Because the book covered such a wide range of topics and theories so lightly, I focused most intently on the section that interests me most and where I have the best background: the effects of media on audiences. Ironically, I received more in-depth information on this topic in a rigorous undergraduate course 30 years ago than in this book. Had it not been for the solid background I received then (augmented by two graduate theory courses), I’m not sure how much I would have gained from this book’s quick reviews of the direct effects theories and their refutations, the two-step theory, agenda setting, and uses and gratifications research.

Probably the most disappointing section of the book was the final brief unit somewhat misleadingly labeled “new media theory.” It was here that I hoped to catch up on developments since I last took a theory course in the mid ‘90’s. Once again, Williams seems to cover history more than recent information or theoretical perspectives.

This section discussed both globalization and modern technology but seemed almost as dated as some of the aging texts and readers on my book shelves. How many years ago did I first read McLuhan? While it may be necessary to allude to modernization theories of international development and their refutations, these arguments are at least 25 years old. Sadly even the section on the Internet and new communication technology is unenlightening. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman offers a far more readable and compelling analysis of the impact of the Internet on global politics in his book *Longitudes and Attitudes*, written to help uncover the roots of the 9-11 attacks. If this is the area of “new theory,” go straight to a journalist who will enlighten you about the paradoxical impact of the Internet on secular and traditional societies.

As befits a book that reads largely like a somewhat cursory review of literature, the Williams book’s greatest strength probably is its 25 page bibliography. There’s also an index that might prove useful to some scholars. Aside from these strengths—especially the bibliography—I suggest that those seeking to strengthen their understanding of developments in media theory (as I was) look elsewhere.

—Eileen Wirth

